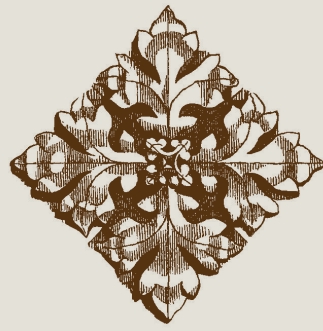


Farlenia

As you cross the seas from Shar to the south if fortune is with you, your eyes will behold the mystical land of Farlenia. Once the bastion of elven civilization, its glittering waters and lush woodlands still recall with fondness the ages long since passed. As you imagine in a dream taking your first steps from ship to shore a sense of magic and mystery wash over you as a faint song carries on the breeze. The sweet perfumed scents of flora assail you as your gaze is filled with the majesty of great trees that guard the secrets deep within this enigmatic place.

Closing your eyes you can see the emerald green of the soft grasses beneath your feet that sway in the soft sea winds like bejeweled stalks dancing to a melody only they can hear. The birdsong accompanies you, soothing your travel weary heart while small animals scamper playfully past giving you the sense you walk within the land of eternal summer. Warm golden rays smile down upon a sparkling lake assailing you with brightness reminiscent of a pool of diamonds.

Unfurling the crudely drawn map you purchased from a merchant in your homeland you retrace the steps you imagined taking with your finger, placing yourself at the shores of Crystal Lake. Although there are many places in the wide world you have wanted to see, it was the tale told to you by an elven traveler that drew your thoughts here. You picture yourself settling amidst the shining sandy shore of the lake as you take a moment to recall the words of the elf who told you of it some time ago.

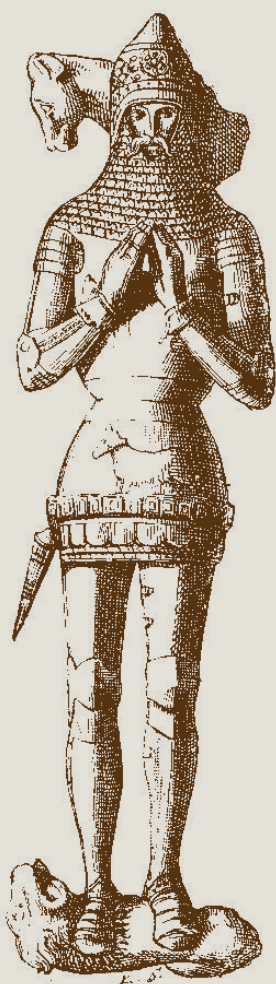


"There is no place in this world more beautiful than my beloved Farlenia. A paradise touched by the hand of the Goddess Laroon herself. Where trees touch the sky and the summer sun bathes you in its warm embrace all the year long. Woeful was I to leave, but eager am I to return."

"You see child, there are many things there unlike anywhere else in this wide world. Even in all my long years I have yet to see them all, but still I endeavor to do so before my last breath is drawn. The ruins of our ancestor's great cities remain even today amongst our treasured woods, and no doubt many untold stories still to be discovered. Although the high elves rein no more over these lands, the wood elves, like me, tend to its care. You see...when all that business came to pass ages ago, when the Shard of Immortality came to be, there were some of us elves who shunned such a thing and broke away from the others. However that is not the tale I have come to tell. I wish to regale you my friend with what Farlenia is now"

"The Myrid forest was once home to some of our royal kin. Spiraling towers set side by side with the vast trees where elves studied magic in its primitive form. Not long after their journey began they became masters of the powers they wielded, their opulent buildings were constructed as monuments to their historic achievements. The Princess Jaelia herself, the very same that lent her magical essence to the legendary soul blade, called it home once. But that was long ago and much has changed. Although remnants of the old city remain, I can not say the same for its people. Oh I hear there are a few, but never did get close enough to see for myself, too afraid that the strange aura from the shard remnants would hold its sway over me. The woodelves that live in Myrid now keep a vigilant eye to the old city and the ancient libraries within, but even they dare not get too close. Despite the lure of lost tomes and ancient spells, they choose instead to let the secrets of old sleep whilst they keep the wildlife and unsuspecting travelers away and tend to the surrounding wood."

"Across the Crystal Lake, along the Eastern coast of Farlenia is Robewood. No old cities to speak of like Myrid, but still plenty to see. The forest floor is carpeted with tiny blue flowers the locals call Amania Faenuma or in the common tongue Laroon's tears. See these woods have always been a home to Druids and such, legend has it, and it was here their sort began. Vast stretches of trees, no two alike, line the ancient paths leading to any number of sacred groves of herbs and plants never seen before. To look upon it now in all its breathtaking beauty you would think darkness never touched these lands, but I am afraid it had even there. While Terengoth held the world's attention, a dark druid, evil as the night is dark, unleashed a terrible blight upon the forest. The trees began to wither in sickness as the earth turned to a putrid muck beneath them. The elves themselves took ill as they were one with the land and could do little to counter the horrid disaster. But their cries of anguish did not go unheard for a magical rain fell from the skies bathing the land in its purity. As the trees returned to life the tiny blue blooms sprang forth from the ground. Laroon had wept over her beloved forest and her tears cleansed the land below. It is said the earth was so grateful for her love it gifted her with the delicate petals reminiscent of her healing touch. Today it stands in all its glory as a marvel of nature's grand design, where many a druid or faithful of Laroon find themselves wandering amidst its storied paths as they seek out that vast knowledge of its secrets contained therein."



"As wondrous a place both Myrid and Robewood are attracting the most accomplished of explorers of the world, their mystery seems to pale when compared to the elusive heart of Evermore. Even the most seasoned of woodsmen would find themselves hard pressed to navigate their way through this enchanted forest. I had mentioned earlier the emergence of woodelves at the time the Grey elves created the Shard of Immortality. You see, a faction of their brethren took offense to its creation, steadfast in their druidic beliefs that such was an affront to nature and little more than vane selfishness that nature itself would never bless. They warned that little more than certain peril could come from the shard's birth, but seen as extremists their pleas to cease this endeavor were ignored. Infuriated by the callous disregard of Nature's lore, they left the Grey elven city and retreated deep into the forest. The reigning monarch at the time ordered their return, but when they refused to abide his wishes, small units were dispatched to silence their objections once and for all. As the King's men set out into the woods they found their search hampered by the spirits of the forest, for they were in agreement with these outspoken elves and rallied to protect them. Well traveled paths seemed to change their course as trees moved and streams flowed in new directions. Before long the King gave up the fruitless search and turned his attention to the creation of the shard."

"The exiled woodelves soon made their homes where the forest grew most dense. They came to dwell in secluded villages dappled high amongst the broad boughs of the bright green canopy of treetops. For ages upon end they remained as time passed unnoticed by them, paying little heed to the events occurring beyond their lofty borders. As the golden age of the ancient High Elven houses faded, and their foretold doom came to pass, the magical woodlands known as Evermore remained a treasure to those woodelves who cared for it whilst in the protective embrace of the forest itself. Til this day they remain hidden to the eyes of strangers as the woods themselves misguide would be explorers. Rare is it a foreign eye comes to rest upon such a mysterious place, and never is it one uninvited. It is likely much of what has occurred through history still lay unknown to some of them, though occasionally some venture out. Perhaps one day fortune will favor you with a chance meeting of one of these unusual folk and an invitation will be extended. I assure you it is the only way as no map will ever lead you there or to a greater treasure anywhere in Trill."