



SHATTERED LANDS PREVIEW:

Elves of Argonesti



*L*isten well my students and gain wisdom. Although the barbarians who reside on the Great Glacier have more than a thousand words for ice and snow, the Argonesti have but one. Home.

*Li Mow Xin the Elder
from the Cherry Blossom Scrolls of Wisdom*

Deep beneath the glacial ice lays a veritable forest of conifers which are effervescently shrouded in fog and a near eternal twilight. The “sky” is a deep glistening blue that seems to keep the entire forest in near transition; neither dawn nor dusk. Birdsong and the occasional call of a stag can be heard throughout the cavernous landscape. Above, the “sky” is marred by a single crack from which true daylight or a glimmer or moon and starlight may be seen. This is Argonost, the mythical home of the Argonesti elves of the Great Glacier.

History

When the various clans of elves who called Ansalon home where consolidating under Sylvanos Goldeneye not all the wilder elves where inclined to meet the new elf king’s diplomats. Among these dissenters was a small tribe who made their home in the far south of Ansalon. These elves lived as they always had, as all those who would later be called Kagonesti had, since the creation of their race in the Age of Dreams.

When the first towers of Silvanesti where raised, some wilder elves brought news of the near enslavement of their people south to the more isolated tribes. After many years of contemplation a decision was made. They would escape the expanding influence of Silvanost by traversing the Icewall Glacier and seeking lands beyond which would be safe from encroachment and enslavement. Argonothalis Kiranshee, a prominent hunter well respected among the smaller tribes, was chosen to lead his people south.

The journey lasted several years and during this time the wilder elves encountered Thanoi and other creatures of the ice. They lost many hunters and children on the arduous journey. When Argonothalis and his people finally crossed the Icewall they encountered another vast sheet of ice and snow. Many of the elves began to despair and feared the ice would never end. All would be lost. Then the goddess Chislev sent a sign in the form of a woodlark. The tiny bird was obviously not native to the region and yet it was alive and thriving. Argo and his people followed the



Bear Rider of the Argonesti

woodlark until they found a large crevasse that billowed with steam that brought with it the scent of pine and warmth. The elves descended into the crevasse and found a subglacial forest which was kept warm by the geothermal pools which could be found throughout the unbelievably large cavern.

After much rejoicing the elves explored the cavern and within days the entire 20 miles of pristine bountiful forest had been explored. Not only that but five small passages had been located which allowed access to the outside world. That very night Argo the Pathfinder was found sitting upon a moss covered stone with his spear in hand, but his soul fled that very night. In his honor the elves named their new home Argonost and the people he had led to safety became known as the Argonesti.

Almost a decade after founding their city, an unexpectedly harsh winter arrived and with it the Thanoi. For an entire season the Thanoi laying siege to Argonesti with the help of a foul artifact known as the Heart of Winter. This device was created in the Abyss during the age of the high ogres by a mad priest who sought



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The Geothermal City of Argonost

immortality. In theory the ogre was successful but eternal undeath is not immortality.

Iridel the Icking, as the ogre lich became known, led the campaign to circumvent a prophecy of his death at the hands of an elf. After fifty years of near constant warfare it seemed as if the Thanoi would crush the elves by simple attrition, until a young but pious ranger named Calis Whitepaw fell to his knees to pray. He asked nothing for himself, but only for the welfare and safety of his people. As he knelt in the snow on an isolated glacial plateau, his head bowed in prayer, a great white bear ambled before him. As it rose to seemingly smite him down Calis felt a connection to the Feywild and the song of his goddess seemed to fill his ears. Rising to his feet to sacrifice himself to the bear Calis was at peace. Rather than deliver a death blow the bear turned around and seemed to beacon for the elf to follow. After what to Calis was to perceive as hours the bear entered great ice cavern and lay down before him and with a great sigh died. Calis in his grief feared that he may have failed his goddess wept, but from behind the great bear crept three snow white cubs. Calis, overjoyed, raised the cubs as companions and with their help the tide

of war with the Thanoi and their dread master was turned. Now the Argonesti Bear Riders act as protectors for all of the Great Glacier.

Argonesti

Capital: Argonost

Population: 5300 (3500 elves, 1500 eladrin, 300 half elves)

Exports: Thanoi Ivory, Pine Nuts, Silver, Cupridium (White bronze)

Imports: Iron, steal, grain.

The Argonesti have much in common with their cousins the Kagonesti. They live close to the land and are in tune with their surroundings. Rather than plunder the unique azure pines that dominate the area for fuel and building materials the Argonesti have harnessed the geothermal pools and vents to heat their homes and city. All buildings are made of stone; while not as graceful or whimsical as those of the Silvanesti, the architecture is simple and incorporated into the natural surroundings.

Life and Culture

All Argonesti children from age 12 live a communal life. Each child is rotated through many crafts and disciplines until the age of 20. When an Argonesti reaches this age the various masters and craftsman select a child for an apprenticeship that lasts 10 years. During the apprenticeship the elf learns how to make a living in Argonesti society. Upon reaching age 30 the Argonesti become an integral part of the self-sufficient community and become a fully capable adult of the tribe.

Among the Argonesti are an elite force of warriors. These warriors and rangers train until they are 40 years of age and are then bonded with one of the great white bears which live in symbiosis with the Argonesti. Bear Riders are the knights and defenders of the Argonesti. However the druids of the Argonesti are always on the watch for a rogue Bear Rider who would abuse his or her authority. Punishment for this offense results in the Bear Rider being exposed to the worst of the winter storms or even exiled to the human lands to the north.

ARGONESTI RACIAL TRAITS

Argonesti have all of the racial traits listed for elves of eladrin in the *4th Edition Players Handbook*.

When creating an Argonesti elf the player chooses whether to be an elf or eladrin.

