

GRIFFONS OF EVERGLOW





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Griffons of Everglow	4
Chapter 2: Combat: Griffon Tactics	18
Chapter 3: Faith: Griffons and Gods	28
Chapter 4: Griffon Magic	32
Chapter 5: Griffon Society	34
Chapter 6: Griffon Settlements	52
Chapter 7: Bestiary of the Mountains	64

CREDITS

Silver Games, LLC CEO David Silver

Silver Games Business Manager Kyle Elliott

Project Manager Kyle Elliott, David Silver

Lead Writer David Silver

Foreward Mercedes Lackey

Editor Savannah Broadway

Art Director Sita Duncan

Cover Art Sita Duncan

Griffon King Art Larry Dixon

Artists Sita Duncan, Tori Crossman, Hugo Solis, H.

Esdaile, Brian Harp, Roz Gibson, Melissa S, Rick

Hershey, Mel White, Ben Saint, Scott Vigil

Layout Design Callie Winters

Special Thanks to:

Kickstarter and our backers! Their contributions allowed this book to come to life!

Sita Duncan and Tori Crossman, the back bone of our art team!

Larry Dixon and Mercedes Lackey, for finding us little guys and helping us spread our wings!

Paizo and their amazing support of third party publishers!

And finally to the Brony community, both small and large!

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game rules used under the Open Game License. Learn more about Pathfinder at <http://paizo.com> and peruse their official database of rules at <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd/>

DECLARATION OF OPEN GAME CONTENT

All texts pertaining to game mechanics and statistics are declared Open Game Content. All items subject to the definition of Product Identity are the property of Silver Games, LLC, and cannot be used without written permission.

PRODUCT IDENTITY

The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(c), and are not Open Content: all trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, deities, etc.), dialogue, plots, storylines, locations, characters, artwork, and trade dress. Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content or are in the public domain are not included in this declaration.

There's a mistake going around. It's an insidious mistake, pernicious because it's one that owes its existence to lazy thinking. We first noticed its rise in 1990s comics, and it spread from there; a mannerist virus, if you will. Wonderful characters gradually weren't about having a bad side that showed itself rarely, they became more and more about having a dark, gritty side, and before long, it became all that they were made of. Bodycount replaced cleverness. Lazy thinking led to lazy writing, and everything was Darkity-Dark-Dark with a side dish of Gritty Realism (except that "realism" was always selective: injuries vanished by the next issue, and there were no personal repercussions besides, maybe, some moping mixed with the teethgrinding. Always with the teethgrinding!).

The mistake persists even today, and it can be summed up this easily:

Dark does not equal Deep.

This game, this setting, is a challenge to that mistake. It is a challenge to the player, and a challenge to the gamemaster, to free their minds from what they've been trained to think is cool by these decades of grim-gritty-angsty-mopey-dark-kill-em-all comics, movies and books.

A great storyteller can engage an audience with something as seemingly simple as why a key is shaped the way it is. The story of the key is the story of those who needed the key, who made the key, those who use the key, and even why there is a key at all. "Why is there a key?" means "why is there a lock?" And what does a lock mean? Why would there even be a need for that lock, for that key, in that place, at that time?

You can challenge that nasty viral mistake of lazy thinking, right here. Dark does not equal deep. Deep equals deep.

You can jettison all the bloody bodycount and gore, and find yourself engaged over mysteries and discoveries, exploration and interaction, attempts and failings. This isn't a place to dully watch what someone else can do in an awful life on an awful world. This is a place where you can immerse yourself in finding out what is compelling to a person whether they have hooves, wings, fins or flukes. This about problem-solving and self-discovery through characters that you personally craft, not button-mashing and thumb skills.

The counter to the virus of "Dark does not equal deep" is "Light does not equal shallow."

Enjoy the light. Explore your world. Go deep. Ask questions about the key. Smile.

—Larry Dixon and Mercedes Lackey,
late September 2014





Sample file

CHAPTER 1

GRIFFONS OF EVERGLOW

Wrought from beast and bird, saturated in the supernatural, griffons are the true inheritors of Everglow. Their prides wandered the land far before ponykind washed up on its shores, and they survived wars of extermination, rose into a great empire, and witnessed that glory crumble in their own talons. Griffons have known lives as free nomads, glorious conquerors, urban elite, and unparalleled warriors. From to bottom of Everglow society to the apex, and back again, griffons are an eclectic mix of ambition, pride, frustration, and honor.

Descended from powerful predators, they are aggressive, assertive, and fearless creatures who stand by the friends and families, any who challenge their autonomy and freedom. Ponykind finds griffons aggressive creatures, too quick to fall back on violence, while griffons see their hoofed neighbors as soft and naïve. This fundamental difference in outlooks keeps the two races antagonistic, but their mutual dependence has thus far prevented them from coming to blows.

HISTORY OF GRIFFONS

Griffons were among the first of the civilized races to dwell on Everglow, claiming the mountains as their own. Powerful of wing and deadly of talon, they had few natural predators. Theirs was a simple life of competition and rivalry between tribes. Unlike savage races, griffon inter-tribal conflict usually ended before lives were lost.

Their tribes spread across the highlands of Everglow during these early times, spreading across its fertile expanse, their only resistance the vicious beasts they drove away. They encountered the other feline kin in their travels, finding the sun cats to be their brethren of the plains, and the purrsians as their questionable allies of the deserts. Though the feline kin saw some measure of similarity among themselves, their differences drew them to occasional conflict.

Long before the ponykind were even imagined, the purrsians discovered a great vein of wealth running in the mountains

near the eventual site of Clovenhame. Griffons had already lain claim to the mountains, and erected a grand temple to the highest of the griffon gods, the Sun King, on the very peak the purrsians sought to mine. Attempts to negotiate were met with resolute refusal. The griffon tribe charged with upkeep and protection of the temple, the Razormanes, challenged the purrsian merchant lord of the mining effort. The purrsians refused the challenge and withdrew from the area. They would return in twenty years, starting the first true war of Everglow.

The Sun's Roar Incursion

The scheming purrsians were too cowardly to attack on their own against the martially trained and capable griffons. Instead, they sent word and money east, seeking allies. When they returned, it was at the side of strange mercenaries. They seemed incapable of four-legged movement, and had no wings. They were naked of fur, feather, and tail, but proved capable warriors. The combined force of purrsians and humanoid took the Razormanes by surprise and forced a retreat from the temple. As the invaders bashed in the gates and flew over the walls the griffons carried away their wounded and what little supplies they could.

The other griffon tribes were appalled and incredulous at the news. The very idea that an army led by purrsians could eject one of their proudest tribes was difficult to grasp, but the evidence was clear: volleys of arrows met any griffon daring to approach the temple. Even worse, the great gold architecture of the Sun King was being torn down day by day. As word of this travesty spread, the tribes of the mountain range banded together, and the war began in earnest.

Several griffon tribes and purrsian families were sent to the Sun King's court, most notable of which were the original tenders, the Razormanes, who fought to the last ejecting the invaders from what was left of the temple. By the time the last of the purrsian army had been ousted, little remained of the holy edifice. The last standing Razormane, well aware that she was the last of her line and that her kin had failed in their task, surrendered her life to the Sun King in return for one last great magic. The temple and the riches beneath vanished from the face of Everglow, taking with it the griffons that had shamefully failed to protect it. Some scholars think that it may yet exist, hidden in the vast tapestry of the universe between here and there. Perhaps it may yet be uncovered.

The war ended with the purrsians and their allies forced back out of

the mountains. With the efforts proving most unprofitable, they fell back away from the suddenly barren mountains, leaving the griffon tribes to recover and nurse a lingering dislike towards their hoarding cousins. The humanoid that had banded with the purrsians returned to their distant home to the east, not to be seen again until the time of ponykind. These strangely shaped but skilled warriors that had met griffons boldly on the field of battle were worth remembering.

Lords of the Griffons

During the war, the tribes came together as they never had before. With so many griffons in such a small space, the conflicts between tribes grew more intense even as they did battle with the invaders. Two griffons rose above the noise and confusion, and marshalled their people. Gerald Skyswiper and Sheh'an Longtalon—a mated pair that had not even yet undergone the binding rite—bound their people together. Generals and peacekeepers, they mediated between the tribes even as they oversaw tactics and logistics. When the war wound down, the griffons still looked to them. They had earned their respect, and this would not be shaken easily. They were to become the first true lords of the people. They accepted the positions hesitantly at first, but once the crowns rested on their feathered brows they rose to the challenge, united as lords, and took a new name: Skycrown.



PURRSIAN

Displaying the wisdom that had won them the position to begin with, one of the first decrees made by the newly minted lords was how to transition to the next lords in case of age, disease, or violence. All who thought themselves worthy would come to Lord's Roost, a small keep in the high mountains north of where Yishēng would eventually stand. It was also possible to nominate another who would be asked to join if thirty griffons of at least three tribes called for them. Once all worthy were gathered, they would undergo a tenfold trial before all who wished to witness. These tests were designed to put the potential ruler's wit, strength, leadership, and sincerity to the test. The trial has served the griffons well, as they have not suffered many incompetent rulers to claim the name of Skycrown. True to the first, it is common for lords to take the test as a pair, though this is not required.

The first Skycrowns also called their people to peace. There were many tribes that were urging their neighbors to battle. The wounds of the Sun's Roar IncurSION still ached, and the urge to strike a vengeful blow to the purrsians ran strong through the griffon people. Though some

lashed out on their own, the griffon kingdom as a whole made amends with the purrsian cities. The purrsian that had incited the war had died during the conflict, and few other desert cats seemed interested in resuming his plans, especially with the mountain drained of its mineral wealth. The resumed trade was beneficial for all, and the hurt of the war faded slowly to distant memory until a hundred and three years passed.

Arrival of the Goats

It was a crisp autumn day when a griffon hunter in the mountain range where their temple once stood fell upon a goat. Instead of a terrified bleat, it begged in Sylvan to be released. Startled, the griffon complied, and the cloven were discovered. Where the goat came from, neither the goat nor the griffon knew, but he had a family, and there were others beside. The griffons did not feel threatened by these unassuming herbivores, so when they asked for a small peak to call their own, it was given to them. The goats proved to be hard working, and the griffons watched as Clovenhome was built. The griffons found their goods to be of fine make, and the goats found clever griffon fuses, and powerful wings were very useful indeed. The two people became warm to one another and Clovenhome became a part of the griffon kingdom. This was never formally announced as such, but simply how everyone came to believe. The goats had no strong ambitions, and rarely argued the laws of the Skycrowns. While they had leaders of their own, they seemed to content themselves dealing with internal affairs of the city. The cloven had fine mayors, but never a true king, which made the griffons able to manage the larger picture around them. It was not to be the last time the actions of their neighbors would spill over.

The Scourging

The court of the Skycrown was interrupted with the panicked arrival of a young scout. She had seen something terrible rising from the deserts far to the south, where the largest purrsian cities dwelled. It radiated malice so potent that even from miles away she was struck ill and took flight to escape its fell presence and report. The Skycrowns of the time were a pair of puma-hawks who had received the position in no small part due to their discovery and perfection of the twinned tail fighting style. They dispatched additional scouts and mystics to learn more of the menace, urging caution.

"Do not allow yourselves to be drawn into purrsian foolishness. Discover its purpose. Discover its strength. Find its weakness, and report back," said they, and the scouts obeyed. Flying on determined wings, they learned of their enemy.

ALFINA