



A Short (for him) Greeting From Elminster

by ED GREENWOOD

"Tantam! Oh...er, 'hello,' as ye say it... 'tantam' is what merchants of the North say, here in the Realms.

"The Realms, the Forgotten Realms, o'course, as ye've all forgotten the way here, until now, that is. Of all the sages in Faerun, I am the first to walk among ye since Myth Drannor fell so it has fallen to me to welcome ye—ye who have discovered the Realms through the offices of the good scribes of TSR, Inc. I bid ye fair welcome to my home, for 'tis a fair world, perhaps the fairest of all those I've walked. And mind ye, there have been a few and a few again, over the years.

"Five hundred-odd winters I have lived in Faerun, most of them in the Dragonreach lands—that is, those lands that border the Sea of Fallen Stars on the northwest. I've learned the odd thing in my time, here and there along my road; and so it is that I can pass on to ye what I think ye should know of the Forgotten Realms.

"One cannot know too much beauty in one's life. Some such beauty is too fleeting, or too personal, to be passed on to others, but 'tis the duty of all beings who would rise to better themselves to pass on to others beauty that others can know. So it is that sages, of all worlds, preserve the lore and learning of their lands and peoples. Music, art, legends, and magecraft—all these we treasure, and TSR will bring ye as the years pass. And ye shall come to know the beauty of the Forgotten Realms.

"For the life of a world can only be captured, howe'er imperfectly, in tellings that give one views of its landscapes and its life—its plants, its creatures, and their doings. I would like to see the Realms come alive for ye, in this world, to delight ye as it has me. I have told one among ye, Ed Greenwood, of my world for years; through him, and others, TSR will bring ye more of the Realms in days to come. For some twenty winters only he listened to my tales, but I've talked long evenings away



to more attentive ears, know ye, in the last season than in many seasons before, here and in Faerun. Ye who like to read what ye term 'novels'—a *novel* term indeed, eh-heh...ahem...can expect to see more than a few tales of the Realms in times ahead. Some words ye can read already, as novels and game tomes, and of these I would speak now.

"In all tales, a teller misses something, or speaks here and there with words unclear to someone who reads or hears, or tells not enough of what his listeners would hear about, if they could guide his tongue. Elminster's business is answering questions—aye, and his pleasure, too. So, ask, I charge thee! Send thy queries to the good scribes, and I shall do mine own level best to answer, if not directly, then by producing more lore on locales, and matters, and beings, ye would know more of. The busy scribes of the realms can then turn such into modules, rule-books, articles, and novels for thy entertainment. For, look ye, what greater purpose is there, if ye cannot heal or shape mountains or create life anew, than to entertain?

"Ah, I envy thee all. To discover the Realms anew, as ye will! To walk amid

the great trees of the Elven court, or glimpse (from afar, if ye would live long) the devil-haunted ruins of Myth Drannor. To see the welcoming farms of Shadowdale, or half a world away, the many proud spires of great Waterdeep, the City of Splendors! Ah, 'tis a grand world, I tell thee (and who should know better?) and it awaits thee, here and in pages—and other ways, who knows?—to come. When ye have seen a sunrise over the Moonshae Isles, or watched the stars glimmering above the beautiful city of Silverymoon on a clear deep night, ye will thank me! Aye, and it makes me glad to know the joy that awaits and proud, too, for the Realms are my home, even as ye would be proud to show a wayfarer thy abode, whate'er it be.

"One thing more: know ye all that the Realms ye have seen in the box is but a small corner of the Realms! One of my favorite corners, aye, but only a small piece indeed of the mighty land that is Faerun. Ye have seen little of the North, little indeed of the lands between the Sword Coast and the Dragonreach, and little or nothing of Impiltur, Aglarond, and Thay to the east.

"And these, too, are but a few—the entire South, from the Vilhon Reach through proud Amn, Tethyr, and hot Calimshan, ye have not even been shown yet. Nor Lantan, or Nimbral, the island realms (nor, far out to sea in the west, Evermeet of the elves); nor Tharsult—nor the wild jungles of Chult, nor Tashluta and the lands about it, that we call Tashalar. Beyond this last lies a whole coast of realms, in the far south of Faerun—and ye could travel for many years walking east, across Raurin, and Durpar, and the Plains of Purple Dust, ere ye came at last to the mysterious lands of Kara-Tur. And Faerun is not the only continent of Abeir-Toril, know ye! Ah, rich years lie ahead of ye yet, ye who come along for the ride across this rich world of mine! I welcome ye, and wish ye well—and will have more to say to ye anon (for I say much, and often, as they say). But for now, until swords part!"



High Fantasy...High Art

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Lands of The Forgotten Realms

During the scribing of the Forgotten Realms tomes, some information was unintentionally overlooked by over-worked scribes working by far-too-feeble candlelight. The errant information literally came to light recently (when the scribery windows were at last washed) and is here included for your education, edification, and perusal.

AGLAROND

A small realm that keeps to itself, Aglarond exerts little influence in affairs of state beyond its borders. It is important in the overall strategic balance of the Inner Sea lands, however, simply because its continued existence prevents Thay from overwhelming the northern "East." Aglarond's strength and danger, because she stands in magical opposition to the Red Wizards of Thay, who do not kindly suffer rivals, is its current ruler, a female archmage of fabled powers, known only as The Simbul.

Aglarond lies on the northern side of a peninsula jutting out into the eastern end of the Inner Sea; a sparsely-inhabited, heavily-wooded realm of few farms and no large cities. Jagged pinnacles of rock stand at its tip and run along the spine of its lands. To the east, these fall away into vast and treacherous marshes that largely isolate The

Simbul's realm from the mainland. Travel in Aglarond is by griffon, ship, or forest trails. It trades lumber, gems, and some copper for glass, iron, cloth goods, and food when freetrading vessels come to port, but sends out no trading ships of its own.

Aglarond cannot boast a field army of any size, nor a navy, but within its woods The Simbul's foresters are expert and deadly troops, adept at fire-fighting and at using "coastboats" (long, canoe-like open boats handled with lateen sails, oars, and poles) to raid by night as well as traveling in the treetops and fighting among them. The foresters are alert and grim; the menacing might of Thay is uncomfortably near, and Aglarond's blades are all too few. At the battles of Singing Sands (1194 DR [Dalerecking]) and Brokenheads (1197 DR), Aglarond's forces turned back invading hosts from Thay, but the cost was great. Skirmishes with raiders hoping to win glory in Thay, or mercenaries hired by Thay, are common.

Little is known of The Simbul's aims and true strength, but she is seen to constantly roam the northern Realms, working to influence all manner of events. This is presumably to better Aglarond's safety, although she is said to be a member or at least an ally of the Harpers, whose aims are more widespread.

Initially a wilderland inhabited only

by a few sylvan elves, satyrs, and the fell forest denizens known more to men in fable than in fact (owlbears, stirges, and the like), Aglarond was little disturbed by men as settlement spread east across the Inner Sea lands an age ago. Often visited by pirates and others seeking a temporary refuge or to cut timber, Aglarond remained unsettled for many long winters. A few adventurers ceased their explorations to colonize the land, mostly those too old, notorious, or badly maimed to continue faring. At length fishermen seeking untouched seas moved to Aglarond's shores, and slowly small settlements of fisher-folk took hold on the rocky coasts. These villagers faced the sea, and although the woods at their backs seldom erupted to endanger them, they did not explore inland nor boldly cut and fell in the manner of the settlers of Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dalelands. The far-off pinnacles and the endless woods remained hostile places for a generation or more; those who ventured too far in did not return. As the woodcutting slowly ate away at the forest edge, skirmishes with owlbears and satyrs became more common, and were-creatures began to appear. Adventurers on the run or seeking hire also began to arrive in Aglarond, and for a brief, bloody decade still vivid in songs and travelers'-tales, men slaughtered the most dangerous of Aglarond's





Lands of The Forgotten Realms

monsters. As the dangers of the woods grew fewer, hunters and fur-trappers ventured further inland—and eventually discovered that the elves of Aglarond had grown few and humble, weakened by disease and continual warfare with the mountain trolls and the dark elves of the mountain deeps. Most of the fisher-folk remained ignorant (and fearful) of the forest depths, and did not venture far into the trees. But the hunters and adventurers fought the trolls and (rarely) the drow, knowing the elves first as wary allies and then as friends, and within another generation a proud (if few in number) half-elven folk had come into being in the depths of the woods, the elves being completely absorbed into the half-elven stock. Over the next decade, the drow “went under”(ground) and came to Aglarond no more, the trolls were nearly eradicated, and the satyrs all left Aglarond or perished in the forest wars, until the half-elves came to rule all of Aglarond’s wooded interior. Indiscriminate woodcutting continued around the villages of Oskur and Dluk in particular and at length the half-elves grew angry enough to move down into the fishing villages and take over. This led to several armed skirmishes, notably a pitched battle at the remote anchorage of Ingdal’s Arm (in which the “pure” humans perished to a man), but at length the half-elves prevailed.

For a time there was ill feeling, but the just rule of the half-elven (and their undeniable and ever-increasing blood ties to the fisher-folk) soon welded the people into a loyal fellowship under the rule of a king. The first king, the senior war-leader of the elves, was the aged Brindor. He established a fighting corps of veterans and youths, named an heir, as he had no surviving mate or offspring of his blood, and began a tradition of government by monarchy and council. Each village chose a representative or elder to be a part of the council, to advise and debate with the king. Those who would not accept the rule of the King moved west, into Altumbel, or north and east into Thesk. Theskan raiders (and later, the growing threat of



Thay) were encountered by Brindor’s only great engineering works: the fortress of Emmech at the mouth of the UMBER, and the “Wall of Giants,” constructed by giants in return for some mysterious magical service Brindor gave them. These works prevented any army that crossed the UMBER marshes from sweeping into Aglarond’s growing farms.

Brindor’s heir, Althon, began a great program of irrigation, road-building, and careful husbandry of the much-shrunken woods of Aglarond. Eventually to become known as Althon “The Old,” he lived nearly a hundred winters. In Althon’s time Aglarond grew into a strong and happy realm, despite the growing power of Thay and the many cities along the coast to the south of the Yuirwood. The wood gained its name from the “Yuir,” as the elven folk now absorbed into Aglarond’s half-elven populace had called themselves. Althon had two sons, Elthond and Philaspur. Elthond perished in the first great battle against the forces of Thay at Singing

Sands (so-called for the lamenting women of Aglarond, who cried and sang all night as they took up the bodies of their slain men from the sands around Emmech). Philaspur reigned thereafter, himself perishing at the fortress of Glarondar in the battle of Brokenheads.

Philaspur’s daughters, Thara and Ulae’, ruled long and well together after his death. Known as “the Grey Sisters” for their raiment, they developed their magical arts to awesome heights and were believed to have used shrewd dweomerwork to thwart many forces from Thay ere these reached Aglarond’s borders. In their later years, both took husbands. Thara wed Elthar of Milvarune, gaining thereby the friendship of Thesk (which survives to this day). Ulae’ bore a son Halacar and a daughter Ilione.

Halacar reigned from the death of his mother (1257 DR) through a disastrous campaign against Thay and died—of poison, it is thought—in the winter of 1260 DR without wife or offspring. His sister Ilione came to the throne inexperienced but she was wiser than Halacar and carefully built Aglarond’s strength. Ilione immediately named as heir her apprentice, the young and mysterious sorceress known only as The Simbul. She ruled long and wisely as Aglarond prospered. Ilione died of plague in 1320 DR.

Since that time The Simbul has ruled the realm with magery greater than any known in the Inner Sea lands since the fall of Myth Drannor. She is thought to still live, and Aglarond still survives, because she personally overmatches even the infamous Red Wizards of Thay. If The Simbul herself has apprentices or a chosen heir, she has not publicly identified any such to the Council. Her style as Queen of Aglarond, a title she never uses, preferring to be known only as “The Simbul,” is her own, different from her predecessors and counterparts in other realms. As Mirt of Waterdeep once said, “Ah, that lady—she goes her own way.” That way must be a narrow and often treacherous one; Aglarond’s future may well be in the balance.



Lands of The Forgotten Realms

EVERMEET

Evermeet of the Elves is the island kingdom of the elves and lies west across stormy seas beyond the lands of men. It is a happy realm of deep, wondrous forests and much laughter. Here the High Elves, under the leadership of the Silver Elven Royal House—six Princes and seven Princesses, under the ruling Queen Amlaruil (her king, Zaor, died some thirty winters ago)—live in rich splendor. The art, the music, and the magical research all are far above what is seen here, even in Waterdeep the Splendid.

All elves, except the Dark Elves, are welcome there, and many sea-elves live in the surrounding waters. To guard the realm against men, particularly the aggressive raiders from Ruathym and the Pirate Isles, Evermeet has a mighty navy. It is by far the most numerous and well-armed in the known Realms. Based in the fortress of Sumbrar, with smaller outposts at Elion and Nimlith, the vessels of Evermeet's fleets patrol from the Wave Rocks to the Gull Rocks and "the Teeth," in a wide circle of ocean. Boats are built and repaired at Siiluth ("Beaching Bay"), and call at only a few ports in the lands of men: Eskember, the Moonshae Isles, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep. In the past, the ships of Evermeet have fought many battles with Ruathym, the reavers of the Nelanthar (Pirate Isles), and Calimshan, and have hurled back all attempts to seize the island or its treasures.

Recently, many elves from troubled lands in the interior of the Realms have begun to take ship in Waterdeep, to come to Evermeet where men are not seen and evil threatens not.

HALRUAA

A small, rich realm fed by the verdant farms of the Maeru valley and slaked by the fiery wines born in the vineyards of the High Aluar, Halruaa is famous for its rich electrum mines and its magic.

Halruaa is a realm defined and isolated by mountains, but often invaded from the sea for its mineral wealth



(principally located east of Lake Maeru, in astonishingly large and pure deposits). Its people have become, as a result, warlike, and led by tradition. The realm is not at peace with its less powerful neighbors. Formerly, out of necessity, they were led by wizards.

These Halruan magic-users are of great and mysterious power. They's current regime is said by some to have been founded by renegade Halruan mages. Halruaa is always ruled by a wizard-king. The current ruler is Zalathorm, an elderly man of great mystical powers. The Elders of the "Halruan" (as the wizards are known) advise him, and will choose from their own ranks the mightiest mage to become his successor, when that time occurs.

Halruaan mages wander in secret over much of the Realms, always seeking items of magic (particularly unique and ancient items), and they have gathered many thousands of such treasures in their temples. The Halruar worship Mystra, and their temples are vast strongholds where they live, work, and study to further their arts, as well as

worshipping The Lady of Mysteries. The most mighty of these temples lies within Mt. Talath and is a vast and ancient network of caverns, passages, and mountaintop turrets. Most of the other large temples (as opposed to the devotional shrines of the cities) are located in the mountains ringing the Nath, or northeastern basin, where vast herds of wild rothe and aurochs roam, and are culled regularly for food.

Halruaa has a small war-navy, based in Halagard and Zalasuu. Its principal fortified base and construction docks are on the outlying isle of Rulasuu.

This realm is little known in the North. These paltry words, and the map, are all Elminster could tell you of it, except for the badge of the realm, borne on navy sails and diplomats' cloaks. It is a star surrounded by three concentric circles, all in white (on a darker background, which may be of any color). The star represents Mystra, the inner circle the land. This is encompassed by the second circle, representing the Halruans, and an outer circle represents the world beyond.



Tales of The FORGOTTEN REALMS



FR1, WATERDEEP and the NORTH
TSR9213 \$7.95

The North...rugged mountains and dense forests, which hide those races hostile to man amid the ruins and wastelands of the fallen kingdoms.

Waterdeep...crossroads of the world, City of Splendors. Here are wealth and goods from every corner of the Realms. Here too is intrigue, feuds, power games and adventure enough for any man.

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FR3, Empires of the Sands
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In the southwest corner of Faerun, a thousand miles south of Waterdeep on the great Trade Way, lie three lands awash in a sea of sand. Here is Amn, land of merchants, where everything has a price; Tethyr, where petty tyrants vie for a vacant throne and evil grows; and Calimshan, a dry land where great magic is commonplace.

These are harsh lands, home of proud and fierce warriors, daring rogues and playground of the Jinn. Let our desert winds bring you hot dreams of glorious battle, fine wine and mountains of riches.

FR4, The Magister
TSR9229 \$7.95

From Waterdeep to the Sword Coast to the jungles of Chult and the faraway lands of Thay, strange and powerful magics fill the Forgotten Realms. Ancient tomes, powerful spells, fearsome weapons - all these and more await the hero who can overcome terrible dangers to wield great power.

Penned by Ed Greenwood and Steve Perrin, at the bidding of Elminster of Shadowdale, perhaps the finest sage in the long history of Abeir-Toril, here are all the numerous discoveries and variations of ancient magics and relics of the Realms.

FORGOTTEN REALMS REVISITED

In our neverending battle to create some of the best fantasy game products available, we are constantly reviewing customer letters, complaints and commentary. You, the customer, are our watchdog for product integrity. If there is something you don't understand you ask for clarification, and if you find errors or missing parts you tell us.

With the release of the first of our FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Adventure Packs, *WATERDEEP and the NORTH*, we received a recurrent complaint of an omission. Several customers felt that they were missing a map to the North since there was a section detailing key landmarks of this territory.

It was our contention that it was never intended that FR1, *WATERDEEP and the NORTH*, should contain a map of the North, and that the brief description of the North provided was to be used in conjunction with the world maps in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Game boxed set.

However your intrepid editor, thought, "Hey, if several customers think there's a problem let us look deeper into the matter. To our surprise, we discovered that many of the features we found on our master map had never made translation onto the world maps. That's when the idea struck us that it would be great to reprint the map of the North with the missing features. So here it is - we never rest.

And now for the really good news. Since there's been such interest in the North we thought it would be only natural to produce a campaign pack devoted entirely to detailing these lands of mystery and adventure. Coming this fall we are proud to present

FR5, The Savage Frontier
TSR9233 \$7.95

presenting all the famous features of that land of legend called the North. Highly detailed full-color maps bring these forbidding Viking lands to life for you.

COME TAKE A
TOUR
Of The
NORTH

Since the creation of the original FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set, we have pledged ourselves to produce a series of game accessories that maintained the standards of excellence, attractiveness, diversity and wonder of that first set. And we have

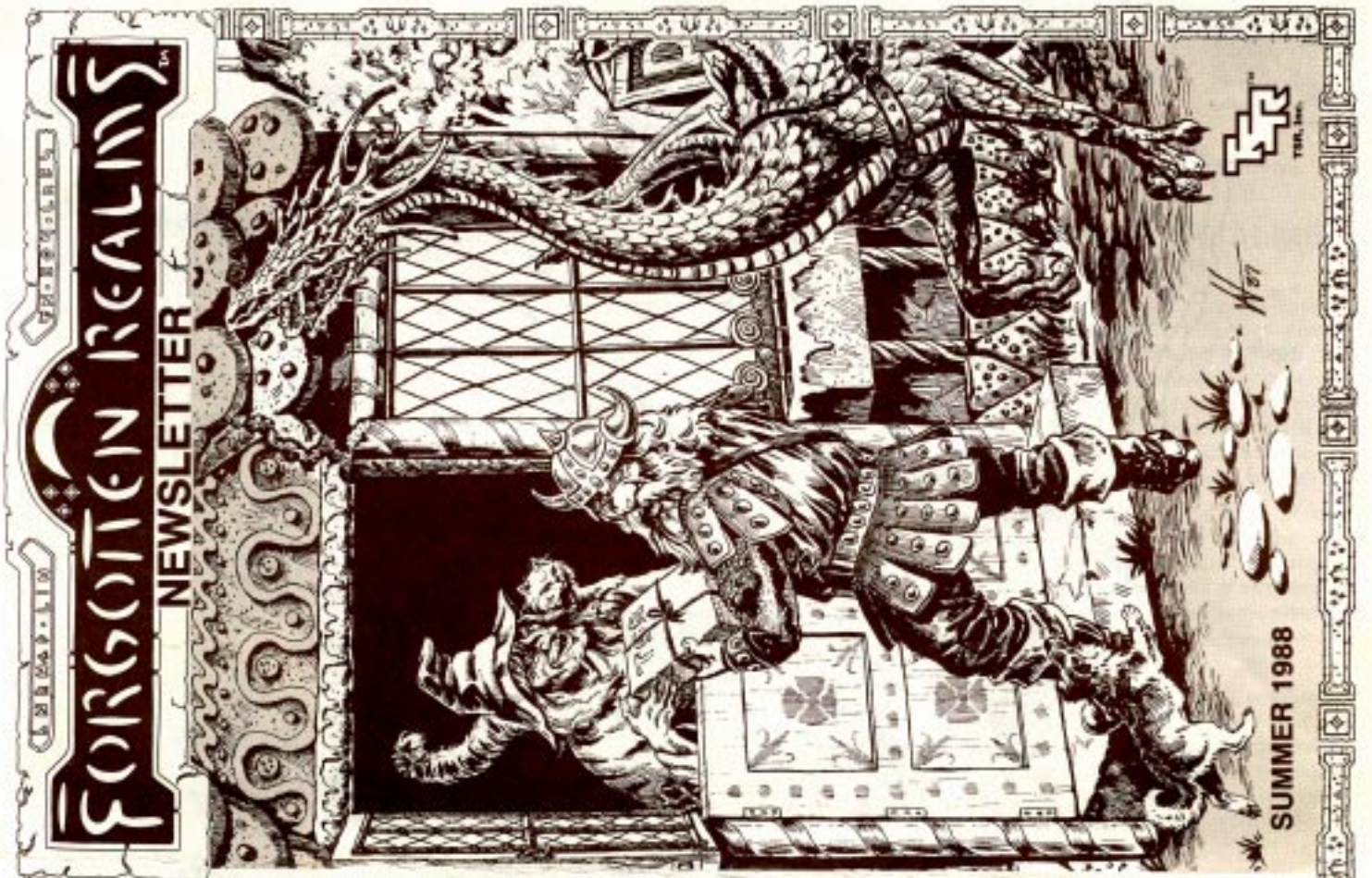
In but six months we have released four 64-page expansions which explore the Realms from the fabled City of Splendors to the savage wastes of the Sword Lands. And we have examined the legends of the past and the magics and relics of fallen kingdoms.

If you haven't gotten a chance to look at all these fine products, here's what you've been missing.



FORGOTTEN REALMS NEWSLETTER

The North



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