

Faction Relationships

The attitudes and interactions between each of the major factions in Dolmenwood.

Each of the major factions in Dolmenwood has its own agenda, sometimes sympathetic and sometimes at odds with those of other factions. This section summarises the relationships between the major factions, as of the present day.

TODO: Illustration

ATANUWĒ'S HORDE

Hate the Church and the Human Nobility: Atanuwë is actively antagonistic toward the forces of Law in the forest and would like nothing better than to conquer their petty dominions and warp them into playgrounds of Chaos.

Unaware of the Frost Elves: Atanuwë cares little for history and has no knowledge of the Wood's former liege.

View all others as playthings: Apart from its hatred of those who perpetuate Law, Atanuwë views all other beings as fair game for its cosmic pranks and jokes.

CHURCH OF THE ONE TRUE GOD

Unsure of Atanuwë's existence and nature: While the Church fears the increasingly bold incursions of crook-horns into Aldweald, they remain unconvinced as to the reality of the folkloric figure known as the Nag-Lord.

Hate the Drune and the Witches: The Church seeks to eradicate the Drune and the witches from Dolmenwood, viewing them as wicked heathen religions. The ancient alliance with the Drune (the Triple Compact—see *History*, p16) is all but forgotten to the Church.

Dismiss the Frost Elves as legend: Time enough has passed since the days of the Cold Prince's dominion in Dolmenwood that the learned eminences of the Church now dismiss talk of fairy lords as superstitious nonsense.

Tolerate the Goat-Lords: There are many among the Church who view the presence of the goat-lords in the High Wold as an uncomfortable relic of the heathen past and an affront to the “natural order of things” as decreed by the One True God. For the time being, the current state of affairs is tolerated.

Allied with the Human Nobility: In most deeds, the Church and nobility are unified. Many in the aristocracy are devout followers of the Church's word, and the high clergy gladly accept the advice of the duke and duchess.

DRUNE

Lust after Atanuwë's power: The Drune look upon Atanuwë with greedy eyes, viewing the Nag-Lord as another potential arrow to add to their arcane quiver. Of course, the Nag-Lord is not easily bound by Drune magic, and will require an eldritch trap of the most exquisite design. They also wish for revenge upon Atanuwë for the theft of the nodal Sargstone (hex 0904).

Disdain the Church and the Human Nobility: The Drune view their fellow mortals with contempt, using them as befits their machinations.

Ward against the Frost Elves: Of the three factions which united to banish the Cold Prince from the mortal world (the Triple Compact—see *History*, p16), the Drune alone remember and honour their role in the banishing. They carefully ward the Summerstones still, guarding against the return of the Cold Prince or his minions.

Hate the Goat-Lords: Goatfolk once served the Drune, but betrayed them and destroyed their most precious relic. Drune memories are long and unforgiving; their wrath still rages against all of goat-kind.

Pact with the Witches: Though the Drune covet the power of the Gwyrigons, ancient pacts deter them from interfering with the activities of witches. Open collaborations between the Drune and the Witches are historically somewhat rare, but not unheard of.

TODO: Illustration

FROST ELVES

Unaware of Atanuwë: The Nag-Lord arrived in Dolmenwood many centuries after the banishment of the Cold Prince and his people back to the fairy realm of Frigia. The Cold Prince is thus unaware of the corruption of the Wood by Atanuwë.

Hate the Church and the Human Nobility: Although the Cold Prince has scant knowledge of recent events in Dolmenwood (i.e. the last eight centuries), his hatred for those who deposed him burns fiercely still. His dreams of returning to claim his mortal dominion and enslave his enemies are frequent and impassioned.

Hate but seek to treat with the Drune: The Cold Prince suspects that the Drune—alone among the three factions complicit in his banishment from Dolmenwood—could be tempted to aid his return. He knew the sorcerers' ancestors, of old, and recalls their brazen lust after occult knowledge and power. It is possible that some among them may be willing to damage the warding ring of Chell in exchange for deep secrets of fairy magic.

Seek an alliance with the Goat-Lords: Goat-folk served the Cold Prince, long ago, and he seeks to rekindle that loyalty.

Unaware of the Witches: Although witches were present in Dolmenwood in the days of the Cold Prince's reign, the frost elves never paid them any heed.

TODO: Illustration

GOAT-LORDS

Fear Atanuwë: Seeing the bondage of their rude brethren—the crookhorns—in the north of the Wood, the goat-lords fear the power that the Nag-Lord seemingly holds over goat-kind.

Disdain the Church: Although notionally followers of the Church's doctrine, the goat-lords' loyalty is born of political convenience, rather than devotion. In truth they are, for the most part, godless.

Dismiss the Frost Elves as legend: Time enough has passed since the ancient days when longhorns served the Cold Prince that the learned among the goatfolk now dismiss talk of his reign as fanciful legend.

Allied with the Human Nobility: Humans and longhorns have ruled side by side in the High Wold since ancient times. While longhorns and humans both tend to favour their own kind, their alliance is stable.

Fear and hate the Drune: The Drune, held responsible for the death of the goat-lords' (supposed) ancestor Hraigl, are hated by all goatfolk of the High Wold. This hatred is tempered by fear, however, as the sorcerers still hold great power in the forest. Seldom do goats of the High Wold venture deep into Drune-haunted Dwelmfurgh.

Ignore the Witches: The goat-lords have no dealings with the witches.

HUMAN NOBILITY

Unsure of Atanuwë's existence and nature: While the Church fears the increasingly bold incursions of crookhorns into Aldweald, they remain unconvinced as to the reality of the folkloric figure known as the Nag-Lord.

Allied with the Church: In most deeds, the Church and nobility are unified. Many in the aristocracy are devout followers of the Church's word, and the high clergy gladly accept the advice of the duke and duchess.

Turning against the Drune: Traditionally, there was a creed of non-violence between the Dukes of Brackenwold and the Drune (a last remnant of the Triple Compact—see *History*, p16). Recent Dukes, however, have begun to question this creed, and have initiated a slow-burning campaign to drive the sorcerers out of the forest.

Dismiss the Frost Elves as legend: Time enough has passed since the days of the Cold Prince's dominion in Dolmenwood that ancient records of his reign are now dismissed as mere legend.

Allied with the Goat-Lords: Humans and longhorns have ruled side by side in the High Wold since ancient times. While longhorns and humans both tend to favour their own kind, their alliance is stable.

Tolerant of the Witches: The machinations of the witches are largely irrelevant to the power plays of the aristocracy, who also pay little heed to the reams of ambiguous and wildly varying folktale surrounding the witches. The dukes' awareness of the vein of witchcraft that runs through their women-folk reinforces this attitude of neutrality and unspoken tolerance.

WITCHES

Hate Atanuwë: To the witches, Atanuwë is an imposter and its servants a plague upon the forest. The High Coven regard the creeping influence of the Nag-Lord as the principal threat to their power in Dolmenwood and seek to confine the beast to its dominion in the North.

Fear and seek to hide from the Church: The witches are becoming ever more secretive, following the Church's increasing aggression against them.

Pact with the Drune: Ancient pacts deter the witches and Drune from interfering in each other's affairs. Witch-kind typically gives Drune men a wide berth while actively seeking to enlist young Braithmaids into their covens. This practice is reluctantly tolerated by the Aegis.

Ignore the Frost Elves: For the most part, the witches view tales of the Cold Prince's reign in Dolmenwood as mere legend. Those more learned in ancient history view the chance of the frost elves returning as remote and, even if it were to come to pass, unthreatening to the Gwyrigons and the craft.

Ignore the Goat-Lords: The witches have no dealings with the goat-lords.

Loosely allied with the Human Nobility: Witchcraft has a long history among the women of House Brackenwold. The High Coven communicates regularly with initiates among the aristocracy.

Factions and Adventurers

The dealings that the major factions in Dolmenwood may have with adventurers.

Bands of wandering adventurers who delve into the deeps of Dolmenwood in search of fame and fortune are typically not directly aligned with any of the factions detailed previously. This section describes how each of the major factions of the Wood views adventurers and whether (and under what circumstances) they may be willing to work with them.

ATANUWĒ'S HORDE

Mortals who seek to parley with a Chaos-godling are likely to be disappointed. The Nag-Lord has no interest in the piffling deeds of mortals, so is just as likely to snack on adventurers who seek its audience as it is to hear them out.

Affiliation with AtanuwĒ: Adventurers of chaotic alignment who impress the Nag-Lord with their sense of humour or penchant for wickedness and pandemonium may be given its “blessing” to go forth and wreak havoc in Dolmenwood as they see fit. Those who submit to the hypnotic bondage of the Nag-Lord’s gaze (see *AtanuwĒ, The Nag-Lord*, p43) will be accepted into the ranks of the faction and entrusted with a role in its schemes.

Rewards: Wild feasts and debauchery, magic items (often with dangerous side-effects), crookhorn servitors.

Example Quests

Spying and subterfuge: Infiltrating and subverting the actions of the Church or the human nobility.

Warbands: Joining (or leading, for more powerful characters) bands of crookhorns on raids into human-ruled lands or attacks on military outposts.

CHURCH OF THE ONE TRUE GOD

The Church has its own servants—this includes PC clerics and friars of the One True God—who are sent on missions into wild and perilous lands. The faction generally has no pressing need to seek out adventuring parties.

Affiliation with the Church: Pious adventurers of lawful or neutral alignment who are willing to take an oath of good faith may be taken into the fold and sent on missions within Dolmenwood.

Unaffiliated relic hunters: The fabled wealth of the Church attracts procurers of holy relics to its door. The Church will reward such opportunists, so long as the validity of the proffered items can be verified.

Rewards: Salvation, forgiveness of sins, gold, divine magic (e.g. healing spells). Those within the ranks of the Church may also be granted increased responsibility, servitors, clerical scrolls or potions, and occasionally the use of relics.

Example Quests

Locating lost shrines: The Bishop of Brackenwold greatly desires to locate and restore the many wayside shrines in Dolmenwood which have mysteriously disappeared in recent years.

Vanquishing enemies: The elimination or capture of sects of Drones, witches, or wicked crookhorns.

Procuring relics: The recovery of lost relics associated with saints or places holy to the Church.

TODO: Illustration

DRUNE

The Drune mistrust bands of wandering ne’er-do-wells, but will at times deal with them.

Affiliation with the Drune: It is not unheard of for a group of adventurers to establish an ongoing working relationship with the sorcerers, though such parties will never be privy to the reason driving the odd quests on which they are sent. The Drune look especially unkindly upon rogues who attempt to seduce their daughters.

Trade in magic: The Drune covet magic of all kinds—both magic items and spell books—and are often willing to purchase items from adventurers.

Rewards: Gold or precious stones—never magic of any kind, which Drune hoard absolutely.

Example Quests

Fetching odd items or substances: The Drune require all manner of items and substances for their magical practice, often obtained from scrabies, goblins, or other weird merchants (e.g. the boggins in hex 0209).

Scouting frost elf activities: Any report of frost elves or their allies in Dolmenwood will be vigorously investigated by the Drune, even if it turns out to be hogwash.

Guarding ritual sites: Trusted (or charmed) parties may be enlisted to clear monsters from the site of a planned ritual and to repel intruders while the ritual is under way.

FROST ELVES

The few frost elves who find their way through cunning paths into Dolmenwood are well aware of their isolation in the mortal world. They are, therefore, inclined to act subtly, achieving their ends indirectly by bribing or charming weak-willed mortals into doing their bidding.

Affiliation with the frost elves: While frost elves are quite willing to pay adventurers and mercenaries for their aid, they will never truly accept mortals into the ranks of the faction. Elves in an adventuring party may eventually become trusted allies of the frost elves, if they are willing to swear fealty to the banished Cold Prince.

Rewards: Coins of fairy silver (worth 10gp each), scintillating ice jewels, enchanted fairy trinkets (usually bearing an inconvenient glamour affecting mortals that wield them).

Example Quests

Spying on the Drune: Scouting around Dwelmfurgh and reporting on the doings of the Drune.

Locating nodal stones: The frost elves desire precise information on the location of the nodal stones of Dolmenwood, with especial interest in the stones around the Witching Ring.

Escorting to the Embassy: Trusted parties may be enlisted as guards and scouts to bring an important frost elf to the hidden embassy at the Falls of Naon (hex 0504).

GOAT-LORDS

The goat-lords of the High Wold have their own servants, but frequently have need of unaffiliated agents to do their dirty work, often against rivals of their own kind (the goat-lords are notorious for their jealousy and antagonism).

Affiliation with the goat-lords: Adventurers of compatible alignment who are willing to swear fealty to a goat-lord may be accepted into their service. Those who prove themselves trustworthy and discreet will be assigned ever more sensitive or dangerous quests and granted ever greater favour. While it is rare for non-longhorns to rise far in the ranks of a goat-lord's servants, it is not unheard of.

Rewards: Gold, political favours, rank and title, land.

Example Quests

Spying on other nobles: Goat-lords will take any opportunity to insert spies into the midst of their rivals.

Assassination or kidnapping: Simple and brutal methods of eliminating rivals, usually performed by unaffiliated brigands, so as to give plausible deniability.

Skirmishes: In times of war (or brewing war), adventurers may be enlisted to serve in warbands or mustering armies.

Drune and Witch Player Characters?

The Drune and the witches are treated in this book as NPC-only factions which PCs cannot be fully initiated into. Rules for player character Drones or witches—along with the secrets of their magic—may appear in future supplements.

HUMAN NOBILITY

The duke and the nobles who swear fealty to him keep their plans to themselves, as a rule. Occasionally, a noble may inquire after the services of an adventuring party to carry out some covert plot.

Affiliation with the human nobility: Adventurers of compatible alignment who are willing to swear fealty to a noble may be accepted into their service. Those who prove themselves trustworthy and discreet will be assigned ever more sensitive or dangerous quests and granted ever greater favour. While it is rare for non-humans to rise far in the ranks of a noble's servants, it is not unheard of.

Rewards: Gold, political favours, rank and title, land.

Example Quests

Scouting crookhorn activities: Monitoring the movements of the Nag-Lord's servants and warning of any large scale incursions into human-ruled lands.

Eliminating monsters: Killing or driving off monsters that have encroached too close to civilised parts.

WITCHES

Due to their limited numbers and sparse distribution, witches sometimes require assistance in achieving their aims and do, upon occasion, enlist the aid of bands of adventurers and mercenaries.

Affiliation with the witches: Occasionally a witch will establish a regular working relationship with an adventuring party, but in all such cases, the true aims of the witch will remain carefully occluded.

Trade in herbs and fungi: Witches will often be keen to trade or purchase psychedelic or magical substances.

Rewards: Charms, talismans, or spell casting. It is known among adventurers in Dolmenwood that consultation with a witch (if one can be located) is often the simplest way of acquiring services such as the unravelling of curses.

Example Quests

Fetching magical herbs or fungi: A witch may send adventurers to retrieve magical specimens from remote or dangerous parts of Dolmenwood.

TODO: Illustration