

Elves

One of the longest and sturdiest kingdoms of Terna, the Eternal Kingdom, or Eternal Leaf Crown as it is sometimes called, holds itself as the ultimate bastion of philosophy and civility. Disdaining the ground, the Elves fashioned many of their city centers from the limbs, boughs, and canopies of great trees called Legacy Oaks, often referred to as the Elder Trees. With trunks spanning hundreds of feet in diameter, the lattice work of branches in Legacy Groves are a sturdy framework for the Eternal Crown's demesne. While much of the kingdom still farms, lives, and dies in the great fields on the southern tip of Terna, the entire capital has been raised above the ground and seems to float in the clouds. Much of the aristocracy feels it is uncouth to live fewer than 100 feet above the ground.

The complexities of the Kingdom's hierarchy are obscure even to the most rigorous and studied historical scholar. At the pinnacle stands the Eternal Leaf Crown, sovereign ruler of the Eternal Kingdom; this title is usually blood-borne and passed from parent to child, but more than a few times, the Crown has passed down to powerful generals, wise scholars, and, in one instance involving a scandal and an ill-fated turn of the ankle, a gardener named Rose.

Beneath the Crown serve the assorted and numerous Diplos, each assigned a specific duty and each ranked in accordance with their direct association to the Crown. The First Diplos is her majesty's personal attendant and advisor; the 50th Diplos, her first diplomat to the surrounding states; the 75th Diplos, the general of her armies; and so on. While the lower Diplos numbers are typically more important, this is not always the case, for tradition has elevated certain Diplos ranks to higher stations in memory of a great Elf who once filled said position: for instance, the 268th Diplos is the Leaf Crown's personal bodyguard, while the 267th is her chambermaid. After 300, most people stop counting. All Eternal Elves are technically assigned a Diplos of some rank by the Office of the Registrar, but most non-courtiers couldn't care less: although the title "6,723 Diplos to the Leaf Crown" sounds austere, it doesn't relieve the necessity for washing the dishes.

Diplos rankings shift on a regular basis to allow for promotions, deaths, births, demotions, "disappearances," bureaucratic error, etc; sometimes the removal of a Diplos will result in many lower Diplos gaining rank. Sometimes the opposite will happen, as higher Diplos will descend, and often Diplos ranks are kept vacant until a suitable, or more popular, Elf can be found to fill the position. Diplos politics is byzantine at best, absolutely absurd at worst.

While Elves are neither an infirm nor delicate race, the Eternal Kingdom believes its citizenry should be reserved for higher modes of life and has employed a sizeable outsider

labor-force. There are still Elven farmers and laborers, but the vast majority of serfs are Human, Wylderkin, and High Orc. Vast “breadbasket” plantations have been built on the northern edges of the kingdom to accommodate this migratory work force and consolidate the land needed to feed the Kingdom. The Leaf Crown has created strict labor laws which don’t allow these groups to be harshly abused by their longer lived overseers, but those same laws also deny most of the population the benefits of citizenship and don’t allow establishment of long-term outsider settlements or conclaves. Because of these restrictions, most of the labor force settles on the plantations through the harvesting season and then moves back home during the winter months. As Elven plantation owners pay well and don’t, as a rule, abuse their workers, the situation has worked well for generations, but there have been more than a few “disturbances” and at least one race-riot within recent memory.

Elves are the second most common race in Terna. They are far flung and range across the entire continent with family groups or small towns spread through out. However, due to the prosperity and prestige of the Eternal Leaf Crown, most Elves have spent at least some time there and it is by far the largest population of Elves in Terna. Other large Elf populations include the Emerald Elves, who live near the Ternian border; the Elves of the northern coast; and the Elves of Ca La Dorn; as well as a nomadic population; however, none of these groups is as large or influential as the Eternal Empire.

Distinct Groups

Eternal Elves are Elves who herald from the Leaf Crown and are divided into two varieties that are roughly equal in number, and a third warrior caste of sorts.

--Imperial Elves or High Elves are the comparatively posh elves who focus on philosophy and magical studies. They are the Elves who drive the Diplos system and keep it alive even as others may want to see it ended. These are the aristocracy and the rulers of the kingdom.

--Wild Elves are the forest Elves who focus on nature and the simpler things. They do indulge in philosophy, but are less prone to spend months debating a single topic as the call of the wild makes them want to act instead of endlessly study and argue. Even though they are equal in number to High Elves, they tend to be lower in station and fill the roles of a more rote and physical nature.

-Wardancers are those who form the elite guard of the Crown and are as much a caste in the society as an elite army. Wardancers practice beauty, dance, and song in all they do. The Song of Death and War is just as important as the Song of Happiness and Revelrie. From an early age, Wardancer children are taught the song, dance, and the skills of both rogue and fighter.

Emerald Elves are a small group of elves from the Ternian Empire who live on the borders of the Spirit Wood. Spirit Wood is a haunted and monstrous place that has always kept the Ternian Empire from invading the Eternal Crown as the Woods swallows all who enters it. Occasionally things of horror will leave the Wood. The Emerald Elves are a band of fierce warriors who cannibalize the fallen of their enemies and keep trophies such as ears and teeth. The Ternian Empire tolerates them as they form the vanguard against the Spirit Wood, a job worth some of their uncivilized habits. They are referred to as Emerald Elves as upon their naming each is given a necklace or bracelet of the purest green stones, usually Emeralds but in some cases Jade. This is the good luck charm and talisman of life that every one of these Elves carries.

The Walkers are a clan of Elves who live in the far North along the coast. They are accomplished seamen who focus on the sea the way most elves focus on the forest. Their name comes from the coming of age ceremony where they must walk on water: they live so far North that the ocean itself will freeze around the fjords in the depths of winter. The young man or woman must walk on the ice and when ice gives way to water once more, and must spear-fish successfully to show that they are independent enough to provide for themselves before walking back home.

Ca La Dorn Elves are a group that herald from the Isle of Thonesh/Ca la Dorn. These elves formed a large portion of that Isle's earth guild. The Isle of Thonesh reappeared after a thousand years of isolation, and as such these Elves have an insular attitude at times. Also, due to the fact that necromancy had been legal on the Isle until recently, most if not all are far more open minded to necromancy and support its legalization in other lands. Necromancy is not evil to them, as it is merely a tool to be used for good or evil as the wielder chooses.

Mirwynne's Elves are a group of wandering Elves who never spend the same night in the same place. They claim to search for the true King of the Elves, who will be found in a lush grove unlike any other - the first grove of them all, with trees greater than even Legacy Oaks of the Eternal Empire. They come from all walks of life, but seem to be a more whimsical bunch than most Elves. They give up their birth name for something very simple and natural. They claim that only when you forgets yourself can you truly know your heart. Ironically, the group's name is drawn from that of a degenerative mental disorder that affects some Elves in old age.

Of Leadership and the Corrupt

A race known as the Corrupt recently conquered the capital of the Leaf Crown and

destroyed large swathes of forest. The enemies have been eradicated, but the damage is done.

The Eternal Leaf Crown is currently vacant and the search for a new King, one that the land will approve of, is underway. A council of wizened elves seek the new candidate, and a new king should be appointed soon.