# Shadows and Tall Trees: Echoes of Empire

*Who is it now, who calls me inside?  
Are the leaves on the trees just living disguise?  
-U2, “Shadows and Tall Trees”*

The history of elves in Faerûn stretches back nearly thirty thousand years. While humans now control most of the world, it was the *Tel’Quessir* that ruled all they surveyed for the majority of that time. A diverse people, they eventually fell to feuding amongst themselves. Great empires rose and warred with each other. Eventually, the sun elven Vyshaan Dynasty of Aryvandaar began a long proxy war with their hated rivals, the dark elven Sethomiir dynasty of Ilythiir. Thus began the Crown Wars, a succession of world-shattering conflicts that saw the complete destruction of entire nations, and the Descent of the Drow. For ten thousand years these conflicts ravaged the world, eventually leading to the end of all the old empires.

Founded near the end of the last of the Crown Wars, Evereska was created as a haven to those fleeing the final fall of Aryvandaar. It stands today as an enclave for those elves who refused the call to retreat to Evermeet from the mainland. Though the Crown Wars ended thousands of years ago, elven memories are long, and the shockwaves of the conflicts that saw the end of their dominance over Faerûn still ripple today.

## The Game

This might not be the game for you, *and that's OK*. I'm going to say that a few times, because it's important to set expectations without hard feelings. We're here to have fun, even if it's not in this particular setting.

This isn't a monster-of-the-week casual game - it's a full campaign that I expect will take at least two years to complete. It will be lore-heavy, with a heavy emphasis on roleplay. We'll be using Pathfinder 1st Edition, but it is effectively D&D 3.5. The reason for the change is that Pathfinder has a slightly tuned-up ruleset that fixes a few issues.

This is a Forgotten Realms game, set largely in and around Evereska, one of the few elven cities on the mainland of Faerûn. It deals extensively with elven history and the effect it has had on the present day, which is set in the year 1371 DR. Character creation has one major caveat: race is limited to one of three Elven subraces. This may not be for everyone, and I understand that! If it's not what you're looking for, no worries whatsoever, but this might not be the game for you, *and that's OK*.  
  
A working knowledge of Forgotten Realms history and cosmology will serve you quite well, but the details are highly subject to change. Many major events from the timeline will happen over the course of the game, but may unfold differently than the published timeline. Depending on what actions the party takes, some events may unfold completely differently. Effectively, any events from 1371 on are subject to change... radically.

## The Group

I'm looking for a group of committed players, who are willing to take the game seriously while still having a lot of fun. This game will absolutely have moments of comic relief and heavy drama. What I really want is people who are willing to be invested in their characters, in the group, in the world, and working together to create an entertaining and memorable story. The joke here is that I want people to [be *really* upset if Black Leaf dies](https://www.chick.com/products/tract?stk=0046).

As I mentioned before, this will be a long-running game that requires a lot of continuity. We all play or we don't play, so if you're not sure you'll be able to consistently attend every session, this might not be the game for you, *and that's OK*.

We will discuss [lines and veils](https://rpg.stackexchange.com/questions/30906/what-do-the-terms-lines-and-veils-mean) as a group, but be advised that the game is intended to be TV-MA LSV or a hard R. Adult concepts will be dealt with, but may happen off-screen depending on the limits of the players. This game is intended to be gritty and dark, but I don't want people to be so uncomfortable with what's being presented that they’re not having fun. If that's not what you like in a game, this might not be the game for you, *and that's OK*.

Race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender will be discussed and dealt with, as will troubled histories with regard to some or all of those concepts. Most importantly: if you use the term "woke" as an insult or think that JK Rowling is just standing up for women, this *definitely* is not the game for you.

## About Me

My name is Paul and I've been playing tabletop RPGs since around 1993, starting with AD&D 2nd Edition (this feels like a support group confession). While I've played an array of different games (including a *lot* of Old World of Darkness), D&D 3.5 has always been my favorite. While not a Forever DM, I do tend to run games frequently and have (checks notes) *a lot* of experience DMing over the years. This game is an homage to the games my original gaming crew played in high school. I've run it a few times with tweaks and changes and improvements, so rest assured that it's a convoluted plot with a lot of hints and callbacks and *someone* in the party should be taking really good notes.

I like collaborative groups. I love taking character backstories and weaving them into games. My number one goal is making sure everyone enjoys my games.

## Forgotten Realms Canon

Well this part is a mess. Sort of like Star Trek, the Forgotten Realms is a very large sandbox with a lot of cats burying treasure, and they don’t often agree. There’s also a lot of stuff that’s generally considered canon that I don’t care to get into, so I’m just going to ignore it outright. It would take a whole sourcebook to expand on that, so let’s just go with a few things that are and are not canon in this game:

Canon!

* The 3.5 Forgotten Realms source is all canon, and anything that disagrees with it is not (looking at you, Espruar alphabet from every other edition).
* Everything in the Avatar Series (*Shadowdale*, *Tantras*, *Waterdeep*, *Prince of Lies*, and *Crucible, Trial of Cyric the Mad*) is canon, as are *Evermeet: Island of the Elves* (except for the Sundering bits) and the Songs and Swords series (*Elfshadow*, *Elfsong*, *Silver Shadows*, *Thornhold*, and *The Dream Spheres*).

Not Canon!

* Any pre-1372 history written after 3.5. The tricky part about this is that the wiki is rarely obvious about what was written when.
* Second Sundering? No thanks, we never had a first one. The creation of Evermeet wasn’t exactly easy, but it didn’t create two planets.

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## Inspiration

Aside from the deep Forgotten Realms lore, I drew inspiration for this game from a number of different sources. Here’s a short list:

* TV and Movies
  + Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
  + Labyrinth
  + Legend
  + The X-Files
  + Carnivàle
* Music (a very short list, suffice it to say it’s a lot of ethereal goth and prog)
  + The Birthday Massacre
  + Marillion
  + Poe
  + Enigma
  + Peter Gabriel
  + Queensrÿche
* Books
  + The Daevabad Trilogy by S.A. Chakraborty
  + The Dark Elf Trilogy by R.A. Salvatore (yes, I know, FR deep lore, but for much different reasons)
  + Saga by Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples
  + Rat Queens by Kurtis J. Weibe

## And Everything Else

That’s it!\* That’s the game! So, is this the game for you? If you think so, here's the character creation outline. Read through it and send me your concept!

*\* that is certainly not it, there are three more documents just for game setup, and then an initial cast of characters list that’s almost 20 people long.*