



## Brevoy

**B**e it known that, as it has been seven months to the day since the disappearance of King Urzen Rogarvia and his heirs and kin, and furthermore that no true bearer of the blood and rights of Choral the Conqueror has been found in all the land, for the good of the Nation of Brevoy and its people it is so declared that Lord Noleski Surtova, right wise Regent of the Dragonscale Throne, by virtue of descent from the line of Nikos Surtova and Myrna Rogarvia, daughter of Choral the Conqueror, shall henceforth be honored as King of All Brevoy, in the Name of Choral, Lord of Issia and Prince of Rostland, Suzerain of New Stetven, Overlord of Restov, and Defender of the Lake of Mists and Veils. His heirs shall follow him in the rights to these titles, unto the ages.

So witnessed and sealed on this 21st Day of Ruthora, in the Year 4699, Absalom Reckoning.

—Public declaration of King Noleski's ascent to the Dragonscale Throne



In the far northern reaches toward the Crown of the World, the land and its people become harsh and unforgiving. Winters are long and deadly here, forcing common folk to scratch out a sustainable existence from near-frozen soil during an all-too-short spring and summer. All the while, the lords of the land plot in their keeps and strongholds, jealously eyeing their neighbors' domains. For centuries, the firm and forceful hand of Choral the Conqueror's lineage has held these nobles in check, but in 4699 AR, the royal house of Brevoy vanished, leaving the kingdom in turmoil. House Surtova took the contested crown, yet not all of Brevoy agreed that the new king had the right to rule. In the decade that followed, noble ambitions burned hotter even than the hearth fires working to drive away the chill of winter, and now all of Brevoy lies on the edge of civil war.

## HISTORY

The history of Brevoy is actually the history of two lands, Issia and Rostland, united into one by force.

Issia, the northern half of the nation, has been sparsely settled for centuries. Numerous small villages cluster on the southern shore of the Lake of Mists and Veils and in the foothills of the mountains to the east. With the land too rocky and cold elsewhere for proper farming, the people of Issia survived on a combination of fishing and raiding—the most successful tribes even venturing across the great lake to sack settlements along its western or northern shores.

Rostland, south of Lake Reykal and the Gronzi Forest, is quite different than Issia—a vast stretch of rolling hills and grasslands fed by the East Sellen River and its tributaries. Taldan colonists settled this area centuries ago under the leadership of Baron Sirian First, who became Sirian Aldori, first of the Aldori swordlords.

## CHORAL THE CONQUEROR

In 4499 AR, the Iobarian warlord Choral Rogarvia, known as “the Conqueror,” crossed the Lake of Mists and Veils with a considerable force under his command. Lord Nikos Surtova of Issia met with the Conqueror on the shores of the lake under a flag of truce, and there the two men worked out an agreement whereby Issia would surrender its land and people to the Conqueror but the Surtovas would retain their power and wealth, serving the new ruler as stewards and duly sworn vassal lords.

The Aldori swordlords of Rostland, with their history of resisting bandit raiders, were not so willing to bend their knees to a foreign conqueror. They immediately rallied for war and secured their strongholds south of Lake Reykal. Yet the fractious swordlords were no match for the discipline and tactics of Choral's forces. By the time the survivors of the war against the Conqueror were able to unite in a last

assault, they believed they had cornered part of Choral's force in a narrow mountain valley. When the swordlords entered, the Conqueror unleashed his greatest weapon—a pair of red dragons. The devastation inflicted by these monsters upon the swordlords was the final blow, and with this fiery defeat Rostland pledged itself to Choral the Conqueror as a way to save its traditions from eradication.

## THE VANISHING

The Conqueror sat only briefly on the Dragonscale Throne of the new nation he forged, soon leaving his family to rule in his name. For two centuries, the Rogarvias held the Ruby Fortress and ruled from New Stetven, pacifying minor uprisings and rebellions, and working to weld two disparate lands into one. Under Rogarvian rule, the nation came to be known as Brevoy and grew into a significant northern power. Yet even the greatest of dynasties do not last forever.

In the middle of winter in early 4699 AR, every member of House Rogarvia vanished without a trace. Rumors flew of palace coups and sinister plots, but it quickly became clear that what had occurred was something altogether stranger than a mere rebellion. There was no evidence of foul play or struggle within the royal palace, nor in any of the noble villas owned by the Rogarvias throughout the land—the nobles were simply gone, leaving empty manors scattered across Brevoy. A brief period of chaos and panic followed, but by the end of the year, the Surtovas had made their move. Citing their age-old ties with the Conqueror's line, they were quick to seize power in New Stetven and extend their reach across Brevoy. With all of Issia seemingly backing the move, Rostland (whose standing army and defenses had increasingly shifted north during Rogarvian rule) had little choice but to bend its knee again. Today, King Noleski Surtova holds the Ruby Fortress and the Dragonscale Throne, yet it remains to be seen how long he can maintain this rule over a kingdom growing increasingly fractious.

## GEOGRAPHY

Brevoy is divided into two lands historically, culturally, and geographically. The vast Lake of Mists and Veils forms the northern border of Brevoy, bound in ice during the winter months, the domain of fishing vessels, merchant ships, and the pirates who prey upon them the rest of the year. The Awzera and East Sellen Rivers, along with the dark depths of the Gronzi Forest, divide the nation into north and south. The Golushkin Mountains south of Port Ice mark the western border, while the Icerime Peaks to the east form a barrier with the old lands of Iobaria beyond.

The northern half of Brevoy, Issia, is a broken expanse of rugged, rocky hills stretching between the bordering mountain ranges of the Icerime Peaks and the Golushkin Mountains, with the lone peak of Mount Veshka rising in its midst. Small, windswept scrub and spiky grasses are

## Brevoy at a Glance

Brevoy's government is a hereditary monarchy ruled by a king, although many (particularly those dwelling in the southern region known as Rostland) privately contest the current king's right to rule.

**Terrain:** Mountainous and rocky plains to the north, rolling hills and grasslands to the south, with a large region of forest in the east. Brevoy's highest point is Mount Veshka in the north-central area of the nation. Its lowlands are centered on Lake Reykal in the south-central region.

**Capital:** New Stetven (population 32,850)

**Notable Settlements:** Grayhaven (population 5,880), Port Ice (population 13,260), Restov (population 18,670), Skywatch (population 6,590)

**Ruler:** King Noleski Surtova

**Languages:** Common, Hallit, Skald, Varisian, Draconic

**Religions:** Abadar, Erastil (rare), Gorum, Lamashtu (outlawed), Pharasma

**Imports:** Spices, cloth, exotic curiosities

**Exports:** Grains, fish and shellfish, timber, iron, copper, fur, salt, liquor

all that grow in the rocky soil, save for in small, painstakingly tended plots and in some of the more fertile areas long the lakeshore (which must deal instead with storm surges, floods, and other hazards of equal concern). The mountains offer plentiful stone for quarrying and building, and occasional veins of metals and precious stones for mining, although the locals are generally poor at mining.

Compared to the land north of Lake Reykal, Rostland is a gentle and fertile place of grassy plains and rolling hills. Watered by the lake and rivers, Rostland's soil is better suited for farming, and the mountains and forest help to blunt the worst of the storms that roll down off of the Lake of Mists and Veils. Still, Rostland is known for its chill winters and its long, slow, and muddy spring season. Rostland is relatively poor in minerals, so most construction is of wood, supplemented by local fieldstone. A few great structures, like the Ruby Fortress or the Bulwark of Gorum in New Stetven, are built with

imported stone, but otherwise even the great manor houses are built mainly of wood.

## CULTURE

"The dragon has two heads," goes the Brevic saying. Some see it as a reference to the dual nature of the nation's culture—Issian and Rostlandic—others to the division between the ambitious nobility and the often grasping priesthood, or between the noble houses and the self-proclaimed swordlords, all with the common people caught in the middle.

## THE LORDS OF THE LAND

Apart from the king and royal family, the highest ranking nobles in Brevoy are its lords—the heads of the noble houses. The lords of Brevoy are male; eldest sons inherit their father's estate and titles. Younger sons often receive some provision, but it need not be much under the law. Women exert influence through their husbands or sons, and may even rule as regents for sons who have not yet reached the age of majority (15 winters). Lords tend to have many children as a result, at least to secure a male "heir and a spare." This leads to various cadet branches and lines of houses, as well as alliances by marriage, such that in the past 200 years the seven major noble houses have become both more closely related and more widespread. There is an ever-greater demand for land and titles, and more young, disaffected nobility looking to make a mark in the world.

## GOLD, RED, AND BLACK

Although Brevans make it a point to honor all gods, three hold particular prominence among these hardy folk. Although worship of Erastil is not uncommon in far-flung rural areas, and cults of Lamashtu have a tenacious ability to endure all manner of cleansing crusade, the following three religions have the greatest influence over life in Brevoy.

**Abadar:** The Master of the First Vault is the unifying religious power in Brevoy, favored of the





merchant and tradesman class, as well as those nobles more interested in prosperity through trade and the rule of law than the iron fist of battle. Temples of Abadar are places of judgment and trade, and the bearers of his golden key are often invested as neutral judges or arbiters.

**Gorum:** Our Lord in Iron speaks to the needs and interests of the nobility of Brevoy: strength through force of arms and prowess in battle. The household priests of the great keeps and strongholds of the land are iron-clad followers of Gorum, wearing their red tabards and swinging iron censers heavy with pungent incense.

**Pharasma:** Our Lady of Gentle Repose is the divinity of the common people of Brevoy, more concerned with cultivation, birthing, and harvesting than wealth, and less involved in the outcome of battles than in the repercussions of the corpse-strewn fields they leave behind. Inhabitants of scattered villages are far more acquainted with the local bone-thrower, midwife, and black-clad mortician-monk than they are with the splendid clerics of Abadar or Gorum.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

The vast majority of the Brevic people are simple peasants, primarily farmers and craftspeople who owe their fealty (and their taxes) to one lord or another. A Brevic peasant's life is largely the same throughout Brevoy—up with the sun in the short spring and summer months to tend the fields in Rostland or fish and mine in Issia, with household chores filling the rest of the day. In the long, dark winter months there is no shortage of mending, brewing, carving, and cleaning. Men may visit the local tavern or taphouse in the evening, and such places host dances or revels perhaps two or three times a season. The wise man attends to his own house and avoids the attention of noble and priest alike, praying to all their gods simply for decent weather, good crops, a healthy family, and the peace with which to enjoy them.

## POLITICS

Seven great noble houses dominate the political landscape of Brevoy, most dating back to before the arrival of the Conqueror, when they existed as powerful tribes of raiders and barbarians. Choral apportioned lands and titles to those lords willing to pledge fealty to him, reordering the houses into their modern forms. The past two centuries, coupled with various marriages of alliance, have shifted and expanded the influence of the noble houses, extending well south of the rivers and Lake Reykal.

**House Garess:** The valleys and lowlands of the Golushkin Mountains are the domain of House Garess, founded on both the defensibility of the mountain terrain and the mineral wealth the house has brought out of the peaks for generations. House Garess once had a profitable alliance with a clan of dwarves living in the Golushkin Mountains,

## Brevic Wisdom

The people of Brevoy are known for their somewhat pessimistic (they would say “realistic”) view of life, summed up in the many expressions on the lips of every farmer, trader, traveler, and tavern regular. Common Brevic sayings include:

“When the wolf shows you his teeth, he’s not smiling.”

“Riders at night carry no glad tidings.”

“Winter always follows spring.”

“As the stars see me” (a common oath asserting the truth) and “The stars see all.”

“The dragon has two heads” (referring to both the crest of the Conqueror and the duplicity of the nobility).

“The temple is close, but the night is cold. The tavern is far, but I have a cloak.”

“Fire is everyone’s ally, but no one’s friend.”

“Pharasma makes cradles for us all.”

“No man dies wishing he had worked more.”

serving as brokers of a sort for the ores, metals, and worked goods the Golushkin dwarves produced. **Lord Howlan Garess** (LN male human aristocrat 5/expert 2) even took **Toval Golka** (N male dwarf aristocrat 2/expert 4), the son of the clan-chief of the dwarf hold, as his ward (some say more as a hostage than a guest in Grayhaven Castle). This proved fortunate for young Toval, as Grayhaven lost all contact with the dwarf hold of Golushkin during the same winter as the Vanishing. With his own son Bren lost inside the mountains, Lord Howlan, a widower with no other children, has named Toval his adoptive heir. This has earned the dwarf, now a skilled young warrior in his own right, few friends in Grayhaven.

House Garess’s crest is a snow-capped mountain peak in gray against a dark blue field like the sky, with a silvery crescent moon in the upper right corner and a black hammer across the base of the peak, head toward the left. Its motto is “Strong as the Mountains.”

**House Lebeda:** The Lebedas of Lake Reykal are known as the most “Rostlandic” of Brevoy’s noble houses, having inherited a good deal of Taldan blood and tradition, including a fondness for sword fighting and an appreciation of the finer things. Their family seat of Silverhall is one of the grandest castles in Brevoy, its spires rising above the shores of Lake Reykal. The Lebedas earn and maintain their fortune as merchants and brokers between the northern and southern reaches of Brevoy, and control much of the shipping across the lake. **Dame Sarrona Lebeda** (N female human aristocrat 11) has ruled the house as regent since the death of her husband, but their son **Lander** (LN male human aristocrat 2/warrior 1) is approaching his majority, when he will become lord



of the house. His older sister **Elanna** (NG female human aristocrat 4) spends a great deal of time representing their house in New Stetven, and rumors claim the Lebedas are looking to arrange a marriage between her and Noleski Surtova. Naturally, Natala Surtova hates the young and charming Elanna Lebeda with a passion.

House Lebeda's crest is a white swan, serenely sailing across a blue expanse, with the sun on the horizon behind it. Whether the sun is said to be rising or setting depends on the house's fortunes, but the Lebedas' sun appears ascendant at the moment. Its motto is "Success through Grace."

**House Lodovka:** Whereas House Surtova slowly changed their waterborne ways to focus on their lands and political affairs in Brevo, House Lodovka has remained strongly interested in maritime affairs. They have steadily grown their fleet of ships in the Lake of Mists and Veils and their influence along their lakeshore lands and the trade routes crossing the waters. House Lodovka claims comparatively little land in the northernmost areas of Brevo, and much of the land they hold is unsuitable for farming, but the house has many vessels hauling catches of fish and freshwater crabs from the Lake. **Lord Kozek Lodovka** (CG male human aristocrat 2/expert 3/warrior 2) is at heart a cunning old pirate with a love of the water, looking to do right by his house, his family, and his people.

House Lodovka's crest is a green-shelled crab climbing from the blue waters toward the gray band of shore surmounted by a gray tower-keep in the center, against a backdrop of black. Their house motto is "The Waters, Our Fields."

**House Medvyed:** The easternmost house, Medvyed claims lands nestled against the Icerime Peaks and the Gronzi Forest, and rules them from the fortress of Stoneclimb in the lower peaks. They are a hardy folk, raisers of mountain goats and sheep, hunters in the Gronzi Forest, and cultivators of what good land can be found on the edges of their harsh territory. The Medvyeds and their people hearken back to the "Old Ways" of worshiping nature in its myriad forms. Isolated forest and mountain shrines to Old Deadeye (and, it is rumored, Lamashtu) are more common than temples of Abadar or Gorum. **Lord Gurev Medvyed** (NG male human aristocrat 1/warrior 5) loves to

hunt, ride, and feast with his men, and dotes on his wife and children.

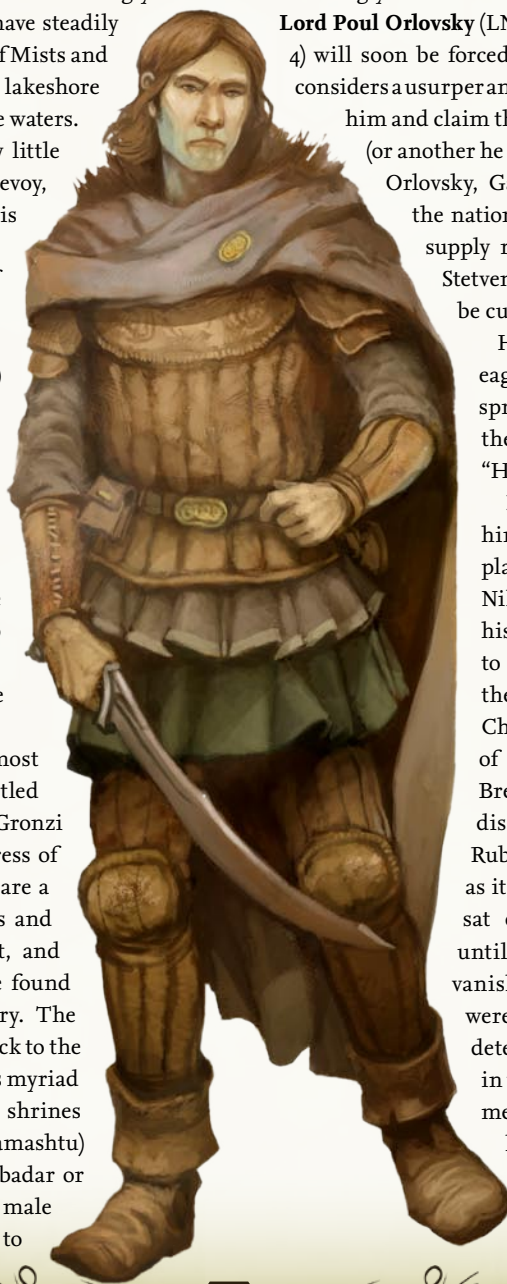
House Medvyed's crest is a black bear, rampant against a red field, with a spread of black antlers above the bear's head. Its motto is "Endurance Overcomes All."

**House Orlovsky:** From Eagle's Watch on the slopes of Mt. Veshka, House Orlovsky seeks to remain above the conflicts in Brevo, both figuratively and literally. Unfortunately, the house's role as a staunch ally of the Rogarvias has placed it in an awkward position under the current regime. Thus far, House Orlovsky has refused to acknowledge Noleski Surtova as anything other than Lord Regent in the absence of King Urzen or a true Rogarvian heir, but it is becoming increasingly clear which way the political winds are shifting.

**Lord Poul Orlovsky** (LN male human aristocrat 4/warrior 4) will soon be forced to either declare for the man he considers a usurper and opportunist, or seek to overthrow him and claim the Dragonscale Throne for himself (or another he finds worthy). An alliance between Orlovsky, Garess, and Medvyed could divide the nation, and cut the Surtovas' travel and supply routes between Port Ice and New Stetven, but any such arrangement must be cultivated discreetly.

House Orlovsky's crest is a black eagle against a gold field, wings spread, feathers almost touching at the point of the base. Its motto is "High Above."

**House Rogarvia:** Looking to secure himself and his progeny as high a place in the new order as he could, Nikos Surtova offered the hand of his daughter, Myrna, in marriage to Choral, binding the house of the Conqueror with his own. Since Choral's final victory in the Valley of Fire, House Rogarvia has ruled Brevo, until the recent mysterious disappearance. The house built the Ruby Fortress in the city of New Stetven as its stronghold, and Urzen Rogarvia sat on the Dragonscale Throne up until 4699, when the entire family vanished overnight. The Rogarvias were well known as ruthless rulers, determined to hold Brevo together in the Conqueror's name by whatever means necessary. Still, while their loss was not overly mourned, the stability they represented has been. Loyalists have continued to call for investigation into the



Vanishing and make much of the fact that their rule lasted precisely 200 years, but it has become increasingly clear that House Rogarvia will not return soon, if ever.

House Rogarvia's crest is a two-headed red dragon, one head breathing flames, the other bearing an unsheathed sword, representing Choral's legendary conquest, against a quartered field in white and gold. Its motto is "With Sword and Flame."

**House Surtova:** The most influential house in Brevoy, House Surtova, is also the oldest, established in Issia centuries before Choral's arrival. The Surtovas were infamous pirates and raiders in those early days, and with the Conquerer's coming were able to parley captured wealth into lands and titles. What started out as a defensible fortress became Port Ice, a settlement that has been the seat of Surtova power for generations. Nikos Surtova's alliance with Choral secured House Surtova's place at the right hand of the ruling house, and allowed them to move quickly into place after the Vanishing. The Surtovas established a "regency" in the absence of King Urzen, which has quickly become the de facto succession to the crown. **King Noleski Surtova** (N male human aristocrat 5/warrior 3) sits upon the Dragonscale Throne, while his sister **Natala Surtova** (LE female human aristocrat 6) reigns as unofficial "queen," as her brother is as yet unmarried. Rumors say Natala enjoys her role (and her influence over her brother) far too much to embrace the idea of a proper sister-in-law. Still, there is considerable pressure for Noleski to choose a bride and produce heirs for his new dynasty.

The Surtova crest is a gray ship against a field of blue below and black above, the upper shield spangled with silver stars. Its motto is "Ours Is the Right."

## THE ALDORI SWORDLORDS

Bandits from the River Kingdoms and Issia nearly spelled the end of the Taldan colony of Rostland in its early years. Sirian First's reputation as a duelist drew the attention of a bandit chieftain, who offered the baron a wager: half his fortune against the bandit leader's head, if he could best him in a duel. Baron First accepted, and lost. He paid his due and disappeared, too ashamed to show his face any longer, most assumed. Yet Sirian returned years later as Baron Aldori and, in a highly-publicized "rematch," defeated his foe in seconds and reestablished his rule in Rostland. Baron Aldori then issued his own wager: 100,000 gold pieces to anyone able to best him in a duel of blades. Thousands flocked to Rostland to answer this challenge, and the "Sword Baron" defeated them all. He founded the Aldori school of sword fighting, and established the influence of the Aldori swordlords over Rostland for centuries.

With the change in regime, many swordlords fled Brevoy to other realms, such as the River Kingdom of Mivon. A few became sell-swords, prostituting the arts of

the Aldori School for the coin needed to buy them food and shelter. The rest primarily settled in or near the free city of Restov.

## LOCATIONS IN BREVOY

Brevoy is a place where you can travel for days between small villages, to say nothing of the long journey between larger strongholds of civilization. These places tend to huddle in the shadows of the mountains, and along the shores of the rivers and lakes, leaving the lands between dotted with small settlements making their way as best they can.

## THE GOLUSHKIN MOUNTAINS

The Golushkin Mountains are home to Issia's greatest concentration of natural resources, as the peaks sit upon deep veins of iron, nickel, copper, silver, and tin, along with some other useful or precious ores. Humans like the Surtovas showed little interest in mining these riches, particularly since the Golka clan of dwarves were already doing so. House Garess established trade with the mountain dwarves, building a reputation on metalworks and a stronghold in the defensible mountain lands.

## THE GRONZI FOREST

The dark expanse of the Gronzi Forest is simply "the Forest" to the people of Brevoy. It extends from the highlands of the Icerime Peaks to the shores of Lake Reykal, forming part of the old border between Issia and Rostland. Although technically the forest belongs to the Brevic crown, hunting and even woodcutting is largely unregulated around its outskirts, particularly in the western reaches. The stretch of forest nearest New Stetven was largely cleared generations ago for the wood to rebuild and maintain the city, and Brevic woodcutters must delve deeper each year to meet their needs.

Although there are many tales of the hazards of the deep forest, the most recent stories are of human origin. A mysterious bandit chief known as **Duma the Sly** (CG male human ranger 5) has led raids on merchants, travelers, and tax-collectors near the bounds of the forest. He and his band are known for their ability to strike without warning and vanish just as quickly into the greenery. Duma is no friend of King Noleski Surtova, but the common folk love him for his generosity, and therefore aid him in evading royal sanction. Tales claim Duma is everything from the son of a wronged Aldori nobleman, a fey-blooded trickster, or the lost Rogarvian heir.

## THE ICERIME PEAKS

The Icerime Peaks wall off most of Brevoy from the former lands of Iobaria to the west. Their heights are perpetually covered in ice, even in the summer months, when cold rivers tumble and cascade down their sides, forming





towering waterfalls and clear mountain lakes. The late spring thaws open what passes there are through the mountains, although few make use of them.

Skywatch is by no means the only ancient site in the Icerime Peaks. Tales tell of half-buried entrances to mountain dungeons, some of them outposts of old Iobaria, others even older. Some of the ruins are said to be haunted by the chill shades of soldiers or miners who perished there, still guarding whatever treasures they found in life.

## THE LAKE OF MISTS AND VEILS

The people of Brevoy know the vast Lake of Mists and Veils simply as “the Lake,” and it defines the northern border of the land as well as dominates Brevoy’s seasons and weather. In the winter, the fiercest storms howl down from the foggy waters, driven between the mountain peaks to pour freezing rain, sharp hail, and heavy snow drifts upon Issia, slowed only slightly by the forest and the hills around Rostland, before exhausting their fury on the southern hills and plains. The lake gets its name from its tendency to warm enough in the peak months of summer so that when the first chill of winter sets in, the water “steams” with heavy layers of mist at night, slowly burning off each morning.

## NEW STETVEN

Choral the Conqueror established the Brevic capital of New Stetven after his successful campaign, building over the ruins of the original Taldan settlement of Stetven. It remains the center of political and economic power in the land, in spite of the recent upheavals. Of particular importance is New Stetven’s place as a trading city, carrying goods to and from Brevoy along the East Selten River and the major trade roads that meet here along the shores of Lake Reykal.

New Stetven earned the nickname “The City of Wooden Palaces” for the abundant use of timber to build everything from walls and houses to mansions and forts. Even some of the city streets are “paved” with planks laid in the near-constant mud from the snow and slush. Raised wooden sidewalks are common in the wealthier parts of the city, allowing people to walk up out of the mud as much as possible. The only great stone structures of the city are the Ruby Fortress, the seat of power to the crown of Brevoy, and the Bulwark of Gorum, Brevoy’s greatest temple to the Lord of Iron. Fire, like that which destroyed Old Stetven, remains a constant threat, and the city relies heavily on the services of volunteers aided by local spellcasters to put out the handful of fires that occur each winter.



## PORT ICE

House Surtova's ancestral lands extend from Port Ice, a settlement that has shifted increasingly inland, like its masters. Although connected to the lakeshore villages by a reasonably well-maintained road, Port Ice is locked behind its walls for much of the cold winter months, visited only by sled and the occasional foolhardy traveler. The rest of the year, the city is open to stockpile all the supplies needed for the next season. The White Manor is the Surtova ancestral seat, currently in the care of King Noleski's uncle, **Domani Surtova** (N male human aristocrat 4/warrior 1).

## RESTOV

Nowhere is the Rostlandic spirit more alive than in the Free City of Restov. The city owes its allegiance to the Brevic crown, and **Lord Mayor Ioseph Sellemius** (NG male human aristocrat 3/expert 2) must bend his knee before the Dragonscale Throne like any lord, but otherwise Restov belongs to no house, making it a haven for the lost glories of the Aldori swordlords and those who look back to the old days before the coming of the Conqueror. Restov is a city of both refinement and rough-and-tumble manners, as only a colony can be in fondly recalling and imitating its motherland. The gentry of Restov consider themselves sophisticates, although a Taldan visitor would consider their ways quaint, and touched with no small amount of northern barbarism. The city is a bustling trade center along the border. Restov's relative wealth supports no small number of idle and titled lordlings and merchants' sons. They frequent the various Aldori and Taldan dueling schools, as well as the alehouses, and fight each other in street corner challenges at dawn and dusk. The schools, salons, and taprooms of Restov are also hotbeds of rebellious talk against the reign of King Noleski Surtova, with young firebrands in search of a leader to rally them to the cause.

## THE ROSTLAND PLAINS

The region of grassy plains and rolling hills to the east of the Sellen and south of the Gronzi Forest are the heart of Old Rostland, dotted with farming towns and villages with a mixture of Issian and Taldan heritage and manners, but with more of an emphasis on the Rostlandic descendants of the original Taldan colonists. Although close to the capital of New Stetven, the Rostland Plains harbor some simmering dissent against the crown, the man who presently wears it, and the very idea of Brevoy as a unified nation.

## SKYWATCH

High in the northern Icerime Peaks is a city built around an ancient observatory discovered by the Surtovas centuries ago in the early days of Issia. In spite of its apparent age, the observatory is perfectly preserved,

## The Rumor Mill

Brevic tongues wag in alehouses, temples, market squares, and "hospitality parlors" just as much as folk anywhere, and there is a great deal for the people of Brevoy to gossip and speculate about. The following are just a few of the things one might hear muttered in a conspiratorial tone over a mug or shop counter.

**Blood of Dragons:** There were three dragons involved in the conquest of Brevoy, not two. The two reds at the Valley of Fire were both females. But their male mate was close at hand—wearing the human guise of Choral the Conqueror. House Rogarvia carried the blood of dragons in their veins, and in the end it consumed them all.

**The Conqueror's Debt:** Choral the Conqueror made a pact with otherworldly forces to obtain not only his vast army, but also the aid of his red dragon allies. The disappearance of House Rogarvia is the result of Choral's debt finally coming due.

**The Next Earthfall:** Skywatch was built as a lookout and warning post against disasters such as the Earthfall, and the reason the Rogarvias have vanished is the observatory has detected another such imminent threat. The people of Skywatch huddle in shelter waiting for the sky to fall.

**Return of the Conqueror:** Choral placed the care of Brevoy in the hands of his descendants and then departed into the depths of the Gronzi Forest, promising one day to return. The Vanishing is a sign the Conqueror's return is imminent, and he wants his kin either out of the way of his armies, or just out of the way of his return to the throne.

maintained by a powerful, lingering magic. The same night House Rogarvia vanished, Skywatch sealed its gates, and the walled city has allowed no one to enter or leave since, not even couriers or supply caravans. Messages and envoys sent to Skywatch have been ignored and none are known to have left. Even divination magic cannot penetrate its walls to discover what is going on within, or even if anyone there is still alive.

## THE VALLEY OF FIRE

In the southernmost Icerime Peaks lies the mountain valley where Aldori rebels fought their last battle against the forces of Choral the Conqueror. They were lured into the valley with the hope of cornering Choral, but instead found themselves in a trap when the Conqueror's red dragon allies bathed the valley in fire, wiping out the men of Rostland. To this day, the Valley of Fire is an infamous place where life refuses to return to the blackened and melted earth, said to be haunted by the tortured shades of the men who died here, seen in the night as fiery shadows with a burning hatred for the living.