



ALINU

A Guide to the Realm of the Alinian World

~ The Realm ~

Alinu is a fantastical realm in which hundreds of stirring and enchanting stories take place over the course of centuries. Stories of bread bakers and princesses, kings and witches, duchesses, saltmakers, warriors, magic-wielders and lovers of every kind all weave together in one group of chronicles arching throughout all of Alinian history.

The realm's history is divided into four ages; the **Earth, Water, Wind** and **Fire Age**. Certain major events that occur in these stories are what divide the ages—and in some cases, even the lands.

~ The Realm ~

Alinu is divided into six major lands—Origshail, Halmen, Tiveryia, Sprille, Loriania and Garmor—each with their own histories, cultures, traditions and legends.



~ Birth Marks ~

The Alinian people are all born with their own individual Mark. Marks vary in style, color and meaning. Some designs are as complex as eight different swirling lines interwoven with each other in perfect symmetry across someone's entire back, and some are as simple as a small dot on a person's fingertip. But no matter the style, each Mark says something about the individual who was born with it—some even indicate that person has magical abilities. Often, people will even come across others with the same Mark. But as similar as they are, the Mark appears on its bearer for an individual, particular reason.

Some people know that reason from as early on as their childhood. However, there are just as many who have yet to find the true meaning of why they were given their Mark, or who don't discover it until later on in their adult years—some, in rare cases, even as late as right before passing away.

No matter when the time arrives, the discovery of a Mark's meaning is a monumental day in one's life. Some people have parties thrown for them by family or friends in honor of the occasion. Others simply take note of it and stow the reason away privately someplace in their heart. Once the true meaning is discovered, it is said that one's life becomes clearer, and that one's purpose is strongly branded in their heart and soul.

The Lands

Origshail: Geography

Origshail (pronounced OR-rig-shail if from the north, OR-*ridge*-shail if from the south) is said to be the heart of Alinu. The region stretches from the borders of Halmen all the way to the top of the continent. It's also bordered by Tiveryia and Sprille, taking up most of the realm.



Origshail: Culture

Origshail gets its name from the gold flecks of **goldshail** that sparkle among the floors of the land's castles, manors and wealthier estates. Goldshail is a deep gold—so deep that it has a shimmery dark orange tint to it—and is found in the land's rocks and gold mines up north. In the earliest years of the Earth Age, goldshail quickly became the regal stamp of the land, used in much of the land's interior design, china cups, dishes, and jewelry.

Socially, the people of Origshail are a fairly friendly people. They'll certainly try their best to sell tourists as many of their products as possible. It is, after all, one of the most popular places for travelers to visit, since it serves as Alinu's central trading post between most of the realm's lands. Origshail's kingdom is one of many different shapes, sizes and colors of people. It's a melting pot and people of all kinds are welcome. (This wasn't always the case during the Earth Age—it took some rather large changes from a baker girl named Meri, and eventually from her sister, Amelia, to earn Origshail the open-door reputation it now holds.)

Origshail: Culture & Clothing

The Origshail people dress in very modest clothing; long sleeves, high neck lines, hats to cover hair, and long skirts. Slim petticoats are used for women, and no gowns too extravagant. However, while clothing is a bit more reserved, jewelry is essential for the showing of social status and is worn almost to excess. Even for men—necklaces and earrings, alike. The more jewelry one owns and wears in public, the more impressive. Of course, one should only wear it when appropriate—Origshail is not as pompous and desperate to show off their wealth as those in the land of Sprille. However, it is a symbol of nobility to wear one's jewelry when possible...*especially* if it's goldshail. Even those in lower class have access to some kind of goldshail; in a small piece of a necklace from an ancestor, or even picked up from the streets of the wealthier towns. The ground practically sparkles with it the farther north one travels.



Origshail: Food & Music

Most of the food found in Origshail is very rich and therefore is eaten at two rather spaced-apart intervals throughout the day. Breakfast is eaten around mid-morning and then there is typically no need to eat again until supper in the early evening.

Breakfast often consists of eggs, sausage, beans, pork and perhaps rosemary bread. Supper will include rich meats—lamb, venison, veal or salt pork—along with peppered potatoes, hearty soup and rich, sweet fruits for dessert. Tea is always served after dinner, imported from the tea fields of Halmen.



Musically, minstrels can be found most often around Origshail's official castle in the north. The lute and piccolo will be heard most, weaving together enjoyable tunes known well throughout the land. Music can also be heard in the markets of Origshail; different styles and sounds that derive from places all over Alinu pouring out from the various stalls, tents and shops.

Halmen: Geography

Halmen (pronounced HAM-men (the “L” is silent)), is a workman’s land just below Origshail. It’s a land occupied primarily by the lower and middle class, ruled by a Duke and/or Duchess who is always in direct relation to the King or Queen of Origshail.



Halmen: Culture

The people of Halmen are as warm, welcoming and friendly as a people could be. They are the first to welcome travelers into their home for food and lodging, and they value community over almost all else. Village gatherings are a weekly event—and it only takes a moment to notice that everyone in each village knows everyone. One night in a Halmen weaver's house and one will know all there is to know about everyone in town—who made the best cakes for Yuletide, who *really* should have won the pie contest last spring, why Eliza told everyone that Efa's dairy cows weren't being fed the right kind of grass...

But as gossip-inclined as they can sometimes be, the Halmenfolk are a hard-working lot of people. Vigilant, early-rising, persistent, and strong-willed. Once a job is started, Halmenfolk won't even think of stopping until the job is finished. Naïve they can sometimes be in some ways—to that of other lands beyond the South River, and to the ways of thievery, cruelty or injustice in bigger cities, for instance. But their big hearts and warm smiles all too often make up for it.

Halmen: Culture & Clothing

Clothing for the Halmenfolk typically consists of whatever material they have lying around the cottage. Most popular is a chemise—often short-sleeved due to the half-year-round heat—with a front-laced bodice and bonnet for women, or a makeshift shirt and workpants for the men. And never will a person in Halmen be seen without work boots or an apron.

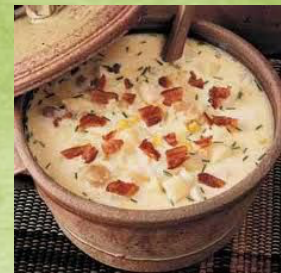
The Halmen colors are green and gold; green for the soft green grass and rolling hills, and gold for the sun. So some of the Halmen-style clothing—if the colored dyes can be afforded—are green and gold colored linen.



Halmen: Food & Music

Halmen mostly consists of farmland and crop fields, so food will usually include a plethora of seasoned vegetables, potatoes, corn, tomatoes, and a variety of dairy products. Herb gardens can also be found practically anywhere you look, so the food is highly seasoned and never without an abundance of herbs. One can always expect to be served thick, creamy beef stew cooked in thyme and chives, whole grain bread spread with rosemary butter, meat pies baked with cloves and tarragon, potato and leek soup with anise and caraway seeds, and berry pies dusted with saffron. Baked goods are a specialty in Halmen; there are even baking contests each year, in each village. And though Loriania is the only land fertile enough to grow cocoa beans, the Halmenfolk are the first to import the cocoa into their villages to make the most exquisite spiced chocolate cake one could ever have the pleasure to taste. And, of course, there are the Halmen tea fields that result in a deliciously fresh, smooth black tea.

Musically, Halmen is known to be heard all the way across the river in Loriania, and even in Origshail, when the cheerful folk play their sweet fiddles and joyful tambourines.



Tiveryia: Geography

Tiveryia (pronounced tih-VER-ree-yuh) is the land farthest to the west of Alinu, up in the realm's tallest mountains. It's a land spread out throughout the Tiveryian mountain range, in small villages belonging to different tribes. It snows nine months out of the year, and the climate is harsh and utterly freezing. But the Tiveryian people thrive up there in the crisp air and wide-open mountainous terrain; they would truly have it no other way.



Tiveryia: Culture & History

Though they have villages built, if the weather becomes too harsh to thrive in or the soil grows too frozen to grow crops, the Tiveryians will pack their things and move to lower land in the mountains until the sun returns. Adjusting their living situation to the climate is part of their survival system and is considered a very efficient, effective way to live. This began in the earliest years of the Earth Age by the Tiveryian king, Tiveryn, from which the land gets its name, and has been the same way ever since. Though there are chiefs of each village or tribe, the King or Queen is the supreme ruler of the land—and since tradition is an enormous value of the Tiveryians, their system has never changed. It is said that the frequent traveling and the harsh living conditions actually bond the Tiveryian people tighter than any other people in Alinu.

Tiveryia: Culture

Another part of their tradition is their spirituality. They are a very earth-centered people and live their lives on the basis of what they believe Nature and her Earth Spirits wish for them to do, to best thrive. They hold ceremonies and festivals for claimed Earth Spirit holidays, in which **Feelers** of the tribes will perform rituals and eventually lead everyone in celebratory dances. Feelers are members of each tribe whose Mark enables them to “feel” the earth; to sense when a storm is coming, to feel the fertility of the soil with their bare hands—to help advise their chief on where best to move the tribe in traveling seasons.

Tiveryia: Culture & Clothing

The Tiveryians sometimes have very pale skin, surprisingly close to the color of the snow they live in, and more often than not, have very light colored hair. They compensate for this by wearing dark colors, so they can tell each other apart when out in the snow and ice.

Fur is the dominant item of clothing for the Tiveryians. It covers over what is typically a simple linen tunic and pants, even for the women—and *that* is layered under a thicker, sturdier tunic. Then furs of all kinds cover it all, depending on the latest large animal that was cooked for the tribe. Furs are worn around the shoulders, across the chest, on the head, (around the stomach for expecting women), and even tied to leather boots to keep the legs warm. In the warmer months, a few layers are shed—men can go without furs and women switch out their pants for looser, comfortable dresses.

Hair is typically hidden away—again, covered with furs. However, in the warmer seasons, the hair is exposed, startling everyone by the very long length. This is sometimes seen as a distraction, depending on the tribe, and is usually braided up loosely. Even the men braid their hair—and sometimes even the beards, depending on the length. (Tiveryian men tend to grow out their beards to unusual lengths, since it is not only tradition but needed to help keep the face warm.)



Tiveryia: Food & Music

Food is scarce in such freezing climate, particularly when traveling. So the food that is cooked is stored and eaten for days—sometimes even weeks. Therefore, the food must always be something that takes long to perish. Dried meat, for example, is cooked almost to a crisp over the fire and then eaten as a tough chewy snack later. Berries and nuts are also eaten when in migration, as they are an easy find.

When back in their home village, Tiveryians happily make a variety of meals out of oats, such as oatmeal or fried oatcakes, as well as warm soups. Broths and soups are eaten most often—typically made with carrots, onions, radishes, beets, turnips, or leeks. Spinach dishes also make for favored meals in the summertime—sometimes cooked over the fire and served with meat and biscuits, or served fresh, with arugula and garden cress. And once in a while, lemons imported from Loriania are used to make a tart lemon pie for dessert.

Music is nearly impossible to play in the fall and winter because of the freezing temperatures. But in the warmer months, one might hear a fiddle playing from a small hut, or a voice singing clear and loud over the crisp mountain air, singing that the sun has returned for spring.



Lorania: Geography

Lorania (pronounced lor-RAY-nee-uh) is a southern region of Alinu, stretching from the lowest Tiveryian Mountains all the way to Garmor in the east. It's a land of bustling cities in the midst of hot, tropical climate and unique culture.



Lorania: Culture

Exotic animals, such as camels, snakes and elephants, can be found in Minche, or the Sand Lands—an area of Lorania that is hardly touched by civilization and filled with desert wildlife. In the cities—markets and temples are found everywhere. The streets smell of spices and incense, and the rush of the city thrills travelers when they arrive.

Just as Origshail is a land of trade in the north, Lorania is the main trade land of the south. So, although Lorrish people can be blunt, quick and short in verbal responses, they will certainly lend a helping hand to travelers who need it—especially if the traveler might hold potential to be a valuable customer.

Lorania: Culture & History

Since Lorania is a trade land, the Lorrish people are open to people of all kinds. This wasn't always the case, however—particularly in the Water Age. The land used to be called **Loranun**; a land full of people with great poise, who held themselves with the highest elegance and regality. All other lands in Alinu were considered beneath them—disgraceful and not worth their time. They didn't allow visitors of any kind.

But one day, the Queen of Loranun fell in love with the King of Tiveryia... and together, they had a secret daughter. Since snowy Tiveryia was considered the most barbaric and uncivilized of all Alinian lands—and Loranun was considered pompous and arrogant—the two lands despised each other. And it didn't help that the people of both lands looked very different from one another. Neither could accept the other. Therefore, the secret daughter, Ivarni—the “bastard princess”—was shunned from both kingdoms. No longer a secret, she was not welcome in either land she was heir to.

But when both the King and Queen were killed together in a tragic murder, Ivarni was forced to unite both kingdoms. She did this in Loranun, bringing the people of Tiveryia down from the mountains into Loranun's main city and combining the names of their lands—thus earning it the name, “Lorania”.

Lorania: Culture & History

Eventually, many of the Tiveryians missed their home in the mountains and felt their culture was being extinguished. So they fought for their independence and won, several tribes returning to the mountain range under the rule of their own self-claimed King. But many tribes still remained down in Lorania, and soon the races began to mix.

Now, thanks to Queen Ivarni's uniting of cultures, Lorania is a land of a multiple blends of people. Though many of the people still have darker skin, much of Lorania consists of people of all colors. And that doesn't include the several other varieties of people that have come from other lands, mixing in with the native Lorrish throughout the ages. And thanks to this change in Lorania, the same can be said for the rest of Alinu.

Lorania: Culture & Clothing

The heat in Lorania is year-round. Even in the winter, though the weather cools a bit, there is still humidity and often, days of heat waves. Therefore, Lorrish clothing is light, easy to move in and leaves much of the skin exposed to better breathe in the heat.

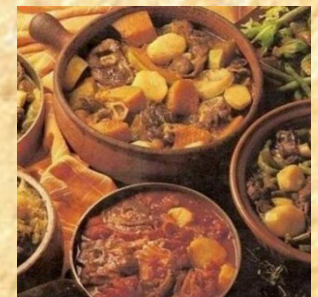
Material is made from rich silks and fabrics and usually paired with a simple piece of jewelry or a form-fitting belt made of snake skin. Women wear long dresses that are light and airy, and typically have a lower neckline. Men wear loose pants and often go shirtless—or wear a vest for modesty, depending on the area. And all wear Lorrish slippers; sandals made with a durability for walking in sand and on rough, hot pavement.



Lorania: Food & Music

Food in Lorania is heavily spiced and often rather exotic. Meals typically start with a plate of naan bread dipped in hummus, followed by seasoned meats such as chicken, lamb and alligator. Savory chickpea tarts accompany the meat, along with sage-cooked onions and vegetables, spiced rice, lemon couscous and one of Lorania's famous snake dishes—either roasted rattlesnake doused in cayenne pepper, or boiled cobra served in a stew with ginger and turmeric. Cocoa beans grow towards the north of the land, though the Loranians don't use them for much more than bitter chocolate bark, eaten in the winter. A more preferred dessert is a jasmine pie or candied ginger. Drinks consumed most often are salep—steamed milk infused with sweet spices—chamomile tea, or a crushed dandelion drink called *sipharn*.

Music is heard mostly from the marketplaces and outside temples. The hand drum and sitar spill from market stalls. The tambourine, mizmar and finger symbols chime in a gentle rhythm and the hypnotic Lorian horn fills the air—creating an enchanting, exotic atmosphere throughout the city.



Garmor: Geography

Garmor (pronounced GAR-mor) is the land furthest to the south of the realm. At the east bottom corner of Alinu, it borders Loriania and looks out over the Garmanian Sea.



Garmor: Culture

Garmor is Alinu's largest seaport. Merchants from lands beyond Alinu arrive in Garmor for trade and barter. However—other than travelers from Beyond—Garmor is hardly filled with anyone except the native people, themselves. Though it's a land under Sprille's rule, it's almost entirely occupied by the working and lower class—and not always the most welcoming sort.

Garmor is very rarely a destination for travelers within Alinu, making newcomers instant prey for stares and often, colder treatment. However, this will begin to diminish once the newcomer is settled in. Once one has made their place in town and a reputation has begun, Garmorfolk will reveal openings for friendship. Though it is said to take quite long for them to open up, once you are befriended by a someone of Garmor, a loyalty is born in them that is unbreakable. With conditions in the land being as difficult as they often are, Garmorfolk tend to stick together for life once they've found their "herd".

Garmor: Culture

Occupationally, since water runs through the main town and out into the sea, most jobs are sea harbor professions. Fishermen, dock workers, harbor men and **saltmakers**, for instance. Saltmakers are people—primarily men—who work in the shallow areas of the ocean in salt beds, scraping salt from the ocean floor with metal saltscrapers. Alinian sea salt is coarse and large, and easy to see with the bare eye. So every week, the salt is scooped up into large barrels and taken back to Garmor's mineral shop. There, the salt is separated from any sand granules that were scooped up with it. The salt is poured into jars and then taken into markets to be sold.

Other occupations are those of lower and middle class, with the exception of the Mayor. The Mayor oversees the run of the land, though he and all of Garmor are, at the end of the day, under the rule of Sprille.

Garmor: Culture & Clothing

Garmorfolk care as much about their clothing as they do about newcomers. They'll wear whatever tunics, shifts and scraps of material they have lying around the cottage or boathouse—usually some sort of coarse linen or canvas that can be made into a shirt and pants, or skirts for women. Colors are bland, matching the brackish water that runs through the town, and the rather dismal gray clouds that seem to hang over Garmor. It also rains often, so their clothes typically include a hood or hat of some sort to shield themselves, so they can continue about their work throughout the day.



Garmor: Food & Music

The largest meal of the day is eaten at night, almost as if in celebration for surviving the long days' work. Seafood, of course, is most popular. Fish of all kinds are eaten—catfish, grouper, kingclip, shellfish and more. Crayfish is cooked in butter and garlic, and cod is baked in a fish pie with peas and potatoes. Mussels and cockles are also popular, along with crab and Garmor's famous clam chowder, cooked with creamy scallops and a sprig of thyme. Though snacking isn't as common in Garmor as in some other lands, women will sometimes make laverbread—boiled seaweed baked into a square of warm bread—for family and friends, to get through longer days. And to wash it all down, ale and rum are the most common beverages.



Music isn't quite as popular in Garmor as it is elsewhere. Work and daily duties have higher priority among the Garmorfolk. However, most of them count the sounds around them to be music enough. The bustling of the streets and docks, morning bells ringing from the harbor, and waves lapping up on the Garmanian shore are all considered comforting sounds to many, and music to the ear.

Sprille: Geography

Sprille (pronounced SPREEL) is the land furthest to the east of Alinu. It borders Origshail and stretches down to Lake Serein, north of Garmor. One of the most powerful kingdoms in the realm, aside from Origshail, its palace stands in the north and is a sight said to be seen glistening from lands away.



Sprille: Culture

Sprille is considered one of the most beautiful and elegant of all the kingdoms in all the realm...and the Sprillians won't let you forget it. Their kingdom is filled with awe-striking castles, rose gardens around every corner, cobblestone streets and extravagant clothes designed in the most comely fashion possible. It's a land mostly of upper class, with separate villages for the nobles' servants and lower class, located more to the eastern side—so as not to have the lower class be the first thing anyone sees when entering the land. A first step into Sprille should be a whiff of tulips and rose petals, the sight of knights and castles, and elegant ladies in velvet. Not...anything else, according to Sprillians.

This said, not all of them are so strict about these ideals. Some are just as humble as the Halmenfolk. And all enjoy new company. Newcomers are more than welcome—especially if of nobility—and Sprillians will always greet them with a smile. Oftentimes, if of the upper class, they'll even invite the newcomers to dinner.

They are also keen on keeping up with the latest fashions and societal changes—and are often even the ones to start them. So it comes as no surprise that many stories have come from Sprille of bold, influential heroes and heroines. (Some even so bold as to pursue love of the same sex, until it became common throughout the land.)

Overall, it's a land that may have its rather pompous values, but has redeeming qualities, too—holding beauty in highest regard above all else, and sometimes in more ways than just externally.

Sprille: Culture & Clothing

Sprille is notorious for its regal, extravagant clothing. In the warmer months, women wear light dresses—sometimes ones that expose a little more of the body than other lands might deem appropriate—with jewels that catch the sunlight and that almost seem to sparkle. Men will wear easy-moving pants, strapping leather belts and doublets of fine cotton. In the colder seasons, clothing consists of thick, woolen coats, fur-trimmed gowns and lavish capes of rich velvet. Each social event held throughout the land is treated almost like a competition to see who can wear the grandest clothes—and there certainly will not be a single person wearing the same outfit as worn before, if it can be helped.



Sprille: Food & Music

Sprillian food is eaten in rather small portions. Finger foods are highly common, as the Sprille people believe that too large of a food portion is unsophisticated. Finger sandwiches are served at any social event—tuna fish, cucumber, or cheese and ham. Cups of onion soup are also popular, along with salads, and Sprillian **Plates**. A Sprillian Plate—more commonly referred to as a Plate—is a dish of thinly sliced prosciutto glazed with honey, cubes of cheddar, a spoonful of brie cheese, rosemary sea salt biscuits, sliced strawberries and mint leaves. A Plate is served at almost any event where there will be a good deal of time spent, whether for a public party in a grand hall or a cozy gathering of friends at home.

More hearty meals may include a lean piece of game with vegetables and potatoes, or a beef and barley stew. Sometimes even escargot is served, depending on the time of year. And to top it off, common desserts include delicate cream puff pastries, rose petal custard, or a dainty dish of blueberries and vanilla cream, sprinkled with cinnamon. Tea after every meal, of course, is a given.

Music is typically performed by the minstrels and bards, singing joyful tunes of their lords and ladies, or playing a gentle fairy flute. It is also considered necessary—and romantic—for the lords and ladies, themselves, to learn to sing. The upper class are taught music and poetry from a young age, so it is not uncommon to hear songs of beauty pouring out from manor windows and echoing through the lavender fields.



Happy Traveling!

Once the Fire Age ended, all of Alinu seemed to end with it. Much of the land fell into chaos and destruction. But though the monumental events and influential people that have shaped the land of Alinu are now long in the past...

The realm still exists.

It is hidden in a place we can find once we discover our own “Marks”. Though we may not be born with them, they—our Marks, our purpose, our dreams, our destiny—are engraved in us from birth. And a trip to Alinu might just help us remember that.

So pack your furs, snakeskin and goldshail! Happy traveling!