

How did we get Here?

A quick explanation of the shared background of the characters and why they are far from home, in an inhospitable land where everyone wants to kill them.

Skip to the Summary at the end if you don't want to read my narrative take and just want the important points.

If you want a quick summary about the setting, check out the RuneQuest wiki, especially the Dragon Pass section, <https://rqwiki.chaosium.com/glorantha/dragon-pass.html>

This is an excerpt from The Long Way Home, a RuneQuest game of Lunar Tarsh characters by Newt Newport.

We Are All Us!

Your characters come from Tarsh, a provincial kingdom within the Lunar Empire, far to the north of the Wastes of Prax where your unit is currently stationed. They are members of the Lunar culture, a magical elite making up around 10% of the Empire, and actively following the Lunar Way.

The Lunar Empire was established roughly 400 years ago, when Sedenya, the Red Moon Goddess, emerged from Hell on the back of the Crimson Bat, a huge chaos demon. With her magical helpers, the Seven Mothers, she went on to conquer the lands of Solar Empire of Dara Happa to the North of Tarsh.

This was done with a mixture of violent conquest and magical guile. The chief belief that she played on with the Solar worshippers was that Sedenya proved to them that she was the long-dead Red Moon Goddess, risen again to take her place as Yelm the Sun God's Daughter in the Sky. Her son, the Red Emperor, completed the ritual by being accepted by the last Solar Emperor as his legitimate heir and successor. This is how the Lunars took over the Dara-Happan Empire, a series of city states that lie on the mighty River Oslir.

When the Lunar Missionaries and Armies came to Tarsh they repeated this method of conquest. They convinced the locals that Sedenya was a daughter of Ernalda the Earth Mother. They also ruthlessly fought the followers of Orlanth the Storm King, who is a rival for the Red Moon's rule of the Middle Air and an enemy of Yelm the Sun from mythology. They disposed of the ruling family, who worshipped Orlanth, and placed their own King on the throne.

Tarsh is now what they call "Lunarised", with an urban-based culture along the River Oslir, where the Lunar Elite lives, and a rural-based culture, which is more like Old Tarsh and is sympathetic towards rebellious Orlanth, even though his worship is banned. There has been an ongoing on-and-off civil war between the Lunar Kings and the rebel Orlanthi from the rural clans. The Lunars currently hold the country, as it is well inside the Glowline.

What drives the Lunars is the belief that when the world understands *We Are All Us*, the Sedenya will transform from the savage and bloodthirsty Red Moon Goddess into the serene and enlightened White Moon Goddess who will rule a united Glorantha at peace.

Extend the Glowline!

This is the Empire's magical border, which glows red with magical light, and within whose borders the magic of the Red Moon Goddess is always full, like her home, the Red Moon. Outside the Glowline her power and that of her magicians waxes and wanes with the cycle of the Red Moon.

When the Empire truly has conquered a land, both physically and magically, it establishes a temple of the Reaching Moon, which acts as a magical focal point and allows the Empire to extend the Glowline to match the land's borders.

Orlanth is DEAD!

During your character's parents' time, the Empire moved south from Tarsh into the neighbouring Kingdom of Sartar. Here, the chief deity was Orlanth the Storm King, and a city-based civilisation, created by the hero-turned City God Sartar, that rivalled that of the Empire was emerging. A threat that could not be ignored.

The conquest was partial. While the Royal Family of Sartar was eliminated, and some tribes allied with the Lunar Puppet King, others carried on in being rebels. The military and magical war continued, until in the winter of 1621 the Lunar High Command finally declared Orlanth is Dead. His rebellious priesthood, the Windlords, unable to cast his magic, were inclined to agree.

Your parents in their short time in Sartar, before they returned home to have a family, with their traditions of fighting Orlanthi in the countryside from the Tarsh Civil Wars, were employed in hit and run skirmishes against the rebel warbands. Your characters have inherited this knowledge.

The conquest of Sartar is nearly complete. The Temple of Reaching Moon is being built, and when completed, the Glowline will move south to surround Sartar.

This will be a great triumph for you as Lunar Tarsh, since it will extinguish the last of the Tarshite Orlanthi Rebellion since they will lose their allies among the people of Sartar and the base in exile at the base of Kero Fin (? Check)

Seven Mothers do have 'em

Your characters joined the Lunar missionary movement, known as the Severn Mothers, when they came of age about five years ago.

The Severn Mothers are five lunar heroes who helped the mortal Sedenya in her magical journey from being an outcast orphan on the streets to being reborn as the Red Moon Goddess and ascending into the sky as the Red Moon. In turn, they became deities, and their followers brought the Illumination of the Red Goddess to the barbarians.

The characters are "Septurions" in a Dara Happan Army of the *Iron Plinth Legion*. This army is mired in thousands of years of Solar traditions, with the characters bringing a mix of new Lunar tactics and magics. Specifically, their cultural ability to fight the Orlanthi Rebels effectively was learnt from their grandparents onwards.

General Baldrox is the Father of the Legion, in terms of the fiercely patriarchal Solar Religion that the Dara Happan follow, despite Baldrox falling well short of the Dara Happan ideal. The

characters are known as *Baldrox's Bastards*, in part of a fierce reputation because of their savage anti-storm-rebel actions, which are not always honourable in the eyes of the local population and the typical Dara Happan Legionary, but also that as Lunar, they are not entirely part of the Solar Tradition.

The Iron Plinth legion has been sent to the far-away city of New Pavis, which sits in the howling and hostile desert known as the Wastes of Prax.

The Marriage of Pavis to the Red Goddess

Why is the city of Pavis important enough for the Lunar Empire to overstretch itself and send troops and magicians all away across the Wastes of Prax?

The original city of Pavis, was established by the 2nd Age Hero of the same name. The huge city, with walls made by Giants, was his utopian city-building experiment in the Wastes of Prax.

Pavis the City fell with the end of the 2nd Age and became known as the Big Rubble. Now in the 3rd Age, the town of New Pavis sits beside the cyclopean walls of the Big Rubble. The Lunars believe that a marriage between Pavis, the City God, and their Red Goddess would see his great city rise again from the Rubble, and its great magic is available to the Lunars. This prospect already saw Lunar Colonists settle in the Grantlands near the River of Cradles, despite the daily dangers from the surrounding Wastes.

Also, there is the practical military matter of destroying rebel Orlanthi Windlords who fled to New Pavis after the conquest of Sartar.

The chief of whom was Argrath.

Argrath the Destroyer is Almost at the Gates!

Who is Argrath? Mystery surrounds this hero, is he an incarnation of Arkat the God Killer? An Avatar of Gbaji the Deceiver? A powerful Windlord of Orlanth? A living member of the Royal Family of Sartar? All that is known is that he leads a powerful army of Sartarite Rebels, who are changing the Lunar fortunes in Pavis and Prax.

His coming to occupy Pavis is foretold by divinations and the upsurge of resistance to the Lunar Military. Also, your allies, the Sun Dome Templars and the Sable Riders, seem a bit more remote and less willing to help you, as if they know something big will happen soon.

The Rituals that make up the Marriage of Pavis have either failed or ground to a halt in ways that can only be explained by the opposition of some hidden enemy. Several of the important ritualists involved in the Marriage have died in sudden, unexplained ways. The remainder have been recalled to Sartar to help with the construction of the Temple of the Reaching Moon.

General Baldrox has confided with the characters that he believes Pavis will fall, and the Lunars will be defeated in open battle with the Argrath and his army, and the best he can do is rescue them and the survivors of the battle and return to Tarsh, where civil war is brewing.

The year is 1624. On the streets of Pavis and out in the character's patrol circuit out in the countryside, the atmosphere is tense and hostile, even amongst people who were allies previously.

Summary

We Are All Us

- The characters belong to a culture called the Lunars that makes up 10% of the Lunar Empire.
- They who follow the Lunar Way led by the Red Goddess, the chief deity of the Lunar Empire.
- Their Homeland is the Lunar Province of Tarsh (see RuneQuest page 126).
- The Lunar Way believes in the reunification of Glorantha under the savage, but civilising, Red Goddess. When the Lunars have conquered the world and everyone believes that "*We Are All Us*", she will become the peaceful *White Goddess*.
- *Orlanth*, the Storm King, the head barbarian deity, is the sworn enemy of the Red Goddess, as he is her father, Yelm, the Sun God. Therefore, he is outlawed and banned as the Enemy God of the Lunar Way.
- Tarsh is a mix of rural clans, who tend to follow Orlanth and Lunarised Urban City dwellers. The characters are from the latter, and their families have generations of experience fighting in the civil wars against the former.

Extend the Glowline

- The border of the Lunar Empire is a magical barrier called the Glowline.
- When the Empire conquers a land, it does it through a mix of religious missionary work, magical rituals and military actions.
- Initiates of the Severn Mothers Cult convince the locals that their Goddesses are the Red Goddess, while magical rituals change the mythic landscape and military conquest subdues those who are still actively resisting.
- When the land is pacified enough, the Lunar Priesthood builds a Temple of Reaching Moon, which, when activated, extends the Glowline to encircle the land, which is then truly considered conquered.

Orlanth is DEAD!

- The characters' parents took part in the invasion of Sartar to the south of Tarsh. Culturally, the Sartarites are similar to rural Tarsh, so the Tarsh Lunars already have a big advantage in fighting them.
- Sartar's conquest has only been partially successful. Despite the end of the Royal Sartar line, and the installation of a puppet King, not all the tribes are onside with the Lunar Way, and rebellion is brewing.
- Despite all this, Lunar HeroQuesting against Orlanth has been successful enough for him to be declared dead and deprive his mortal worshippers of his magic. The Temple of the Reaching Moon in Sartar is near completion and when it is, that will be the death knell of all resistance to the Lunar Occupation.

Seven Mothers do have 'em

- Upon coming of age, the characters join the Seven Mothers cult.
- They join the Dara Happan *Iron Plinth Legion* under General Baldrox. They are all part of a special magical unit, who are called *Baldrox's Bastards*. Each of them has the rank of

Septurion and is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of seventy soldiers and being a troubleshooter who completes special missions for the legion.

The Marriage of Pavis to the Red Goddess

- The Iron Plinth is deployed to the Wastes of Prax to assist in converting the local population, putting down rebels and helping with a Lunar Magical Project known as the *Marriage of Pavis*. Pavis, the local city god of the city named after him. This would, in theory, restore to working order the huge ruin of Old Pavis, aka the Big Rubble, that sits beside the current small city of New Pavis. Bringing all its magical marvels back to the world and under the control of the Lunars.

Argrath the Destroyer is Almost at the Gates

- A rebel army under a big Hero called Argrath has been overturning Lunar victories in Prax and pushing their forces back to New Pavis.
- With signs that Lunar Magic is failing during the rituals of the Marriage to Pavis, it is clear that city is about to fall to him.
- Despite preparing the legion to face Argrath's army in open battle, General Baldox has privately told the characters that he's going back to Tarsh, with the remains of his forces to fight with the Lunars there.