The Creation of Grenholm

In the time before time Ysim created the earth, the sea, and the sky. Upon seeing the chaos of creation Ysim brought forth the Grenmari to tame the earth, the sea, and the sky. The Grenmari worked tirelessly for Ysim to mold pieces of earth, sea, and sky to create the many stars and planets. Greatest among the Grenmari was Hadari. First Hadari created Fyr by mixing the sea and the sky with only the brightest and fieriest pieces of earth. Ysim was pleased by Fyr and placed it at the center of the universe and declared that all the creations of the Grenmari shall look upon Fyr. Despite Ysim's pleasure, Hadari was not satisfied. Even though Fyr was vibrant, Hadari saw that it lacked life. Not knowing how to create life, Hadari brought pain upon herself and drew blood to mix with the earth. Hadari then molded the sea, and the sky upon the blood soaked earth to craft Grenholm. Ysim was pleased with Grenholm and set it in motion around Fyr. As the flames of Fyr warmed Grenholm grasses, trees, and flowers sprung from the earth. Seeing life flourish, Ysim realized what Hadari had done and became angered. Ysim demanded that Hadari undo Grenholm and take back her blood. Hadari refused and Ysim imprisoned her within Grenholm as punishment. A chain of ice and stone was wrapped around Grenholm to bind Hadari to the world and Styga and Hunar were placed in the sky to watch over Hadari. Ysim then declared that until Hadari undoes her creations, life would only arise from pain and blood.

From her prison within Grenholm Hadari began crafting from her own flesh, forming all the creatures of the earth, the sea, and the sky. Once Hadari had expended her flesh, she chose from among her creations and endowed the races of elves, dwarves, gnolls, gnomes, and dragons with her spirit and sent them forth to spread life across the universe. Ysim saw this and became enraged. The races of humans, halflings, orcs, goblins and giants were sent to Grenholm to bring order and prevent the spread of Hadari's creations, for only when Hadari undoes Grenholm will Ysim remove the curse of pain and blood.

A Brief Introduction to Grenholm

The children of Ysim and the children of Hadari have been constantly at war with one another. Although children of each deity will generally work with one another, they are not without their own conflicts. Among the children of Ysim, halflings are suspicious of goblins, and humans are contentious with orcs. Among the children of Hadari, elves distrust gnolls, and dwarves are wary of gnomes. Dragons and Giants both serve as ambassadors among the other children. Under no circumstances can children of one deity tolerate those of the other, but it is not unheard of for those captured on the field of battle to be forced into servitude.

Rarely the circumstances of slavery have led to the birth of half-breeds. In general both races kill any such offspring on or before birth, although certain sects of both Ysim and Hadari have attempted to raise the half-breeds in hopes that their better nature will dominate. Many leaders have found half-breeds to be valuable spies, but generally they are shunned if not outright attacked by the general populous, so they often hide their appearances.

In addition to the children of Ysim and Hadari, lesser Grenmari have used Grenholm for their experiments in life. Such aberrations are reviled by both the children of Ysim and Hadari. Both children also equally despise heretics, or those who have renounced their devotion to their deity. Usually the heretics are isolated individuals, but rumors have recently emerged of a group calling itself 'The Cradle' that seeks to unite the heretics under a single banner.

Heretics have become more prevalent in the five years since the Battle of Blood Moor. After years of conflict, the once great plains of Assini were covered in the bodies of millions of both the children of Ysim and the children of Hadari. Blood soaked the earth so thoroughly that the conjurers of both armies were
readily calling forth their most destructive enchantments. During a particularly bloody conflict a light was seen in the sky before a furious inferno laid waste to both armies. Those that survived often claim that they saw their deity within the conflagration. Since that time none have dared to venture into the plains of Assini, now called Blood Moor for the numerous pools of blood still visible in the fields, and the only battles being fought are skirmishes in the Calderon Mountains.

**The Children of Ysim**

The children of Ysim are currently ruled by King Feisel, a human. Well respected by the orcs for his strength in battle, King Feisel also has a reputation for being just and kind. However, it is also known that he has not seen the field of battle in over ten years and it is widely anticipated that a young challenger may soon remove Feisel from the throne.

**The Children of Hadari**

The children of Hadari lost their leader, Kristani, a young elf, in the battle of Blood Moor. After the devastation of the battle the gnomes and dwarves went to war, preventing any conference with the gnolls and elves to choose a leader. The dragon Trysepta has been acting as the leader at the request of the elves and gnolls.

**Environment and Time**

Grenholm has a ring of ice and stone, the chain, two moons, Styga and Hunar, and its sun is Fyr, the heart star. Portions of the chain are visible at night near the horizons, otherwise it appears only as a slightly darker band in the daylit sky. Styga and Hunar are about the same size and always appear in opposite hemispheres of the sky. Styga has a slight blue tint, while Hunar is usually white, but occasionally appears in shades of red or orange. Fyr, the sun, is a rich golden color with occasional spots of red.

Time is measured in hours, days, months, and years. Each day is 24 hours long and each month is 30 days, which are divided into six day segments, called weeks. A year is 310 days long, or ten months and ten days. The moons both experience a full phase progression each month. Holidays are celebrated based on a solar calendar rather than the lunar calendar. Festivals mark each of the four seasons and a tournament is held by all towns at the new year and the half year. These tournaments are used to determine ranks in the military and identify and assign young recruits.

**Special Magic Rules**

Both arcane and divine magics function normally in Grenholm, but they are closely tied to blood. As a move equivalent action, any arcane or divine caster can draw blood from a willing participant within reach (for the purposes of this ability a dead creature is considered willing) to augment their spells, treating them as one level higher than usual. This process results in 1 point of Constitution damage per spell level being augmented to the willing creature. The blood of dead creatures is less useful and can only augment one spell level per body, in addition the corpse can be no more than a day old.

In Blood Moor only, casters can spend a full round drawing blood to apply a metamagic feat to the spell they cast in the following round.

**Special Combat Rules**

Tournaments require special equipment and combat rules and large scale warfare requires several special
rules. In general, the rules are those outlined in 'Complete Warrior', with the following additions.

Archery: Advanced tournaments require participants to hit the chinks on suits of armor. The chink is considered a fine target with an armor bonus equal to that of the suit (AC13 + Armor Bonus)

Duels: Unlike a joust, which uses blunted weapons, a duel uses real weapons and serves as a demonstration of skill rather than brute strength, as such it follows a special set of rules. First, Initiative is rolled each round. Second, after initiative each combatant makes an opposed intelligence check with a special bonus equal to their base attack bonus to read their opponent, the winner gets a +2 bonus on their attack roll, defense roll, and saving throws. Third, each combatant makes only one attack roll, opposed by a special defense roll (1d20+AC-10+½BAB). A roll of a natural 20 on an attack roll results in a free sunder, disarm, or trip attempt instead of threatening a critical hit, these free attempts do not provoke attacks of opportunity. A natural 20 on the defense roll results in either an immediate counterattack, treat this as an attack of opportunity, or a free disarm attempt against the attacker, this disarm attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Because the attacks are not meant to kill, strength is not applied to damage. This process repeats until one combatant concede or the prearranged conditions of victory are met. Typical conditions include first to draw blood (consider any combatant who sustains damage from a slashing or piercing weapon or who losses 10% of their total hp from a bludgeoning weapon to be bleeding), first to three hits, first to disarm their opponent, or first to trip their opponent. Other more creative conditions could also be made, so long as both combatants agree. If a combatant chooses to use brutal force, by either taking multiple attacks, applying their strength bonus to damage, attempting a critical hit, or using an unauthorized weapon or ability they are disqualified.

Magic Duels: There are three types of magical duels; mastery duels, combat duels, and summoning duels. In mastery duels, casters simultaneously cast the same spell and roll opposed spellcraft checks to determine which spell dominates. The winner of a mastery duel is the caster who casts more dominating spells after the full set of spells agreed upon have been cast. In a combat duel each caster takes turns casting a spell, while their opponent attempts to counterspell. The winner is usually the first combatant to effect their opponent with a spell, but other conditions could be decided. In summoning duels, the casters agree on a summoning spell or series of spells and summon monsters to fight each other. The winner is the caster who has lost the least number of summoned creatures after an agreed amount of time. Typically a trained healer arbitrates these contests so that in cases of a tie they can declare the winner based on the condition of the surviving creatures.

The Dead and Undead

Death in Grenholm is usually considered final. Although magics have been developed to raise the dead, they are typically only used to correct mishaps in the tournaments. This is partially due to the prohibitive price for the spells, and partially a cultural issue. Dying on the field of battle is considered honorable, and it is assumed most dead soldiers would not wish to return. However, the wealthy will sometimes arrange for revival, but even this is still rare. Occasionally a rogue caster has revived people against their will as undead, such casters are severely punished.

Other undead have arisen naturally from the corpses of murders, rapists, arsonists, and other disreputable members of society. When it was noticed that these occurrences increased when the individual met a violent end, corporal punishment was banned. However, there are still cases where undead spirits will arise from the graves of both criminals and their victims, causing many arcane researches to opt for cremation out of fear that the earth contaminates bodies and forces them to rise in a mockery of life. Each faction blames the other's deity for this blight.
The Known World