

Elven House of Azazel

The House of Azazel is an ancient Elven house, one of the few still in existence due to the Elf-Dwarf War. Though members of this house have altered their surname over time, its traditions have survived the ages.

History

Azazel nobles can trace their lineage back to Lictalon himself, even to the Age of Chaos. While this has advantages, it also makes them targets for groups such as the Zealotry (see **Library of Bletherad**, p.66) and the Purifiers. In addition to being Lictalon's descendants (some would claim they were descendants only of Lictalon and demon temptresses), the House of Azazel is the most adept of all the ancient noble houses in the ways of magic. There are rumors that the ruins of Azazel fortresses and cities still hold the secrets to lost magicks and countless magical trinkets. (**Note:** Azazel has not yet launched any expeditions to locate their lost fortresses or cities. While scavengers and bandits have stumbled upon a few, most remain hidden, their treasures buried beneath layers of dust.)

During the Elf-Dwarf War, House Azazel was one of the houses governing over the Golden City of Baalgor prior to its destruction by the Dwarves and the Circle of Absolute Elemental Power. In the final days of the War, many of the younger nobles were smuggled out of the city and across the Sea of Scarlet Waters. Some of the braver (some might say foolhardy) nobles faced the dangers of the Baalgor Mountains and entered the Yin-Sloth Jungles. Whether the latter endured to the Age of Mankind is yet unknown.

Those nobles who were smuggled out and forged their way north found themselves forced to adapt in subsequent centuries. As the age of Elf and Dwarf came to a close and the rise of mankind was felt all over the globe, Azazel nobles found themselves forced to blend into human cities or find refuge in the secluded wilderness. In the remote Vequerrel Woodlands, two noble houses, Azazel and Skaaryl-Ra, began to intermarry. Though some of the nobles refused to contaminate their bloodline, others were forced to face the facts in order to perpetuate their species in a time where they were faced with a very real possibility of extinction.

From the elaborate and decadent cities of the Western Empire to the forests of the feudal Eastern Territories, Azazel nobles (some bearing the surname "Azalon") have persevered and served in the courts of kings and emperors, dictators and monarchs. Only through using their magic and populating the globe have they been able to escape the purges carried out by fanatical organizations devoted to the destruction of history and magic in all its forms.

Current Events

In recent centuries, the nobles have worked to rebuild their shattered house in the forests of the East. They began by holding the border of the Old Kingdom against the hordes of the monster races, allied with a number of the region's feudal lords. Frequently, after routing the raiders, the defending army would chase them back to their stronghold, plundering and then razing it. The survivors are placed in chains and sold as slave stock to nearby Timiro (and on occasion, some of the other feudal kingdoms).

The spoils of war resulting from this tactic funded House Azazel's military, the building of cities and fortifications, and even the construction of a new vault for the Azazel library. The new library vault lies beneath the palace in Azlus, their capital, and is a well-guarded secret. Only House nobles are allowed to access the library and only the most elite Royal Guard oversee its protection. In addition to the library, a second, heavily guarded (both by Elven guards and magic) vault contains the few treasures of the House. Special magical items, including the House's coat of arms, are kept beneath the palace, only brought into the light of day when all other alternatives have been exhausted.

Since establishing their capital, which is named for the founder nearly 400 years ago, House Azazel has slowly expanded their kingdom the breadth of the border with the Old Kingdom. This has left the fledgling kingdom (officially called the Great Kingdom of Blackmoor) under constant political scrutiny by diplomats and spies alike from many of the other feudal kingdoms. There are even rumors circulating that the Azazel nobles are actually demons, citing strange tales of children born with horns and sharp teeth as

evidence. Most dismiss these folk stories as pure fiction, claiming that no demon would aid any mortal kingdoms in the way that House Azazel has against incursions from the Old Kingdom. Strangely, the Elven nobles will not deny the rumors, causing even their supporters to doubt their beliefs.

GM Note: The rumors are indeed true, at least in part. While occupying the realm of Hades, Lictalon had a number of mistresses, especially Succubi. This has resulted in a few... odd... genes. Every few generations a son or daughter will be born with some type of deformity (see the table at the end of this history to randomly determine a characteristic or choose one that you feel is appropriate).

Geography

The Kingdom of Blackmoor lies along the Old Kingdom River, south of Veil Lake, Neven, and Hadrian's Cove (roughly 50 miles of ogre, orc, and goblin infested wilderness between their domains). Much of the region is rich in hardwood forests that have created a lucrative logging industry, much to the annoyance of the natives, and rolling plains suitable for farming covers the remaining land area. The nomadic Danzi or local Ogre tribes occasionally target Blackmoor's logging camps.

Blackmoor has signed The Charter of Dominion and uses standard Dominion currency. Caravans generally depart for Hadrian's cove every other day, with a four-day round trip to and from the Cove and three days at market. The caravans return with cloths, dyes, and other textiles, as well as flour, grains, and similar goods. The kingdom also possesses its own vineyards and grows grapes and strawberries for use in the infamous Elven wines.

Total Population: 500,000

Total Land Area: 50,000 square miles

Elves – 65%

Humans – 15%

Gnomes – 6%

Wolfen – 2%

Titans – 1%

Other – 11% (Mostly Goblins, Kobolds, and the occasional dwarf; but does include just about every mortal race on Palladia)

Though House Azazel has not purposely spread word of a new Elven Kingdom, dozens of Elven pilgrims and settlers arrive every week during the late spring and throughout the summer, longing to live under a united banner and return to the glory days of the once-great Elven Empire. Many even hope to correct the mistakes of ancient history.

The Azazel nobles are proud that the Kingdom is prospering, however, they are also faced with the very real problem of resources. Not wishing to start any more wars with the well-protected kingdoms of the East, the nobles have begun to look toward West and have begun to formulate plans to expand into the Old Kingdom. Azazel has even worked to strengthen ties with the other kingdoms by forging trade agreements (exporting timber and grain to the Western Empire and importing additional foodstuffs, ore, and cattle). Commerce is conducted with the standard Dominion Crown (see **Eastern Territories**, p. 13 for additional information on currency).

Military

The kingdom's army is formidable with a full battalion of wizards (divided into three companies) and two full companies of rangers (used for reconnaissance and surgical strikes). In addition to the standard denominations of infantry, archers, scouts, cavalry, and battle mages (wizards), the kingdom also houses one of the largest air forces in the world. Troops fly atop domesticated Pegasi to battle as both cavalry and forward scouts.

Finally, the kingdom's navy, while in existence, is very small, even when compared to other feudal kingdoms of the Eastern Territories. So far, only three large ships (frigates/cutters) have been completed in addition to a miniscule fleet of six small, patrol vessels. Currently, the kingdom has two more large ships and another half-dozen patrol ships in production. Two additional patrol ships and one frigate should be complete within a year. Most of the shipbuilding is done along the Old Kingdom River, but the larger ships are constructed at a contracted shipyard in Llorn. While the Llornian government ensures the

shipyards compliance with laws, Blackmoor provides all its own supplies, buying any others that it requires. This has led to a lucrative business in caravan guarding between Blackmoor logging towns and the city thanks to the presence of the orc, goblin, and ogre tribes in the region.

Additional wizards are trained at the Wizard's Academy in Azlus, while most of the Pegasus Riders are born into the job (typically the first-born son or the second-born daughter).

Diplomatic Relations

Other Feudal Kingdoms: No embassies in place, but Blackmoor does keep in contact and trade regularly. They have good relations with some and not others (it depends on the rulers). All are suspicious and concerned about the Elves' growing power and what it will mean to them regardless of whether they are friendly or not.

Timiro Kingdom: Blackmoor maintains a formal embassy in Credia. Trade is increasing, but problems are brewing in settling the borders of the two nations. Primarily, Timiro is concerned with Blackmoor's plans for expansion. For now, Timiro keeps their objections silent.

Eastern Territory: The Dominion as a whole maintains a formal embassy in Azlus (as Blackmoor does in the Territorial Capital). Most members of the confederation don't give the Elves much thought. Those that do are not very happy with the Elves right now (see Wolfen Empire).

Phi & Lopan: Each maintains a formal embassy and has excellent relations since both islands used to be part of the Elven Empire and still house large concentrations of Elves.

Coalition of Merchants Guild: Indifferent, even toward The Collectors, Blackmoor recognizes the legitimacy of the Guild because of the use of the standard currency. Azlus does not house any Guild offices, but there has been talk of negotiations. Unfortunately, some kingdoms would prefer not to see this event take place.

Kingdom of Bizantium: No formal embassy exists at this time. A wealthy Bizantium merchant is empowered to speak on the behalf of Bizantine government should the need arise. Trade has been increasing as the Blackmoor's commerce begins to impact the world markets.

Western Empire: Good relations due to the Elves' long history in the Western Empire; nonetheless, none of the Empire's diplomats are trusted. The Elves have an appreciation of the good parts of the Western Empire's culture and are prepared for its brand of politics. Trade is increasing, especially with the Old Kingdom Frontier region of the Empire, as Blackmoor develops.

Land of the South Winds: No formal embassy is maintained, but, as with Bizantium, a South Winds merchant is empowered to speak on the behalf of his government should the need arise. The South Winds simply can't afford another embassy to a small nation. Trade is picking up simply because the two are so close together.

Wolfen Empire: Much to the anger of the Eastern kingdoms, Blackmoor has recently recognized the Wolfen Empire and is allowing them to build an embassy in Azlus. One reason is that the Elves intend to increase their trade in the Great Northern Wilderness. The second is that the Elves hope to be able to intercede between the Wolfen and Humans and keep them from repeating history (the Azazel nobles see many parallels between the Elf-Dwarf War and the brewing conflict between the Eastern Territories and the Wolfen Empire).

Dwarven Kingdoms: The Elves and Dwarves continue to ignore each other (which is considered a good relationship). The Elves are considering sending a delegation to the Dwarves at Acoroc (see **Old Ones**) and Northholme (see **Eastern Territory**) to see if a formal agreement of non-aggression ("cold shoulder"), and possibly future trade, can be reached. Current, Blackmoor only lacks a competent sucker for the job.

Isle of Cyclops: The two nations each do not acknowledge the others existence both nations prefer it this way.

Kingdom of Giants (Mt. Nimro): These races have hated the Elves for much of recorded history. The feeling is mutual.

Titans: The Elves still mourn over the loss of their ancient friends. Titans have mixed feelings regarding the formation of a new Elven Kingdom. For this reason, a number of Titans have been sent to Blackmoor to keep an eye on it.

Church Tolmeti: The nobles of House Azazel refuse to believe that one of their ancestors could ever have associated with such an evil, deceitful, and notorious goddess. While Tolmet is angered by their denouncement, she has done nothing to retaliate yet.

Deformities

As mentioned previously, once every few generations one or more of the noble children is born with some strange deformity (01-45% chance), likely due to a partial lineage of Succubi or other demon.

01-15 **Horns:** A pair of curved black horns protrudes from the noble's forehead. The horns can be removed through magic and careful use of a saw, but the scars will always be apparent. If the horns are left alone, a head butt will do +1D6 damage.

16-20 **Pointed Teeth:** Not just pointed canines, but all of the person's teeth come to a definite and sharp point. The deformity can be hidden by filing the teeth down, but it would be rather painful, not to mention difficult, to get all the teeth. Bite Damage is 2D4.

21-30 **Affinity with Magic:** Similar to the Dwarven affinity with the earth, the character has a basic understanding of magic giving even non-mages the skills to recognize enchantment and recognize magic the same as a Wizard. If the character is a wizard, the character gets a one-time +15% bonus to these skills.

As a Wizard, he/she also gets as a +15% bonus to the success of Enchanted Cauldron, a +15% to avoid any insanity from the cauldron, and a +15% bonus to successfully convert scrolls as well.

A Diabolist gets a one-time +15% bonus to recognize and understand magic circles, use magic circles, and identify energized wards skills.

A Summoner receives a onetime +15% bonus to the skill of deciphering circles.

Should the character practice two or more areas of magic he gets all of the bonuses with the exception that they do not double up. For example, an alchemist from this family and with this deformity would get the +15% bonus to the success of Enchanted Cauldron, a +15% to avoid any insanity from the cauldron, and a +15% bonus to successfully convert scrolls, +15% identify energized wards, +15% bonus to the skill of deciphering circles, but would only get a +15% to recognize enchantment and recognize magic not a +45%.

31-40 **Skin Discoloration:** The noble's skin has a visible reddish or reddish-brown hue to it. This deformity is nearly impossible to hide and often causes the noble to be exiled to avoid embarrassment. In more recent years, the noble has been allowed to stay, but must remain out of the public eye (often the attending healer is killed to silence him or her).

41-45 **Tail:** The noble has a small, serpentine tail (one to three feet in length, about one inch diameter and tapering near the end). Shorter tails can easily be hidden beneath trousers, while longer ones require a cloak. A "whip" strike with the tail does 1D6 damage.

46-50 **Affinity with Demons:** The character is not considered by Demons to be a mortal. They think of the character as a fellow Demon. This doesn't mean that the Demon will aid or be nice to the character; after all a Demon is a Demon. However, the character is not seen as natural prey by Demons. As such, Demons are far more likely to cooperate with and leave unharmed the character. The Demon would feel far less anger in having to serve such a character than a regular mage. It would be used to being forced to serve the more powerful of its types considering such service natural and would consider this bondage to be the same.

51-62 **Clawed Hands:** The noble's hands end in razor sharp claws. Provide the noble remains well groomed, the claws can be kept short. Damage from a claw strike is 1D6+2.

63-75 **Odd Tastes:** The noble has a strange tendency of cannibalism, and a taste for raw flesh in general.

general.

- 76-83 **Disfigured:** The noble is horribly disfigured (PB 1D6), but has been granted the ability to see the invisible.
- 84-95 **Tufted Ears:** The noble has tufts of hair at the tips of his or her ears.
- 96-00 **Wings:** Much like Baalrogs, the noble has a pair of bat-like wings protruding from his or her back. The character has the ability to fly (innately learned). As with the skin discoloration, the disfigurement is impossible to hide leading to exile or forced hiding. Surgery in the noble's infancy is an option, but very risky and rarely pursued.

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