

Woad of Kalidor

1153 AS

Estlemere land of heroes, legends and fools! The light shines upon you once more and while you sheltered within your magical cocoon the lands beyond did so ever change. Ruled now mostly by the fallen of Salam's children and recently reborn to the greater Realm of Selquittian. The Kingdoms and realms you now face are, I believe beyond even your ability to comprehend, that is without my aid of course.

Let me introduce myself, I am Bard Rendwyn Lillyfern of the Blue Quill and have been assigned to write for you a series of informative documents that may help to bring you to the lands of enlightenment so that you have a chance to survive.

Now I know you think 'who am I' to give the likes of heroes advice, but the truth is the Orcs you faced led by the petulant orcish child known as Vulkura was the lesser of the dangers that have already began to creep within your borders.

For this first document we shall cast our eyes mostly to the east across the aptly named blood coast, but first they shall titter upon the fringes of Savatoga to the north in what remains of your former Ebon Wood and along the Deymornes where once the fabled Teph'Mitaani stood. Yes my new found friends today I write to you about the Woad.

Rendwyn Lillyfern

Scholar of the Blue Quill

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Jhen'Urdo

Tribe of the Boar

Marking Color: Red

Marking Pattern: Tusk upon each cheek

The Boar has joined their kin upon the Fire Islands and is considered to be the largest of all the tribes. Their Chief holds the position of the Hearth within the Fire Islands political structure.

The Boar is extremely active in raids along the Kalidor coast and have sacked more settlements and been responsible for more Estlemerian deaths than any of the other tribes. While the practice of taking non-pointed ears as trophies is deeply ingrained into their culture, they have also started burning the bodies in sacrifice to Cyndar whenever they are able.

Members of the Boar tribe should avoid other Woad bearing the markings of the Bear, Hawk, Panther, and Yew. These tribes have in the past actively warred with the Boar and while none actively seek out to renew conflicts, all would kill a Boar if they were able to do so without notice.

The Boar tribe is also mostly nomadic though many of their numbers spend a great deal of time in the coastal cities of the Fire Islands to sign on to joint raids or to launch their own upon the blood coast.

See my account of the raid on Penton for more information on the Boar Tribes raiding strategy.

It is also of note that the Boar tribe has in a lot of ways thrown down some of their previous customs in reference to metal. They now see it as a pride to only wear armor and weapons they have taken from their kills or crafted by their tribe. No Boar tribe would ever be caught with an item that wasn't taken from a slain opponent, looted in a raid or crafted by the hands of the Woad. Though they still to the last prefer and will not wear primarily metal armor preferring to keep their mobility; instead having it melted down or reforged.

If one is brave enough there is a way to trade successfully with the Boar tribe that can be quite profitable, if you wish to know more send me a letter expressing your interest with 5 gold pieces to the Blue Quill Consortium in Balandir.

Jhen'Noctuum

Tribe of the Owl

Marking Color: Blue

Marking Pattern: Thick Blue masking both eyes, line from bottom of Chin to bottom of nose

The Owl tribe has entered into human society by residing in the town of Ebon Dale. Their Chief granted the Duchy by Queen Brynja the first of Estlemere.

The Owl has some of the best archers upon Lowgarryn and rivals even the Panther for their ability to stalk and ambush at night. Scouts and Rangers the lot of them their abilities seem to have not yet been dampened by a more civilized setting.

They still attempt to keep to their Nocturnal traditions and being within reach of both the Panther and the Wolves makes for some difficult night games between the three warring tribes. Other than this though their main opponent in keeping Ebon Dale safe are the slavers that attempt to steal away residents of Ebon. Last I heard the Owl had yet to prove these slavers actually came from Savatoga, but are currently working on such an investigation.

The religion of the Owl has also become a factor, previously one of the few tribes still dedicated to the maidens three before the sister's true ascension to god hood

(If you wish to know more about this tale seek out my writings of the High Preist Gwin and his deeds and hardships during the Shadow Era)

The Owl has begun to take religion seriously, specifically to the gods Sybil and Oalvanus, it seems that recently a small contingent lead by a weaver of Oalvanus from the Hawk has arrived upon his great eagle to teach them the ways of these new gods and reports have the Owl taking to the teachings with fervor.

Those of the Owl do best to not come into contact with any Woad wearing red markings they have been told of Cyndars influence by the Hawk and have made pacts with them to do their best to root out Cyndar's corrupting influence from the land. The Owl is also in a three way violent dispute with those of the Wolf and Panther, both of whom after over a thousand years of separation from the Kingdom of Estlemere are still angry over the slights of the Kingdom and those of the Owl's Betrayal long ago.

The final thing I shall say about the Owl is that their leader proves to be as wise as their totem represents and they seem to have become fiercely loyal to the people of Ebon Dale, one would even say they have adopted those people and possibly Estlemere all together into their tribe.

Jhen'Kurro

Tribe of the Panther

Marking Color: Blue

Marking Pattern: 3 diagonal slashes of different lengths strewn across the face as if slashed by claws

No tribe has as storied a history with the people of Estlemere than the Panther and no Woad has more reason to hate the people of Estlemere. The tale of the Panther and their struggles is longer than I wish to account and whether it was the betrayal of allies, the disease of the red death or the final straw from the false promises gifted by the pretender Barrett. These Woad were at one time the largest of Lowgarryn's tribes, but after a few short years of calling the people of Estlemere friends had shrunk to the edge of extinction.

Some say that when all the other tribes were leaving to join their brethren upon the Fire Islands the Jhen'Kurro decided to stay, they setup camps upon the edges of the wards knowing that one day they would fall again and that day they would resume their campaign against the Kingdom.

(If you wish to know more about the first few years outside the wards feel free to seek out my writings on Chief Kestyr.)

While they have lost much in culture they have gained even more of their ancient hunting instinct. Not since the original days of the great schism and the leaving of Noor'Neld Haran has a tribe reached the ferocity of the ancient Jhen'Innari in battle. Some scholars even say that the Panther has surpassed these fabled honorable Woad warriors with their savagery and brutality towards their prey.

Those bearing the Mark of the Panther are in essence at war with most others, though geographically they are very far from the Bear who they have a grudging respect for and the Hawk who have always proven to be steadfast allies and aided the Panther long ago when they asked for aid after the defeat of Maeve in the Fae Uprising.

Jhen'Inoki

Tribe of the Hawk

Marking Color: Blue

Marking Pattern: Variable, but always uses the right eye as the base.

The formerly Xenophobic tribe of the Hawk has since carved out a little piece for themselves on the Fire Islands. They rebuilt their rookeries and with the blessing of Oalvanus. It is said when Oalvanus rose to god hood as a reward for the hawks aid they were gifted a clutch of eggs blessed by the god of nature, he told them of the Eagle's heartiness against fire and disease and claimed they would be needed in the days ahead.

It was the Hawk upon the backs of these Eagles that sought out the remaining few of the Yew tribe and brought them back to their Island sanctuary.

It was the Hawk who opposed the other Woad and saved Calder Falls during the battle of Red Tides. Some say to repay an ancient debt, others say simply to thwart the destruction which Cyndar attempted to wreak. (If you wish to know more you can seek out my short stories of the heroes of this battle).

Believing almost to the last, in the power of the god Oalvanus the Hawk attempts to spread the love of nature to all corners of the land. They now allow all followers of Oalvanus and those of his allies to seek out refuge on their shores, and many have begun to treat this as a holy pilgrimage.

Young of the Hawk still go on their year long quest out into the larger world and still are able to determine whether they wish to stay part of the tribe upon the completion of that year or if their path lies in another direction. This however has turned more into a religious mission over a lesson on the larger world, young are sent out to find out how best they can spread the word.

This strong faith has put them at great odds with those bearing the red marks of Cyndar. Oalvanus and Cyndar being bitter enemies has led to an endless war between the two factions that constantly pulls in all those on the island from time to time. The only reason the Boar has yet to crush the Hawk is because of three very big reasons the first is the bow and arrows that are crafted by the budding Yew tribe out of Entish wood freely given. The second are the Entish protectors that ring the entire island, planted by the first high weaver and grown by the graces of Oalvanus. The third are the eagles themselves resistant to fire and disease and steadfast and loyal mounts these eagles allow the hawk to strike quick with their enemies blinded by the sun.

They bare a special hatred with the Scorpion and Snake this ancient hatred is stemmed in the others use of profane arts that the Hawk cannot tolerate.

Jhen'Corga

Tribe of the Snake

Marking Color: Red

Marking Pattern: A Cobra head flared to strike outlines the head. Starting where the eyebrows meet and each line ending as fangs upon the chin.

The Tribe of the snake is the one I would be worried most about, they recently achieved leadership rank within the Fire Islands and have a history of necromancy and poison. Their profane rituals would make even other devotee Cyndar worshippers cringe.

Believing in cunning and the power of the dark arts, many of these Woad have been known to be necromancers or wyitches. They gain power from drinking magical remedies that grant them prophetic visions. They believe that one should brand themselves with each successful profane ritual not only in honor of their god Cyndar, but to show the world that they are strong enough to bend the darkness to their will.

These Woad are also notable alchemists that brew poisons that not only kill the intended but raise them up as raging undead that fight and destroy their loved ones.

The Snake is not to be trifled with and they command the respect of all those that bare the red markings. The exception to this is the Bear, who were put to slumber and imprisoned by the combined efforts of the Snake and Spider. Though should the Bear once more be found and awake their wrath would be great! The Hawk and Yew war openly with the Snake as historically do the Panther though due to distance they rarely run afoul of one another.

Jhen'Xeres

Tribe of the Scorpians

Marking Color: Blue

Marking Pattern: An inverted Y on the center of the face with arrows at each of the three points.

Only a little better than the Snake Woad this volatile tribe has stuck to their ancient ways with a single exception. They now worship the Brood as spirits of the gods and work with them to protect their Queen in the mounds south of Calder Falls.

Masters at the art of brewing poisons and deathly effective with body spears the Scorpians have been successful in defending the brood lairs above ground against the excursions of Knights and Mercenaries sent forth from Calder Falls.

The Jhen'Xeres consider it to be a great honour to become a host for a Brood parasite and grow the creature within ones body, most times this ends with the Woads death in a ritual known as the great birth, but for some Scorpians that survive this results in some tissue of the brood remaining behind in the Woad and causing him or her to have almost supernatural like strength speed and sometimes the ability to regenerate.

These elite warriors form the ruling caste of the tribe which unlike most seem to rule based on a tribal council system.

Those bearing the Scorpion mark currently share all enemies that are at war with the brood they have both aided in raids against Calder Falls and fought the same people depending on the whim of the Brood. They bare a strong hatred to those that abandoned the ways of the Brood who now call themselves the Jhen'Vespa. As for other Woad tribes the only one they wouldn't kill on site would be the Snake or the Raven due to ancient alliances forged in the Legendary Woad Wars of the early Heroic Era. Oh and they would have a special way to kill a member of the Spider, which initially starts with pulling limbs from the body, starting at the fingers and toes and working towards the torso.

Jhen'Sephi

Tribe of the Water Rat

Marking Color: Blue

Marking Pattern: Blue Whiskers, 3 on each side of the face.

The Jhen'Sephi used to live upon Ghedrons Heath and protected the Teph'Mitaani in alliance with the Spiders. After the fall of Heathbrett and Surrounding lands in the Shadow War they retreated to the mountains where they learned a harsher way of life. Becoming friends with the dwarves who had retreated deep within their peaks, they learned many of the Dwarvish ways including strangely enough the forging of metal.

While they favour furs and hard leathers of the beasts still found in the mountains it is said they rival even the dwarves when it comes to the crafting of weapons. They acted as guides to those looking to escape from the demons within Mirgaard in conjunction with a few Aelos and Oalvanus temples that sprung up along the mountain range and acted as way stations for those fleeing to the safety of Savatoga.

Existing mostly in small family units and only coming together on the fifth day of every fifth year in celebration as a tribe and to enact old ceremonies to refresh the shards of the Teph'Mitaani, for they believe that even now these are the shards that continue to weaken and trap the dragon in his humanoid form.

Those that bear the mark of the Jhen'Sephi are not to be trifled with; fierce close combative fighters and natural and quick with the combative techniques they blended from ancient times and new techniques of the Dwarves not to mention their hardyness gained from over a thousand years of survival in the harsh Deymornes. They currently bear no enemies other than those of the Snake, Scorpion and Spider as all three are said to have abandoned their ancient duty of protecting the Tethyr known as the Teph'Mitaani.

Jhen'Lupas

Tribe of the Wolf

Marking Color: Blue

Marking Pattern: Starting on either side of your forehead these two lines slant inwards towards your nose then travel on either side of your nose down your face to your chin.

The Jhen'Lupus or Wolf has changed little in the last thousand years, family and clan is still their most paramount of concerns as well as preserving their hunting grounds.

The lack of enough land has led to a war with the greater in number Panther tribe as the Wolf is unwilling to part with the remainder of their ancestral hunting grounds. Since the wards have fallen there has been a resurgence of hate from the plague that nearly wiped the tribe into extinction. So you protect your lands, you kill humans, you hunt prey and most importantly you make sure your pack is safe.

Those of the Wolf are only currently at war with those who bare the marking of the Panther, while the Wolves are slow to anger they see everything with the eyes of a true hunter, they are always on the lookout for fear or weakness and are always ready to strike as one against any enemy that threatens.

Worship seems strange to the practical wolf, reverence for their ancestors and the spirits of their land is more the way of life. Rumor has it that one of the Lamias has become a revered spirit of the tribe though which one and why we have yet to discover, safe to say though friends. Keep your eyes northward.

Jhen'Vilni

Tribe of the Spider

Marking Color: Red

Marking Pattern: Dots of Red ringing both of the eyes and lines acting as fangs on either side of the chin

The Spider was in hiding from their defeat in 2253HE by the crusade heading north until 1SE when the world had begun to change. It is said they made allies with an ancient spider race and with their help were able to recover. Eventually as with all things though the Spider grew tired of its temporary home and when an Efreed of Cyndar offered them their own home with their brethren on the Fire Islands they were quick to accept. The Aranea begged and pleaded to keep their new found friends from being led astray, but in the end the lure of power was too strong and their Spiders lust was turned upon the Aranea by Cyndar.

(More of this conflict can be found in the short story detailing accounts about the War of Webs that played out in the Deep Dark)

They were taken to the sacred temple of flame and saw wonders and ways beyond count to pay back the humans for the pain they caused; Vengeance like fire consumed their hearts.

The Jhen'Vilni work closely with the Jhen'Corga and it was with their aide that they were able to entomb the entire Jhen'Ursa, slumbering for eternity in cocoons in a secret chamber.

(More of that story can be found in the tale of the slumbering bear)

Growing in number to the point where only the Jhen'Urdo rivaled them and finding a natural affinity for the psionic arts the Jhen'Vilni quickly rose in power on the islands and found they were able to exploit the power of Demons to accomplish Cyndars will, and became somewhat masters of trapping and siphoning the power of Demons from Hades and bringing their fire to bear during raids upon the coast.

Those that bare the marks of the spider are hated enemies of those bearing the mark of the scorpion this is a hatred that even we of the Blue Quill do not know the beginning of. Though some of their numbers have worked covertly with the Jhen'Inoki upon occasion the bulk of them war with the Hawk. Should any of the Jhen'Ursa escape they would find sworn enemies in the Bear tribe, and they seem to constantly be butting heads for power with the Snakes though this is more of a friendly competition between serial killers than any kind of potential for war. Finally the Jhen'Sephi has a deep hatred and would most likely attack members of the spider tribe openly for the hurt and loss of the Teph'Mitaani.

Lesser Known Tribes

Jhen'Ursa

Tribe of the Bear

Marking Color: Blue

Currently all trapped in a secret and enchanted vault somewhere within the Fire Islands only members of the Spider and Snake know the true location.

Jhen'Vespen

Tribe of the Hornet

Marking Color: Black

As far as tribes go, they are a relatively new tribe only had appeared on the Isle 800 years or so ago. They are territorial, pack oriented, and become vicious when provoked. Poisons, traps, and armor piercing weapons are common weapons for them. Rarely do they attack a foe by themselves, as they tend to fight in numbers. Magic is almost unheard of within the tribe, and those who wield it seem to be treated with great reverence. They are vile opportunists at their worst, and protective allies at their best.

Jhen'Innari

Tribe of the Lion

Marking Color: Blue

Thought to be eradicated long ago by the first settlers when the Tribe of the Lion refused to give ground and abandoned by the other Woad in the first War with the humans. The Lion is said to have started to return and Woad of other tribes have started to take upon themselves the mark of this ancient tribe. This group is a major reason that more war like young of the Hawk have begun to not return after their year abroad, instead adding to them the Mark of the Lion. Why this tribe is returning and who the chief is has yet to be determined.

Jhen'Taxus

Tribe of the Yew Tree

Marking Color: Blue

Living with their saviours the Hawk, the Yew tribe in safety has once more begun to grow slowly in number. They have retained the ancient arts of crafting legendary bows and arrows and while still peaceable in nature have deep dislike of the followers of Cyndar and those bearing the red marking. They have recently recovered an ancient technique of shaping freely given Ent wood and these artifacts infused with the very essence of nature have gone a long way to aiding in not only the defense of the island but even saving some of the Pheonix.

Jhen'Vulpes

Tribe of the Fox

Marking Color: Blue or Red

The fox is a fickle and playful tribe, much like the water rats of old they exist in small family units or individually and travel throughout the fire islands and Lowgarryn looking for worthy friends and allies, not ones to make enemies quickly when an enemy is gained they are very slow to forgive or forget a grudge.

Jhen'Corvus

Tribe of the Raven

Marking Color: Red

One of the most Famous of tribes, but now one of the smallest if we are to talk specifically of Woad. Most of the tribe is now made up of Fire Elves though pure blooded members of the original tribe of Born of Ky'leth are still counted among their numbers. The Raven was the first to change markings from Blue to Red in honour of Cyndar, fanatically devote to the god of fire they are tasked with overseeing the temple of flame and taking care of the sacred Phoenix.

Jhen'Tempest

Tribe of the Dragon

Marking Color: Blue

With the fall of the Dawn Spire and after the final loss of Noor'Neld Haran to the armies of the Storm Lands. A group of Woad broke away from the Jhen'Urdo, not wanting to be drawn further from the lands of their birth and instead wanting to return regardless of the cost. The Dragon returned to the lands of their birth and quickly learned that to them the Dragon was the true source of nature and the gods the invaders, they would bring together their people once more and they could all live as they once did in the beauty of Noor'Neld Haran with Ilyxtriak to watch over and protect them. After all they believe that the Dragon is not imprisoned but supporting all of Lowgarryn upon his back until they his people, the Woad are able to heal the pillars of power that once supported it above the sea.

Jhen'Squalo

Tribe of the Shark

Marking Color: Red

As Xenophobic as the Hawk once was the small shark tribe controls a small chain of Islands to the north of the Fire Islands. Here it is said they dine upon only meat and over the years have even begun to partake in Cannibalistic acts against Woad of other Tribes. They do praise homage to Cyndar and say that it was the great shark of fire that gifted these islands to them and gave them the right to devour all who would attempt to access them as the fire devours all.

Some of the Shark decided to follow the ancient path of one named Ashtaroth and instead of venturing to the Fire Islands instead travelled to the Storm Lands and joined the Dragon

Jhen'Luna

Tribe of the Moon

Marking Color: Blue

Travelling in small groups across the Fire Islands, this purely nocturnal clan praises the goddess Sybil, they bear markings of blue and willfully take upon themselves the gift of Lycanthropy. Those that are strong in faith are said to be able to control their gift while those that are not instead fall prey to the mother of monsters corruption. They are highly nomad like and travel by foot and sail along the blood coast, within the North eastern portion of the Ebon Wood and even upon the Fire Islands.

Jhen'Genere

Tribe of the Phoenix

Marking Color: White

Almost nothing is known about this tribe, only that they are bred and raised for sacrifice. It is said that they are the pure that they are the ones that Cyndar enjoys most to feed upon and so they are bred to willingly give their lives and their purity is shown with markings of white.

