Estreham

Estreham is a secluded, bowl-shaped valley located within the southern country of Cottalem. It serves as a primary spiritual hub for the Clewgists and acts as a strategic winter home for the ancient matriarch Alfarinn and her sprawling household of female Heroes. The valley is protected by an ancient anti-male curse and is the site of the Temple of Clewg, a major architectural and religious landmark.

Geography and Climate

Estreham is situated inland and slightly north of due west from the town of Minhaton, reachable in approximately one hour by flight, but much longer on foot. The valley is accessible via a track that leads away from the river into a region of low hills and pastures, eventually giving way to the return of dense, deciduous forest. Unlike the arctic conditions of Heimdal, the climate in Estreham is notably very warm, even during the late summer and early autumn.

The valley is dominated by an oval grove featuring a continuous ring of twelve immense chestnut trees. These trees are physically braided together where their canopies overlap, creating a unified living boundary around the central temple complex. A small steaming pool, lined with smooth pink rock, feeds a crystal clear spring-fed lake on the western side of the grove.

The Curse of Estreham

The valley is protected by a potent and ancient curse laid by the Clewgists to defend against the Quirinites several centuries ago. This magical warding ensures that no man who is not a direct initiate of the Clewgist mystery can approach the sanctuary.

The effects of the curse are absolute; the bodies of male prospectors and soldiers who have lost their way are frequently discovered miles from the temple, having perished shortly after entering the exclusion zone. This supernatural protection provides the matriarch Alfarinn with a safe haven from male interference, particularly from the renegade Rojden. In recent history, the only man known to have survived the valley's environs is Noren, following a complex ritual of divine intercession.

Major Sites

Temple of Clewg

see the main page for Temple of Clewg

The central feature of the valley is a white domed building of oval construction, which sits within a large grass covered clearing. The sanctuary itself is made with a ring by immense pillars and remains open at both ends. Its walls are designed as sails that can be raised or lowered to manage environmental exposure. Inside, an off-centre black rock altar serves as the focus for high-level

rituals.

Artisan Workshops

Near the temple grove lies a collection of huts, including the workshop of Alfinna Alfarinnsdottir. A master of craftsmanship and a descendant of Frijdodr, Alfinna populates the area with lifelike sculptures, most notably a large black bear. These workshops are centres of specialised labour, where amulets and other reliquaries are crafted.

Recent History

In 774 AM, Estreham became the site of a pivotal confrontation with a magical geas. Yngvild the Fierce arrived at the temple seeking to save Noren from an involuntary geas laid by Rojden. After guidance from the Adept of Clewg, Wall, Yngvild performed a blood sacrifice at the black altar, calling upon the Nine Gods to break the binding.

Following the successful removal of the geas and Noren's resurrection, he was initiated into the mysteries of Jorunn within the valley. The events at Estreham were further marked by a divine directive delivered via a collective harmonic voice of the birds, commanding the seekers to find the mythical Chestnut Lodge.

Relationships

People

- Wall: A high-level Adept of Clewg, guide, and philosopher based at the temple.
- Alfarinn: Matriarch who utilises the valley as a primary residence and safe haven.
- Alfinna: Artisan whose sculptures and workshop are located near the sanctuary.
- Inibrakemi: A shapeshifting state agent and descendant of Alfarinn who frequently visits the valley.
- Yngvild the Fierce: Hero who performed the high ritual of resurrection at the temple.
- Noren: The only male to survive the valley in recent memory due to divine intercession.

Places

- Cottalem: The nation housing the Estreham valley.
- Minhaton: The nearest major town and logistical point for travellers.
- Riggin Dale: A valley twenty miles to the north-west used by Yngvild et al for a rendezvous with Skyssian agents.

Concepts

- Geas: The valley is famous for the specialised mysteries required to remove these compulsions.
- Clewgists: The religious order that maintains the temple and the valley’s curse.

Skyss - Story Background	Characters	Skyss - Places	Pantheons of the World	Other Background

fantasy, world-building, Skyss, Estreham, Temple, Clewg, Alfarinn, Fierce, place, 2026, Player: James

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