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Runedar Lore Write-up, October 7th

Karnoss's Revolution

So, we had some discussion and disagreement on how to best handle Karnoss's overthrow of Argon. But, as it's a key point of Argon's backstory, I figured I'd throw out a new draft. Before I really get into it, though I do want to explain something: I think it would be wise to make at least *part* of Argon's fall due to his own failings or naivete.

The reason is that flawless characters, or those whose flaws don't seem to come with real consequences, feel unbelievable and unrelatable for people. If, however, we have a hero who fell from group because he failed to do something-- especially if he decided to do the "nice" thing when he should have done the smart thing-- it allows players to connect with, care for, and relate to the character. These don't have to be grandiose failings, and we don't need to make everyone into a nihilistic character study, but people should have flaws and those flaws should have an affect on their life.

With that said, here is my current idea: We'll keep what was said before about the history of Argon's early life and his father, as well as the fact that Karnoss is Argon's uncle. But, either Argon's father and Karnoss were twins, or Argon's father was older. Either way, Karnoss showed far more aptitude in the military realm than the domestic, while Argon's father proved to be a great domestic leader and wound up with the crown (I'll leave whether they were twins or not up to you, Blade). Karnoss, being power-hungry and viewing himself as the "defender of the kingdom," believed that *he* should rule the kingdom, and never quite forgave Argon's father.

Fast forward to Argon's early life, where he seemed a little more concerned with tinkering and exploration as a youth. But, after becoming a king at a relatively young age (his father died somewhat unexpectedly), he worked hard to adapt. Still, he had a taste for progress, experimentation, and domestic duties, with the idea that he'd follow in his father's footsteps... even if the other leaders saw him as a touch unorthodox. There was some fumbling around, but he learned to be a good king, and his policies were generally good.

Still, he left military affairs almost entirely up to Karnoss, partly out of disinterest for them, and maybe even a sense that they weren't wholly necessary. Either way, Karnoss saw this as incredibly naive and backwards, believing a king to be a military commander above all else. Unfortunately for Argon, some old-school leaders (and new ones) agreed, and Karnoss was able to convince supporters that Argon's "selective" style of rule was a continuation of his youthful tinkering and irresponsibility (which wasn't entirely true), and got more and more people backing him... especially the military that he'd been leading since Argon's father's rule.

Then came Argon's major mistake: he overestimated himself, and underestimated Karnoss. He was too nice, and too inexperienced to think that someone could be so callous and so effective. Either way, Karnoss staged a quick coup and with the military at his back, Argon barely had time to react. His supporters were jailed and exiled, maybe even executed if you want it to get really dark. Karnoss realized that Argon was too kind to risk executing, and agreed to exile him. Realizing an assassination attempt would probably follow, Argon didn't wait: he snatched that map of the Veins of the World and left.

If that works for you, we can start to adapt the rest, as well, if it needs changing. And, if there's any parts you don't like, the rest might still be able to stand.

The Origin of the Obelisks

I figure this will take some back and forth to figure out, but I figure they're such an important centerpiece of the world and story that we should start exploring their origin.

The continent (or island) the game takes place on seems to be relatively small but geographically and ecologically diverse. One downside of this is that ecological disasters have the potential to absolutely *wreck* the entire area for years to come. With that in mind...

I'm thinking this happened centuries ago. Long enough that it's mostly spoken of in rumors, or in history books so filled with mythology that people don't know what's real and what's false. But, it occurred near the dawn of the major civilizations on this island. Some may have migrated, while others may have grown here. I'll leave that up to your personal tastes, Blade. But, it was still so early that each group was still *mostly* located in the same area it arrived in. They simply hadn't had time to intermix. Some were growing kingdoms (I figure the Dwarves would do that early on), others had sorts of collectives with central cities (the elves), and still others were loosely-associated villages (humans). More likely than not, this will be up to the terrain.

Either way, the groups were each getting on the verge of being large enough to start mingling with the other groups... then things went south. It came first as floods and hurricanes. Droughts followed. People held out hope for reprieve, but the droughts and disasters went on for years and years. Eventually, there wasn't enough food to go around. Groups banded to whoever was closest and most familiar... which, due to still being centered on where they first arrived, was largely broken along group-based lines. Elves, Dwarves, Beastmen, and Humans each created their first homogenous kingdoms. Likely, there were a few odd-ones-out, places where the groups had already mixed and decided to become their own fighting force, or to run from the fighting altogether (we could use these groups later). Anyway, desperate for food to support their people, the kingdoms began to fight, hoping to steal food and farmland, unaware that things were bleak all over, each desperate enough to think that the other groups were hoarding secret stores of food, somewhere. People go nuts during famines, after all.

These wars over food and farmland stretched on for a bloody few decades, then the droughts finally ended. But, with so much blood in their history, the wars continued, and grew *more*

bloody now that the increase in agriculture allowed for more people and better tech. Enough so that some groups realized that, there might be a continent-wide collapse if another drought hits in the middle of the fighting. They needed to separate everyone, or find a way to discourage them from coveting each others' land.

The "how" of this I haven't quite figured out. But, they knew there was a network of highly magical "roots" under the continent. Great sources of power. And, desperate for some way to stop the fighting, they came up with a severe solution-- they'd link this root network to giant magical Obelisks. While they couldn't find a way to ban kingdoms from interacting with one another... they could link these obelisks to certain mana signatures. And the only ones they were sure they could hit were the distinct mana "fingerprints" of each group. Knowing that the kingdoms were *mostly* still divided along group-based lines, they encouraged each group to sign a treaty, and set up the Obelisks in what became the first capital cities of each kingdom.

Over the centuries, this organizing group has mostly been forgotten. Those who remember them think of them as a myth, and most leaders see the Obelisks as a sort of fluke, just a natural part of the landscape that so happens to separate kingdoms.

Argon, of course, always thought there must be more to them than that. And, these days, he's begun to realize that his map of the Veins of the World is *exceedingly* old.

Intrakingdom Obelisk Effects

As one, super-short final note, I was thinking that the effectiveness of the Obelisks weakens as you get further away. As a result, many of the kingdoms may have an unspoken class system, where the more powerful stay closer to the capital cities and the beneficial effects of the Obelisks. This could have also resulted in interesting social structures. For instance, some may have set up their capital cities in the middle of farmland, creating a society whose "higher ups" are all farmers and agriculture workers. Just a thought I had. Feels like it might work for the beastmen, being as strong as they are. Could make them a very "salt of the earth" kinda group.