

Player Aid: living in Abandon

Oppressed

All live in fear of the **Wolf**, a lesser deity who conquered the land generations ago. His brutal and cruel followers are known as the **Sons of the Wolf**, who have been known to hew entire towns to the dust just, apparently, at a whim. While the Sons are officially both the military and policing force of the nation, they seem to rarely do either.

The Wolf rules from his **Throne** – an unmitigated evil, a powerful artifact that draws strength from fear, misery and hopelessness. Each full moon he gathers power by performing a profane ritual known as **the howl**; terrorizing everyone in the country up with trembling and fear. The Wolf lives at the top of an enormous mountain, **the Spire**, the heights of it a sheer tower that rises high above the perpetual clouds of autumn.

Steeped in poverty

Most commoners earn a single copper piece a day (the D&D standard is 1 silver piece a day). People are *poor*. Bread is *scarce*. Almost all national wealth is hoarded and squandered by the military. Any roads just about anywhere the heroes will want to travel are run down and poor.

While characters do gain and, indeed, exceed normal wealth for a D&D game, they still start poor unless they are military. No character, despite being level 2, owns more than 1 weapon and one suit of appropriate armor. Money, life, and strength, all “belong” to the Wolf in Abandon.

Low magic adventure - initially

It is vital to understand that this campaign begins as a low magic campaign. This means that PCs have probably never seen a magic item or a magical spell – at least without it being used to terrify or control them.

Wizards and clerics must study in secret, often for years and without proper training. Clerics do not know the correct rituals to appease their deity; the voice of

the Gods is scarcely heard amongst this downtrodden populace. Clerics of Good deities learn quickly to hide their power. Wizards have had to piece together their research with only sporadic clues and possibly a single spell scroll. Even sorcerers, warlocks and others are mysteriously weak for some unknown reason. Magical items must be hidden for fear of being claimed by a capricious and heartless military.

All spell casters begin with only *one spell* per spell level (though they do have the usual number of spell slots, etc.). PCs only gain new spells at the direct imposition of a deity. Even so, anyone else who knows the PC possesses this power will fear and revere them mightily for it.

Yet this also means that any magic the PCs manifest might be the first time they’ve ever seen it. And as new powers manifest it’s a topic of great interest. Feel free to stretch out the mystique, for example, as sorcerers gain new spells they may be completely unaware until they mystically manifest it at propitious times. This is intended to put the magic back into being, well, magical. Also, everything is blown out of proportion by a superstitious and hope-starved people. *Wind wall* is a supernatural gale that can level forests. A +2 thundering maul has thrown down mountains. A wizard with *charm person* can control the minds of others and force them to do unspeakable things. As the heroes gain powers, they too can get caught up in the dramatic hyperbole that surrounds those who wield magic of any kind.

It will be useful to give your DM a list of the spells and the order you hope your PC will gain their magical abilities, as such do accrue quickly in game when the need is indeed very great. Magic “belongs” to the Wolf in Abandon.

Races

Almost everyone is human. Most other races are sent into hiding or exile, or interbred with the humans. Full blooded races are rare and treated with some suspicion.