

Background Information Commonly Known to Elves

This campaign is Tolkien-ish, with some serious historical divergences fairly early due primarily to a higher level of available “overt” magic.

1 Creation and Mythology

Ilúvatar, keeper of the Flame Imperishable (or Secret Fire), created the Ainuir, offspring of his thought. He sent the Flame Imperishable into the Void, at the heart of what would be Eä, the World that Is, or Arda. Many of the Ainuir passed into Eä to help create it, in accordance to a vision shown to them by the One.

Note that many of the Elves of the Light, having heard the story of the Creation of the World from the Ainuir themselves, would probably take offense at what they consider to be history being called a myth.

1.1 Valar and Maiar

Those Ainuir who passed into the world became bound to the world until the End of Days, so the mightiest of the Ainuir are known as the Valar, the Powers of the World. The lesser spirits of the Ainuir are known as the Maiar, and serve and assist the Valar.

The Ainuir, pre-dating the creation of the physical world, are not required to take physical form, and can assume a physical forms as if changing clothing, or even walk “unclad” and undetectable to all lesser beings. Most of them tend to choose physical forms based off their vision of the Children of Ilúvatar.

1.2 Elves and Men

Elves and Men are the Children of Ilúvatar, and the Ainuir had no hand in their making. In them the Ainuir saw the mind of Ilúvatar reflected anew, and learned yet more of his wisdom, and more that was previously hidden. The Elves, or Firstborn, are more like in stature to the Ainuir; immortal and bound to exist in the World until the End of Days. Those who die from violence, grief, or ennui, pass to the Halls of Mandos in Valinor, where they remain until the End. Elves are bound into the Song, and are closely tied to Fate. Men, or Atani, the Followers, awoke with the first rising of the Sun and were given strange gifts by Ilúvatar. The hearts of Men seek beyond the world and find no rest therein; but they have the virtue to shape their lives, amid the powers and chances of the world, beyond the Music of the Ainuir, which is as fate to all things else.

1.3 Religion

The Eldar revere the Valar and Maiar, and occasionally call out to them in times of great need, but do not worship them as men worship their gods. Elbereth, the Valar who created the stars, is most beloved by the Elves. Most Eldar do not believe that the gods worshipped by the mortal races are the Ainuir, but no proof has been obtained one way of the other. Accordingly, those extraordinarily rare clerics and priests among the elves worship the deities of mortals, and are generally ostracised from “polite” elven society, as are paladins and healers. The greatest elven healers are Lay Healers, not channelers. Animists (druids) are the only common channeling profession among elves, and tend to follow Yavanna, the Giver of Fruits, or occasionally Melian. Rangers are rare and usually follow Oromë, the Hunter.

2 Divisions of the Elves

The fathers of the Elves awoke under the starlight around the mere of Cuiviénen, far to the north and east of Middle-Earth, during a time when the Great Enemy ruled Middle-Earth. They invented speech so that they could name the things around them, and called themselves the Quendi, or “the ones who spoke with voices”. The Elven people were Sundered when many refused the invitation to abide with the Ainuir in Valinor.

2.1 Eldar

The Eldar are Elves from the three tribes that set to follow Oromë to Valinor, after their leaders, who had been taken to Valinor to be shown the truth of Oromë's words, vouched for his story.

Vanyar The Vanyar were the fewest and fairest, and followed Ingwë, the most high lord of all the Elvish race. All of the Fair Elves passed over the Sea, and none are known to have ever returned.

Noldor The Noldor followed Finwë, and have been renowned for their great valor and wisdom. All passed across the Sea to Valinor, where they were beloved of Aule, and learned much of crafting and artistry. They were known as the Deep Elves, in Aule's honor. Many of their number returned to Middle-Earth, exiled from the Undying Land due to Fëanor's rebellion, and under the "Doom of the Noldor", and became known as the High Elves, as compared to those who had not seen the Light of the Trees.

Teleri The greatest in number were the Teleri, who were stragglers. They delighted in the water, and were known as Sea Elves. The Teleri were led by two brothers, Elwë Singollo and Olwë.

Sindar While in Beleriand, the western-most lands of Middle-Earth, Elwë encountered and fell in love with a Melian, a Maia. He could not be found, so Olwë took the kingship of the Teleri and departed for Valinor. Elwë became known as Thingol Greymantle, and Melian was his queen, and those of the Teleri who remained behind became and followed him became known as the Grey Elves, or Sindar. Although they never saw the light of the Trees directly, they saw it reflected in their Queen, and their King was one of the Elves of the Light, and mighty upon Middle-Earth. Their line is the only known mingling of the Ainur with the Children of Ilúvatar.

2.2 Avari

The Avari, or Unwilling, are those Elves that fled the approach of Oromë, or who refused the Great Journey. They are relatively uncivilized, as compared to the Eldar, and are frequently known as the Wood Elves. However, some of the Teleri who fell behind and did not enter Beleriand are also known as Wood Elves, so the appellation is not exact.

3 The Eldar in Action

The most ancient of the Noldor, the Elves of Light who lived in Valinor and saw the Light of the Trees, have vast prowess beyond all other Children of Ilúvatar in all fields of endeavor. There are only a few great Elf Lords remaining who remember the Elder Days and have not died or left for the peace of Valinor, but those who remain are accounted among the great powers.

Even the younger elves, who tend towards a profession of arms, are usually skilled in several spell lists.

Not long after the Noldor returned to Beleriand from Valinor, the Sindarin tongue was adopted for daily use for a variety of reasons. The Noldor dialect, still called Quenya, is normally only used for epic songs and tales of lore.

It is rumored by some that the exile of the Noldor is still in effect, but few of the ancients are willing to discuss the matter.

3.1 Recent History

Over six thousand years ago, a small faction of Eldar built a mighty fleet and crossed the Great Sea of the East, seeking a new path to Valinor, to replace the Straight Path that was lost and denied to the Noldor by their Doom. Instead, they discovered the continent on which this campaign is currently based.

The continent was apparently only populated by barbaric human tribesmen and two newly-awakened Houses of Dwarves in the mountain range to the north. They sent back word of their discovery to the Old Continent, and settled in a great forest in the center of the continent, far from the overcrowding and strife of the land they departed.

A thousand years passed...

Human explorers found rich metal deposits in the unoccupied mountains between the two dwarven kingdoms, and the massive colonization of this continent began. A port city grew up around the cove where the elven fleets and the first of the fleets of men landed, and was named after the first king of all the Noldor upon Middle-Earth. The new arrivals showed little interest in expanding into the old-growth forest, and a willingness to trade.

The Great Wood is currently sparsely populated with Noldor and Sindar. There are no Avari known to live on this continent.

3.2 The City of Nod

Many of the Eldar living in the (former) capitol city of the (former) Empire of Nod live in one of the wooded parks inside the city walls. There are many small elven communities in five mile by five mile square areas, centered on old wooded parks that were assisted in their expansion by elven animists after the fall of the city. As few of the parks are large enough for the elves to be self-sufficient, elven animists and water mages trade their services to nearby farming communities for a share of their crops; others cut gems and perform various crafts in trade for money and goods.