

The illustration depicts two elf warriors in a forest. On the left, a light-skinned elf with long blonde hair is shown in profile, wearing ornate silver and gold plate armor. He holds a sword aloft in his right hand. On the right, a dark-skinned elf with spiky black hair and a menacing expression is shown in a dynamic, lunging pose. He wears dark, intricately detailed armor and holds a sword in his raised right hand. The background is a misty forest with a bright, glowing light source behind the dark elf. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border with a repeating circular pattern.

Kingdoms of
Kalamar

BLOOD AND SHADOWS
THE DARK ELVES OF TELLENE

Blood & Shadows:

The Dark Elves of Tellene

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Introduction

Why the Kingdoms of Kalamar® Campaign Setting?

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting describes the world of Tellene, a vibrant world alive with rich characters, imminent danger, complex intrigue and exciting adventure, all awaiting your shaping hand. This robust world consists of many detailed lands and cultures, both human and humanoid, that are rife with adventure possibilities. On Tellene, fantastic creatures roam the wilderness, evil clerics worship evil deities hell-bent on destruction and the dead rise again to spread terror throughout the world. Complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids and medieval technology and culture come face to face with magic and the fantastic. Tellene combines the best of a realistic medieval world with all the elements of fantasy you have come to enjoy. While nearly any campaign setting suffices for a single adventure, your characters will find the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting to be an engaging game world to explore long after the novelty of the "tourist bazaars" has worn thin.

The underlying strength of the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting comes from its geo-historical basis. The maps feel right because they are right, at least from a standpoint of verisimilitude. The continents, lakes, rivers, forests and other geographical features all follow examples from the real world. This attention to detail clearly shows a setting built from the ground up, from the direction of the prevailing winds to the plate tectonics. No glaciers lie in the middle of warm lakes nor huge jungles in temperate latitudes. The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting becomes the invisible backdrop for the real action: you.

The player character becomes the real hero of any D&D game. You rescue the princess and you recover the stolen Whatzit for Lord So-and-So. You shape the campaign world through your actions, not the other way around. Tellene, like few other campaign settings before it, offers you the opportunity to be a world-shaper. Life in Tellene grows from ordinary men and women with extraordinary courage and resolve. This setting gives you the information you need to allow your players to become one of those people. But fear not, for all the detail and background history that this setting provides add depth to your adventures without confining them. The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting allows you to be the author of your own destiny by providing the scenery but not the story.

Of course, player characters cannot be everywhere at once. The world continues moving even when they spend weeks exploring long forgotten ruins or dark forests somewhere. Evil cults spread their influence throughout a small town. A village succumbs to a mysterious disease. A band of humanoids halts merchant routes between two cities. Villains even kidnap princesses when heroes are not around to do anything about it. What happens then? Well, sometimes the princess escapes, but more often the Vicelord has his way with her.

For the NPCs of Tellene are not inept, else they would not be worthy (or successful) villains. A world full of morons is no place to live. The good, the bad and even the so-so must transpire in the campaign in order to make the party's heroic deeds exceptional. After all, if every person on the block is a superhero, nobody stands out.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting is designed to enhance your D&D experience by providing a realistic backdrop for your character. Every type of person you could imagine lives somewhere on Tellene. In fact, that's one of the reasons the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting is such an enjoyable world to play in: it is tremendously versatile. No matter what type of character you choose to play, you should feel confident that he or she will have an important place in the world of Tellene.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting also provides a realistic, dynamic world for your character. Every sort of adventure can be found on the continent of Tellene. Whether you dream of finding great riches in the bellies of mountains or ridding the desert of undead abominations, the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting provides the where and the how, all the while maintaining a commitment to realism that lets you experience your character's adventures in the most satisfying ways.

In the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting, your character has a chance to stand out. In fact, you have a chance to be the greatest character in the campaign world. But greatness is different for every individual. While you may dream of conquering the continent and bringing peace and prosperity to its people, others may wish for the ultimate in scholarly or magical achievement. What sets the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting apart is its ability to give you the opportunity to do all this and more without sacrificing continuity or common sense. Here you are presented with the opportunity to become great. Realizing that opportunity, however, requires skill, effort and a little bit of luck.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Welcome to Blood & Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene. This Kingdoms of Kalamar supplement details the lives, ways and threats of the dark elves (also known as shadow elves, or "drow" in Low Elven), providing both players and Dungeon Masters with information regarding this unusual race. The first few chapters are for both player and Dungeon Master, but only the DM should read the final chapter.

Inside are rules for both running a campaign with the dark elves as the protagonists and for players to run dark elf player characters. Also included is the history and status of the elves that betrayed their kin and fled from the sun, as well as those relatives who chose not to betray the light.

This book is organized as follows:

Chapter One details the history of the dark elves. Here, Mithelizek Kexithemios, wizard and defector of the dark elf

Chapter Two discusses the culture of the dark elves, and the roles that those within it play.

Chapter Three presents the twilight elves and the remaining descendants of the elves who turned away from the Shadow elves' corruption.

Chapter Four details the rules and guidelines to playing a dark elf character, and includes information on character classes. It also includes several new prestige classes.

Chapter Five includes new equipment, feats, spells and special items.

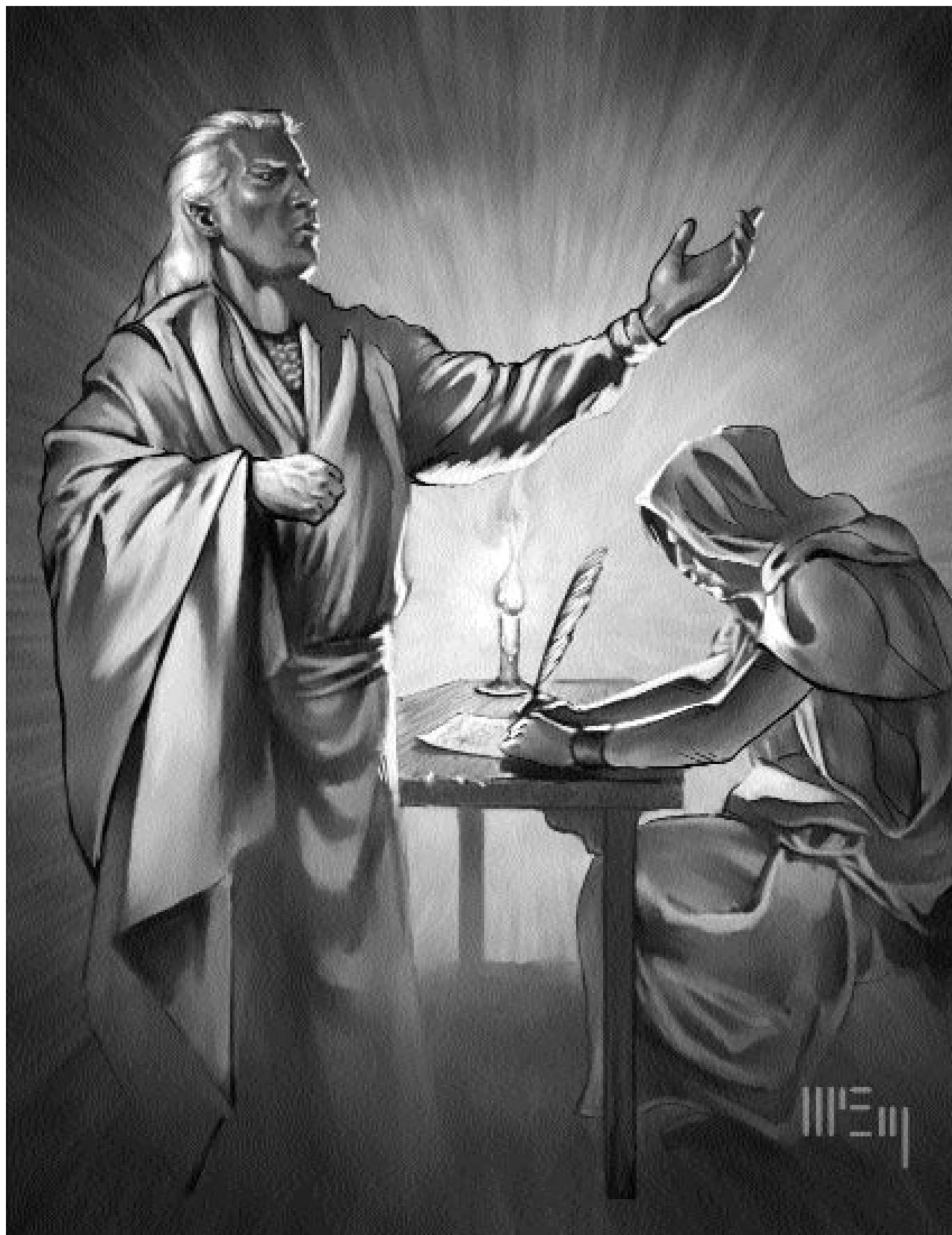
Chapter Six should be avoided by players, and only read by the Dungeon Master. It contains information both censored by Mithelizek, and things that even he is not privy to knowing.

The Appendices cover specifics about religion, new magic items, new monsters, a glossary and vital character statistics.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

This campaign resource assumes that you have access to the three core rulebooks of the Dungeons & Dragons game: the Player's Handbook (PHB), the Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG) and the Monster Manual (MM). This product uses updated material from the v.3.5 revision of the D&D rules. As this book is compatible with the Kingdoms of Kalamar fantasy campaign setting, it is also useful (but not required) to have the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook and the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide and any of the other fine Kingdoms of Kalamar adventures and sourcebooks available.

empire, explains the history of his people from the dawn of time to the current day.



Chapter 1:

History and Legend

HISTORY AND LEGEND

From "Histories Unknown" by Branlel the Younger
Historian to the Mendarn Courts
Graduate of the Eighth State

The following information comes from a series of interviews with Mithelizek of the shadow elves (also known as dark elves, or "drow" in Low Elven), and is intended only for those of the appropriate authority. For purposes of both personal safety, and the welfare of those who aided me in the past few months, I assure you that the knowledge laid out within this tome makes you a target of many dangerous forces.

I met the wizard Mithelizek only weeks after arriving in Vrandol, our Svimohzish colony. While performing my nightly ritual of compiling and checking my notes over a rather watered-down tankard of ale, a large man of native stock approached my table. Having heard stories of Svimohz accosting lone Brandobians out of greed and anger, I was more than a little nervous. The stranger said nothing at first, but then asked my name.

"Branlel...the Younger" I stuttered out from fear-stricken lips. The man merely nodded, laying a sealed scroll upon the table as he turned to leave. Still nervous, I sat motionless for several minutes after he departed, afraid something terrible would happen the moment I dropped my guard. Eventually, apprehension gave way to curiosity, and I began to examine the scroll.

The first detail to catch my eye was the seal. The symbol was unfamiliar, and even its design seemed alien. Whirling bars, lithely flowing about a feathery center, were somewhat similar to patterns present in elven handicraft but espoused a chillingly dark resonance. With a sneaking suspicion, I opened the letter, hoping for confirmation. The message, written in painstakingly scribed Draconic, was nothing more than a time and location within the city. Despite the potential dangers before me, I knew I must keep that appointment.

It was nearly midnight when a horse-driven cart arrived, its driver concealed from head to toe in black robes. The being, the only word I could safely use to describe it, gestured for me to climb aboard only after scanning the area for observers. Whispering a quick prayer of protection to Brovadol, I quickly complied.

The fog was unusually thick that night, so I cannot accurately report on our journey. The constant right turns gave me the impression that we were driving about in a circle, and the vibrations from the road gave me the impression we were destined for a location within the city. However, when the carriage finally stopped, we were nowhere near the city, but rather miles into the country. I quickly surmised that the entity I dealt with was no doubt a student of the arcane, a suspicion that first arose by the writer's choice of Draconic script. Of course, this theory cemented itself as I gazed upon the cyclopean tower standing at the opposite end of the meadow. The black structure stood defiantly in the moonlight, like an oppressive sentinel in the otherwise serene wilderness. As if impatient with my surveillance, the enigmatic driver pointed to the tower. Again, I complied with its wishes and made the walk towards the dark building.

In the lighted door, the person I would soon learn to be my host stood before me. He was rather tall for a dark elf (or so I learned later), standing at half a head over five feet, although in the light of the moon he seemed almost soaring in stature. His ebony skin and jet black robes appeared to consume the silvery luminance around us, as a rift of darkness in the middle of the light. He politely beckoned me to come in and made his formal introductions.

I should say here that Mithelizek Kexithemios is an unusual example of his race. He values both solitude and the fresh open air, which his brethren find anathema. Nevertheless, what mostly separates him is a willingness to associate and do business with those not of his race. He is an outcast, and subject to severe punishments, should his

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fellow dark elves ever discover his whereabouts - hence the covert means in which he brought me to his tower.

After a brief exchange of formalities, the mage made clear his business with me. Through his network of contact, he had come to know of my interest in his race. Since little such knowledge exists in modern civilization, Mithelizek explained that he would be glad to help me - for a price. He claimed that the information he possessed was most valuable, and he would require payment of an extremely costly nature. What he demanded in return is not something I am at liberty to discuss at this time, nor do I think I ever shall be. In hindsight, I wonder if I chose the correct course of action, but my excitement was too overwhelming to do so effectively.

Upon the elf's request, the first subject he lectured upon was his peoples' history. He stressed the importance in understanding this history in order to "appreciate" (his own words) all other aspects of his culture. As my focus of study is historical fact, I saw the wisdom in such logic. The following are the wizard's words exactly as I wrote them from his spoken discourse. I shall warn you that Mithelizek's bias towards his people is, at best, mixed. Sometimes he grinned with pride upon their accomplishments, and other times scowl in bitterness. So take heed - a grain of salt may be necessary, but the truth remains.

MITHELIZEK'S TALE

You cannot have peace or harmony any longer, my children. No emotion will ever again be pure for us, because everything is hate and anger now that the sun hides behind the stone.

- the Book of Scorn

"Long ago, millennia before you humans gained even the remotest intelligence, the elven civilizations of Tellene existed in a peaceful harmony with both nature, and each other. The commoners worked side by side with the nobility, crime and treachery were virtually nonexistent, and all elves walked fearlessly with the beasts of the wild. It may be difficult for your human mind to contemplate such a paradise, but life at the dawn of the world was much purer than it is now.

Much like today, there were different bloodlines of elf. The high elves built beautiful cities in the light wooded areas and meadows. The wild elves lived more primitively within the heart of the fey forests. The gray elves lived in the most remote places, doing Gods-know-what ever it is they do. However, our people...we lived upon the Elenon mountains. What? You look quite surprised. Your reaction is not entirely a shock, however. You would never be able to wrench out that little nugget of lore from those frail, callow elves in Lendelwood. Painful memories and mistakes of the past are things best forgotten to them, no matter the consequences of ignoring history. They sweep their unpleasantness cleanly under the forest floor.

We were not always as you see me now. Back in that far off time, we were the twilight elves. Our skin was pale, and our flesh was statuesque, not unlike alabaster or marble. Our hair burned radiant gold and copper like the metal ores in our mountains. We towered over our lowland cousins, standing even taller than you Brandobians do today. We were the most beautiful of the beautiful, with the pride to match. Moreover, why should we not be so? Our castles rested upon the tops of the mountains themselves; we lived in the very firmament of heaven. We taught our lesser cousins the art of working metal for tools and jewelry, and we were the greatest wielders of magic and science of the Dawn. We looked down from our thrones in the sky at our cousins, bewildered by their need to live amongst beasts and dirt. Of course, of all the sins absent at the Dawn, envy was not one of them. Our cousins' jealousy of our lofty home in the clouds was subtle at first, but soon became more apparent. Naturally, this only served to increase our pride, and so only worsened their hostility. The idea of resentfulness between elves was a very frightening prospect at the time, and many of those in power on both sides of the tree line became worried, fearing this might be the greatest crisis of history.

You know, my friend: I just realized how ridiculous that last statement must have sounded to your human ears. Hostility, open or veiled, is something your race deals with every day of your short lives. It must seem so commonplace - a nuisance often ignored. Vrandol is an excellent example: the Svimohz hate the snobbish, oppressive Brandobians, who in turn look down upon their hosts as exploitable labor. Given half a reason and the right opportunity, the civility of the colony would erupt into blood-drenched chaos. However, no one seems to think twice about it. Yes, your people would have my full sympathy, were I were capable of having emotions for such simple beasts.

You see, the crisis lay within the fact that my people did not wish such a sad and horrible condition placed upon their civilization. Such things not only did not occur at the Dawn of the World, but were inconceivable to most folk - an innocent ignorance that our leaders meant to keep. However, perhaps they were trying to stave off the inevitable; their attempts only worsened an unavoidable catastrophe. Only the gods involved know.

AN ARRANGEMENT FOR PEACE

The sages and leader of both the lowland and twilight elves discussed the matter at length, finally agreeing upon a diplomatic solution that your people are often fond of employing - an arranged marriage between the most beautiful and respected of both races, to bridge the gap between heaven and earth. From the lowland elves, Solethius, prince of Lathlanian town, would be the groom. From the twilight elves, a bride from the Halibeth family was

thought best. The House of Halibeth, and the city that bore its name, was the most revered of all the twilight elves. The city that they founded towered high in the Legasa peaks, its white, lofty spires almost reaching to the radiant sun itself. Yes, their family was the archetype of all virtues possessed by the twilight elves - beautiful beyond comparison, wiser than centuries, elegant to an apex. It was legend at the time that the blood of Lady Love flowed within that family, a tale that proved quite ironic later. Ironically, they were also the proudest, haughtiest, and most resistant to the thought of appeasing their "inferior" relatives. In fact, they were the most ardent supporters of the isolationist movement spreading along the mountain kingdoms at the time. However, after much cajoling (and most likely bribing), the family patriarch agreed to the marriage by offering his youngest daughter, Joleriel. I wonder - had he chosen any of his other 12 daughters, perhaps our people would still be living under the sun? His choice was our first step towards damnation.

Joleriel was a ravishing maiden of only 95 summers, but with the wit and intellect of one sevenfold her age. Many a suitor had his hopes smashed upon attempting to court her, as she proved quite frigid and unaffected by romance. She was incredibly vain and self-absorbed, even by her family's standards. No suitor could match up to her impossible standards, for she saw herself worthy of no less than a man of god-like stature. In fact, she prayed each night to all the gods, daring them to come and court her in mortal fashion. And, eventually, one did.

On a dark, moonless night, Hatemonger himself came to visit the young maiden. He came in the form of a great drow of impressive physical stature, standing upon the balcony of her quarters. The girl's usual arrogant composure gave way to fear and awe, cowering before the sight of the great deity made flesh. "Why do you quake in fear, vain girl? Is this not what you asked for?" asked the god. Joleriel, paralyzed in horror, could not answer. "Perhaps," said the Emperor of Scorn, "it is you who has much to prove to me."

From that night on, the god visited her chambers and whispered dark secrets into her ears. The black lore shared in those many nights Joleriel scribed by her own hand, thus forming a dark text now known as the Book of Scorn.

The news of her betrothal to Prince Solethius was anything but a surprise to young Joleriel. Months in advance, her dark lover informed her of the forthcoming event, calling it an opportunity for her to prove her worthiness as his consort. With an unexpected enthusiasm, Joleriel agreed to the demand of her reluctant father.

By the time of the wedding, Joleriel had already amassed a rather sizeable cult to the Despiser. The downside of naïve innocence is that it is very easily corrupted, and the bored young noblewomen of the city found the concept of moonless night ceremonies and clandestine readings

to be exciting recreation. Eventually, the thrills of reckless youth changed into worship and, over time, evolved into blind zealotry. Now with a small army of followers at her disposal, the young maiden hatched a plan to bring her lover's wishes into fruition.

BETRAYAL AND BLOODSHED

The wedding ceremony was to take place in Leucaunth, a small town near one of the tributaries of the Lendel River, in the foothills of the Elenons. Dignitaries of all the major houses attended a celebration lasting two weeks, which preceded the actual wedding itself, with overabundant feasts and wine flowing like the waters of the nearby creek. Now, to say that the security at this place was lax by modern standards is an understatement. Elven warriors at the dawn of time could spend centuries without swinging their swords in anything other than practice, the few exceptions being against some evil aberration or beast. Other than the house guards of the two families, there were no armed guards at the site, which worked to the advantage of Joleriel. Her followers, disguised as Lendalian elite guards, entered the chambers of their mistress' family and slew her parents and siblings. They made as much noise as possible while carrying out this grisly act, making certain they were seen as they escaped into the hills. News traveled quickly back to the temple grounds and, upon hearing of her family's death, Joleriel made a great show of false anguish, claiming the wedding was a trap of the lowland elves. The Halibeth guards quickly drew their swords. As the now confused Solethius tried to explain that there must be some sort of misunderstanding, Joleriel pulled the ceremonial gaz'zirad (a long, double edged dagger with weight and length comparable to a short sword —B) of her people and buried it into her groom's heart. Violence washed over the temple, and the true Lendalian guards were easy work for the twilight guard. Those followers who remained behind produced weapons hidden throughout the temple and proceeded to slaughter the high elf royal family and any guests they could catch.

Very few escaped this massacre, and Joleriel's followers left the once peaceful town to burn to ash. To this day, the elves of Lendelwood consider the area where Leucaunth once stood to be a haunted, unholy place. They tell tales of ancient undead roaming the ruins of the desecrated temple, doomed to walk the birthplace of betrayal and wanton murder. That is something else they do not like to talk about to anyone, even amongst each other. It is another secret they refuse to acknowledge, but that will no doubt manifest and haunt them when they least expect it.

Two distinct versions of the Leucaunth Massacre cropped up soon after among the elves, though I imagine the story told by the scant number of survivors was closer to the truth. The horrified elves managed to find their way back

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to their respective homes, reporting that the twilight elf princess had lost her mind with grief, and became mad with vengeance and bloodlust, brutally slaughtering many in her pain. Of course, Joleriel told us a much different tale. Not only was the wedding a trap set in order to destroy the Halibeth family, but also as a precursor to an invasion of the mountain kingdoms. Only through the guidance of her god was she able to turn the tables on our treacherous kin and turn defeat into victory. She then "reluctantly" took the crown of her father. Only a few hours after her self-coronation, the confederacy of the mountain kingdoms declared her Empress under martial law (thanks to her followers in key houses). Her first decree -war with our traitor cousins.

THE WAR BEGINS

Although I denigrate my surface dwelling kin concerning their naïveté, I cannot say that my own bloodline is much better. At least in modern times, the elves of Tellene have their own thoughts and opinions. However, since the ending of dawn and to this day, my own people are as easy to lead as sheep, provided the shepherd is a shadow elf with expensive fineries and bosoms. Why, in the short span of a few days, my people were told a suspicious story concerning a massacre, saw a princess become a queen and then an empress, and found themselves at the beginning of a civil war. Yet, no one questioned it!

The war went exactly as the Empress wished - prolonged strife with no clear way of winning. The length of the war is lost to history, but it was certainly much longer than any human or hobgoblin war recorded. Although the lowland elves outnumbered us four to one, we had the defensible advantage of high ground, and a near monopoly of metal ore to create weapons and armor. Nevertheless, as I said, a long, strife-ridden war was exactly what the Empress desired in her scheme to win the Despiser's love.

Imagine a besieged city walled with strong defenses along the turrets. Yes, food, water and weapons are inexhaustible, but consider the mentality of the citizens in such a prolonged siege. They live in constant fear and uncertainty, desperately relying on their leader for comfort and guidance. Joleriel began her "improvements" in this setting.

JOLERIEL'S CHANGES

The earliest change was the creation of the House of the Unwritten Page, a group of bards and artisans whose job it was to inform the people of news concerning the war effort and important domestic issues. Thus began our long-standing tradition of misleading the masses by vilifying the Empress' enemy and concealing her own crimes. Do you know, I believe this is perhaps our greatest art form? Their deceptions spread through everything from handbills to theatrical plays. In the minds of the twilight elves, our lowland cousins gradually devolved into bloodthirsty, sub-

humanoid monsters, while the First Empress elevated to a status scarcely below godhood.

Next came the official founding of the House of Scorn (falsely called the House of Hope). Hatemonger shone in a positive aspect, and was accredited with many of our military victories. The House of the Unwritten Page described him as a gentle but firm deity, a staunch defender of the peace - in other words, the complete opposite of what he is. This false House of Scorn became the state religion, and quickly gathered quite a following. The other gods, even those well-established with my people, remained legal, but the House of the Unwritten Page spared them none of its slander, and many of the old temples were vandalized. As popular opinion turned against its own gods, the House of the Unwritten Page increased the vilification of the other religions to fuel the flames. Simple vandalism turned into arson. Sensing that lynching would be next, many of the clergy fled from the Empire. Those who stayed either converted to the state church or endured martyrdom at the hands of those they once guided. When the false House of Scorn finally removed all of its rivals from the Empire, Joleriel declared herself its high cleric. The young Empire was now a theocracy.

The last of her improvements made upon her people is the most radical in the eyes of history - the decision to officially brand males as weak and give all roles of importance to the females. I suppose that this part of the grand scheme was not the decision of Hatemonger, but rather one of Joleriel's whims. The early texts surviving from that period describe her as having very low regard for the mental capacities of men; not unlike the disdain some of your race hold towards females. Again, several well-crafted lies and a few choice assassinations proved to be the answer. With our society molded to her desires, it was now time for Joleriel to execute the final stage of her plan: lose the war.

WAR'S END

The expression of shock and confusion upon your face once again graces the room. Please bear with me. We are, of course, discussing plots that span from decades to centuries in order to execute - almost a half a human lifetime for the simplest scheme to come to fruition. These things seem completely illogical to one with such a narrow perspective of time and miniscule lifespan, but rest assured that her plan should make sense when I explain the reasoning behind it. You see, Joleriel never entertained any delusions of winning the war. In fact, she had no desire to win. She merely sought to isolate her people so that hers would be the only voice they heard. However, once she had succeeded, the war no longer served any purpose. Trying to win had little reward, as expansion into the lowlands risked losing her dominance over the minds of the people. Also, there was little guarantee we could win. If the high

elves discovered the blasphemies our society engaged in, they would not rest until they destroyed us all. Surrender meant sure annihilation. No, the only viable option was a calculated loss, under predetermined terms.

The Empress arranged for our military forces to make critical errors on the western front, losing large amounts of ground. While our Empress let hundreds of our soldiers die needlessly, her speeches turned from victory to exodus. She told the people that Hatemonger came to her in a vision, telling of a promised land deep within the mountains.

To this, Joleriel responded by increasing the number of critical errors made by our military. Now, thousands were dying, and the invaders moved at tremendous speed towards our borders. With the collapse of the Empire seeming imminent, even the most stubborn sheep lifted their hooves from the mud and corralled into the darkness. The military then reduced, buying enough time to organize and execute the evacuation. By the time the allied elven armies marched upon our capital, there was nary a soul to greet them. My people call this the First Exodus.



The true destiny of our people, so she said, lay within the caverns below, and that we must travel to it. At this point, despite all the deceptions, common sense finally made itself known to my people.

As we often mined the earth for ore and gems, we were no strangers to traveling underground, and thus did not suffer the fear of small, closed off spaces attributed to our cousins. However, spending a few hours a day in a mineshaft is much different than spending the rest of one's life miles underground, and denied the sun and the sky. Asking the elves of the firmament to live in the foundation seemed as logical as asking an eagle to spend the rest of its days in a badger den. Finally, the Empress' word was being questioned.

THE FIRST EXODUS

Again, our Empress had planned ahead of time. During the early days of her reign as Empress, she successfully converted an entire clan of mountain dwarves, the Moss Beards, to the true House of Scorn. They acted as guides to the refugee twilight elves, helping them establish their own settlements, and showing them the ways of surviving underground, including cultivating food and stonemasonry.

By this time, we were settled within the underground confines of the mountains, our morale low and our population a fraction of what it once was. Our once joyous race was now hardened by the ravages of a prolonged war, and cold-hearted from the loss of the open skies and warmth of the sun upon our faces. The Unwritten Page did not portray Hatemonger in benevolent tones for us; it

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was not necessary anymore. The House of Hope revealed itself as the House of Scorn, and its bigotry we welcomed with open arms. Distrust towards those not of our blood dominated our hearts, and hatred for our cousins burned in our souls hotter than any forge. Hatred consumed us, for we no longer hated because we were taught and told to do so, but instead we hated because we wanted to. With our fate sealed for eternity, our race no longer walked the path of the righteous, but instead sprinted down the road of corruption.

EMPRESS MELURIA I

Though Hatemonger gave my people the gift of hate, the greatest of his gifts he gave to the one who dragged us down into the abyss we now called home - Cleric-Empress Joleriel of House Halibeth. In her room late one night, the Despiser gave her what she asked for, and soon she became pregnant with a daughter - Meluria.

Meluria was exactly what the House of the Unwritten Page foretold - a being of divine status. Although her mother was unbelievably beautiful, Meluria's splendorous form could strike a male blind if he looked at her directly. Though her skin was light and her hair was gold, her soul was as black as her father's. Also, small, vestigial demon wings - the mark of true evil - grew from her shoulder blades. On the evening of her ninety-fifth birthday, she took the same gaz'zirad that slew Prince Soletius and cut down her own mother, placing the bloody crown upon her own head before the stunned crowds. Thus was the coronation of Meluria I.

Our second Empress proved little different from her mother in terms of ruling ability. We continued to sink further into debauchery and malice, often taking out our frustration on each other when suitable targets were not available. We still did not know peace, however, as did our mountain dwarf neighbors. Moreover, they could not stand the likes of such evil creatures as we sharing their confined space. When we lived above their heads, our relationship with them was friendly but restrained. They would visit once for trading of goods, or to exchange some trade secrets concerning metalworking and gem cutting, but mostly

both sides wished their privacy. As the War of Elves raged on, the mountain dwarves stayed away, although I suspect they made a handsome profit providing our cousins with weapons and other metal goods that we had once supplied them. Not surprisingly, they were less than happy to see us living in their subterranean home, especially after word came to them that we were responsible for the corruption of the Moss Beards. Although we never engaged them in a true war, there were countless numbers of skirmishes, raids and the like.

However, other than the changing of leadership and the sporadic dwarf extermination, the first few centu-

ries of our new life in darkness was a golden age. The elves of the wood eventually discovered what we had truly become, but they never attempted to hunt us further. We had gone where they feared to tread, and I think I have already made clear their method of dealing with horrible memories of the past. As debased as we had become spiritually, a fierce pride drove the people to not only adapt, but to thrive. The degradation within our Empire receded after the relocation, as the House of the Unwritten Page slowed its work from a raging torrent of propaganda to a gentle stream of true art. Many great plays and epics entertained audiences in this time, and new forms of art emerged, all embracing the new ways. Our expressions took a darker form, perhaps even macabre, but still held an eerie

beauty reminiscent of our past glories. This was also a glorious age for the arcane practitioner, for our greatest achievements with magic came during this time. In many ways, it almost seemed as if rebelling from our family improved our lot in life - a reward from Hatemonger for sacrificing our old lives in his name. Indeed, this was a time of great achievement for the twilight elves. Nevertheless, all good things must end.

FROM TWILIGHT TO SHADOW

For some time, Empress Meluria bore nothing but worthless sons, even though she used male concubines as often as washerwoman uses rags, trying in vain to find one who could sire her daughter. Her persistence eventually paid off, and on the 350th year of the First Exodus, our Empress Meluria I produced a daughter. More precisely, two daugh-



ters – she had given birth to twin girls. While one had skin of marble and hair of reddish gold, as was common with the twilight elves, the other had skin the shade of night and hair the color of bone. My people took this to be a mark of Hatemonger's approval, and rejoiced in the good fortune of our Empress. Truly, her child must be blessed.

You can imagine it was of some small surprise when the next child, born of a cleric, was also so marked. As was the child of a mason, and as were the next, and the next... It quickly became clear to all that the shadowy children were our future, and we reveled in our own damnation. The twilight elves were dead, and the shadow elves stood in their place. But to return to the twins...

They named the shadow elf child Drow'deltha, meaning "first of shadows, and the twilight sister Persephaine, which is the substance your jewelers refer to as white gold. Through the decades of their childhood, their dualistic natures shone through. Drow'deltha was exceptionally cruel, even for an heir of the Empire, and many spoke in whispered tones that she would take the crown by the same means her mother had. Persephaine was a stark contrast to her sibling, although the greater scandal indeed, for no amount of training or conditioning could hide the kindness in her heart. She treated males and commoners as equals, and had a reputation for being generous and cordial – things unbecoming of a shadow elf and inconceivable to perceive in shadow elf royalty.

The Temple did nothing to suppress rumors that the Princess was insane; in fact, they encouraged such thinking. The people had to be ready to accept Drow'deltha's ascension to the throne without any question. You see, the temple's dogma returned to haunt them, as there were no clear guidelines on inheritances concerning twins, or which would officially be the heir. The only rules recorded concerning the heir to the throne were that the inheritor would be the oldest surviving daughter at the time of the mother's demise.

The possibility of a power struggle loomed overhead, so the only course of action would be to instate Drow'deltha upon the throne immediately upon her mother's death, in hope that Persephaine, whom the people thought weak and mad, would not dispute her sister's ascension. Even with her seeming lack of ambition, the nobles in the Temple were still not entirely convinced that the Pale Golden Daughter (a nickname given to her by the people in a sympathetic tone) was completely harmless. However, even if the weaker sister were not to interfere, there was another problem. Not long after Meluria slew her mother and claimed the title of Cleric-Empress, she added to church dogma that no member of the royal family might slay another of her blood. Any murder of the Empress or her family was punishable by death, with no exceptions. If Drow'deltha were to slay her

mother without covering her tracks, her life would be forfeit and Persephaine must ascend.

THE DISAPPEARANCE

Then, shortly after the twins reached adulthood, the Empress Meluria vanished. No body, no sign of a struggle, and nothing that would incriminate Drow'deltha was found. There was a panic within the halls of power, as divinatory magic revealed nothing concerning the Empress' whereabouts or fate. Clerics scurried about the palace, desperately searching while attempting to fool the masses of the Empire into thinking that nothing was wrong. While they hurried in vain, Hatemonger's favored granddaughter stood by and watched with a wicked grin upon her lips. On the sixth day of the hopeless search, she became bored with her subjects' suffering. She went into her mother's quarters, obtained the symbols of sovereignty of both church and state, and ordered the searches to cease.

The news given to the people of the Empire was that the Empress had fallen sick, and was unable to perform her duties. Meanwhile, Drow'deltha would act as Empress Regent until either her mother regained her health or passed on to meet Hatemonger. Only the clerics who originally searched for the Empress knew the truth, but without solid proof of murder, they could do nothing to challenge her claim to the throne. Persephaine, away studying at the Arcane College, was unaware of her mother's disappearance. She learned of her mother's sickness along with the rest of the Empire, and immediately set out to return to the palace upon hearing of the news. On the way, her bodyguards were ambushed, and quickly overwhelmed. Only Persephaine and two of her guard managed to escape.

The attack, as you may have already deduced, was ordered by Drow'deltha. She knew that her altruistic sister would return to attend to their ailing mother, although the texts I have read have described the relationship between mother and daughter to be cool at best. Therefore, she set an ambush along one of the many long, rarely patrolled tunnels traversed to return. However, not only did the Princess manage to elude the assassins, but made it all the way to the court of her sister. Drow'deltha surely had to use all her willpower to hide her shock and rage when she saw her sister's living face.

"Where is mother? How does she fare?" asked the Pale Golden Daughter.

"She is in one of the hidden rooms, in order to assure her privacy. She hangs on to life with but a thread, as none of the healers seems able to relieve her sickness. I think our grandfather shall claim her soon," misstated Hatemonger's favored. "She is to remain to herself, as only those possessing great healing prowess may enter her chambers without fear of contracting the disease. There is

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nothing you can do here. Return to your chambers and I shall inform you on her state when I can."

Pale Golden Daughter knew that she could not argue with her sister, and left the court - although she did not return to her chambers. Instead, she left the palace, skillfully dodging the minions sent to spy upon her movements. You see, Persephaine was not a naïve, weak simpleton, as her family believed. She was, in fact, a very shrewd woman, touched by a goddess.

LADY LOVE TAKES ACTION

Lady Love, whom you Brandobians know as Lelnani the Pure One, and we elves call Adrabrintariel, watched the downfall of the twilight elves with much grief in her heart, especially concerning the corruption of her children in House Halibeth. The manipulations of her offspring by Hatemonger enraged her, and their final exodus into the sunless lands had all but destroyed her heart. She waited patiently for a time when one of her likeness surfaced from the bloodline of House Halibeth, and Persephaine was that Chosen One. When Persephaine was a small child, the goddess began to visit her in secrecy. How exactly Lady Love knew of the child is another mystery lost in time. The restricted church text in which I found this information is the only one of its kind, and it does not provide an explanation.

Lady Love taught the little elf maiden many things: her heritage, her purpose and her destiny. She instilled upon her the virtues and ways of her ancestors as they were before Hatemonger's corruptive influence seeped into the twilight elves. However, she also warned that since Persephaine was to be her champion, then her sister would no doubt be her nemesis, as she was the evil incarnate dominating the Halibeth bloodline. She would no doubt be a greater evil than any previous Empress, perhaps even too destructive for Hatemonger to control, and it was important for Pale Golden Daughter to plan for the day when she must oppose her sister. The day that she left her sister's court was that day.

TWILIGHT REMAINS

Oh, lest I forget... Do you remember my mention that some of the original holy men and women of the twilight elves escaped the lynch mobs of our declining Empire? There were more survivors than the Empire would care to admit, and they had yet to forgive themselves for allowing their people to slide into shadow. They headed west, down the slopes of the Elenons and into the camps of the lowland elves. In those days, the lowland elves asked questions before firing, which accounts for the survival of these expatriates. The twilight elf priests were first prisoners of war at the hands of their suspicious cousins, but their relevant knowledge of enemy locations and horrifying tales of their Empire's heresies were enough to garner some

trust. Eventually, the elven armies made special amnesties for all fleeing twilight elves, and a majority of the frightened priests and other disillusioned twilight elves arrived safely at the lowland kingdoms. They aided their cousins as best they could, and many died valiantly in the hope of dethroning the wicked Empress and saving their people from damnation. Alas, when the invading forces found our mountaintop homes empty, the refugees were heavy of heart, while their cousins cheered cries of victory.

They received offers from all the races of the elves, as their sympathetic plight and unerring valor touched even the dispassionate gray elves. A council of remaining twilight elf elders thanked their cousins individually for their kind sentiment, but declined all offers. To settle down within the kingdoms of their cousins meant to interbreed with them, thus having their culture and race disappear over the passage of time, an event they felt was akin to defeat at the hands of Hatemonger.

The surviving twilight elves journeyed back to the Elenons, taking residence within the halls of the mountain dwarf clans. In exchange for swearing fealty, they were given full citizenship and the chance to observe their people from afar. I imagine that the dwarven campaigns against the shadow elves, and no small number of their victories, were due to twilight elf influence. Twilight elves also became adept spies, for they could appear as a shadow elf with minor magic, and few of our traits and habits had changed since the First Exodus. With the greatest diligence did these infiltrators watch for signs of a chink in the Empire's armor, a small glimmer of hope that our people could reach salvation. Persephaine was exactly what they waited for, and they wasted no time in contacting her."

MY TIME IN THE TOWER

At this point, seeing by the water clock in the room that dawn was approaching, my host summoned a servant, apologizing for retrieving me so late. I was led to another room in the tower, the only one (I later learned) with a window unenchanted against sunlight. I found breakfast waiting, along with a number of blank scrolls, quills and inkpots. As my hands cramped mercilessly from taking dictation all night, I decided to forego my usual review of my work and took my meal with little delay. More curious than exhausted, I decided to explore my surroundings. With the dawn's first rays of light, I surveyed the outside environment more clearly. Little else lay beyond the meadow - a few sparse trees and shrubbery, the occasional deer bedding in the high grass, and so forth. There was little cover in sight, which led me to believe that the tower's anonymity was due to magic alone - another mark of my host's arcane prowess. Satisfied that there was little of interest outside, I explored the inside of the tower.

Many of the rooms were marked with a sigil stating those areas to be off limits. This was hardly a shock, as past experiences with spellcasters taught me that most mark their laboratories and experimental rooms in a similar manner. The rooms I had access to produced a bevy of information on my host. For instance, if you were to ask the uninitiated person to describe the inside of a drow tower, he might evoke many a manner of stereotypes commonly associated with necromancers - undead servants, filth-encrusted chambers stained with blood, and all manner of ghoulish décor about the place. This was not the case. The tower, although filled with many a servant, seemed devoid of any such aberrations. I imagine that such beasts were concealed within the restricted rooms for my visits. However, when I questioned one of the servants, also a dark elf, she merely laughed, stating that necromancy is both distasteful and taboo in the eyes of her people, and that the tower never hosted any sort of death magic. The shadow elves still retain the elven hatred of the undead, and exterminate any undead without second thought just as do elves in other lands.

As far as the servants themselves, I counted at least 20, meticulously cleaning all the chambers of the tower. Their results were evident, as I never witnessed a mote of dust anywhere during my entire stay. Mithelizek would often test the sterility of the rooms with a white glove, chastising his servants if he found the cleanliness of the room anything less than perfection. My host obsessed in his need for cleanliness - one of many such oddities that I noticed in my visit. He also seemed uncomfortable indoors. He always seemed to stay near the many large, open windows in his tower, and exited the tower for the wide meadow on numerous occasions in the evening. The longer he remained in the tower during our waking hours, the more agitated he seemed. This tension was alleviated only when he walked outside for a span of several minutes, coming back rejuvenated. How Mithelizek survived while harboring such a strange discomfort for cramped quarters is beyond my means to comprehend.

As I write this, it is the third evening of my time here. Last night, my second, Mithelizek was preoccupied with an experiment of some sort, and dispatched an apprentice to inform me of the delay. In compensation, her master had approved my access to one of his libraries, to which she led me. Although the temptation to study the books was powerful, I deigned to interview the apprentice instead. She, much like all the servants I have seen so far, was a female dark elf. I could identify her as being separate from the staff, as she dressed in the robes of an apprentice, not the scandalously meager vestments worn by the servants. She avoided any questions about her master, so instead I made query concerning her and the other female occupants in the tower.

Apprentice Xelilia stated her master obtained his servants through various means - slave rings, indentured servitude and payment of debt. This confused me, for Mithelizek had impressed upon me that males had limited rights in the Empire. How could a male do such things? She offered little answer, only stating that her master had contacts that made such things possible. As for herself, she was once a member of the merchant class, the heir to a mushroom plantation. Unfortunately, blight struck the crop, wiping out the majority of her mother's fortune. With debt accruing and her mother's rivals capitalizing on the misfortune, she had no choice but to sell her child into slavery. Naturally, the selling of females is illegal within the Empire, so she used contacts in the black market factions, who eventually found a buyer in Mithelizek. Although Mithelizek purchased her to add to his army of overworked scullery maids, he saw great potential and uncanny intelligence in the young maiden, and decided to make her his apprentice. Xelilia told me that her time away from home was very disheartening at first, but the lessons her master taught opened her eyes to the flaws of her former home, and of the true power of magic when not dominated by the temple. She spoke at length of the virtues of Mithelizek, and gave me the impression that their relationship was more than professional. Satisfied, I thanked her for her time and began to peruse the various tomes before me. I believe that the books concerning his people were in another library, for I only saw tomes concerning the histories and cultures of other societies, some of which were written by me! Perhaps my reputation as a historian and sociologist was a factor in his choosing to bring me here. Still, I saw there many tomes I had never read before, some of which I now seek for my own collection.

It is almost time for Mithelizek's evening discourse, which I anticipate will be the conclusion of our history lesson. I am more than curious as to understand why the shadow elves are reported to inhabit the Krimppatu Mountains, if their touted homeland is actually the Elenons.

MITHELIZEK CONTINUES HIS DISCOURSE

"Again, I must apologize for my absence last night. Some complications from a previous experiment made it imperative that I conduct more tests, so I can only assure you that my delay was unavoidable.

It occurred to me earlier that I mentioned Empress Drow'deltha ordered the attack upon her sister, although I had not mentioned that the attackers were, in fact, hobgoblins. A slight oversight on my part - as I focused on the plight of my own people, I neglected to mention our dealings with them, which were quite important.

My texts allude to the idea that we, the shadow elves, created the hobgoblin race, in an underground temple somewhere near the headwaters of the Ek'Ridar River.

Whether true or not, the parallels between this and the creation myth of the hobgoblins of Norga-Krangrel are quite intriguing. However, this fails to take into account the hobgoblins of Ul-Karg. Yes, much as I am loath to admit it, I feel that the legend of our creating the hobgoblins is merely that – a legend.

Among the shadow elves, the hobgoblins held a position below the corrupt Moss Beard clan, and were subject to special laws in order to keep them under control. They were also restricted to their own temples and living spaces. Hobgoblins were often scapegoats for my people's crimes and schemes during this period, and thus subject to lynch mob justice. Male shadow elves and Moss Beards were particularly fond of using them in this manner, thus venting their frustrations upon their own inferiors. Nevertheless, the hobgoblins allied themselves with Drow'deltha when she approached them with the opportunity to better their lot in life. Although just as zealous in serving evil as their betters, they chafed greatly at their place in the Empire, and would do anything to improve their lives.

Now that I have clarified this point, allow me to continue...

NEW ALLIANCES

After her flight from her sister, Persephaine located a safe house managed by one of her fellow conspirators - shadow elves converted to her cause. Pale Golden Daughter informed the underground that the time of reckoning was at hand, for she had little doubt her mother had perished at the hands of her twin. The conspirators prepared themselves as best they could, eagerly anticipating the next moves of Hatemonger's favored.

The next few months of this reign were uneventful, as Drow'deltha pretended to give her mother time to expire, so not to excite the unknowing empire. Eventually, it was announced that Meluria I had finally passed into the darkness, and the empire observed a month long period of grieving. Since a noble's body can only be seen by a select few of the highest rank, there was little difficulty in counterfeiting the funeral. We do not bury our dead, but rather inter the bones into the ossuaries of our temples. I believe a peasant girl was a likely substitute for the Cleric-Empress.



With the interring complete, Drow'deltha became the new undisputed Empress, and her sister's conspirators waited patiently for her first move.

When I mentioned the other night that the twins were a precise dichotomy of good and evil, I went into more detail concerning Pale Golden Daughter. Being her opposite, Drow'deltha was the very epitome of malice. Even as a small child, she received a reputation for cruelty and violence, often making sport of killing servants and peasant boys on a frequent basis. She adopted torture and avarice as pastimes, and made it no secret that she had enjoyed the carnal touch of more than one demon. By the time she secured the crown, her evil was more akin to madness, and her first major decrees all but confirmed this.

Six weeks after her mother's funeral she crowned herself God-Empress of the shadow elves, disbanding the hierarchy of the House of Scorn and reforming the theocracy to worship only her. Immediately, we were plunged into civil war. Why she did this, I am not certain. Perhaps she believed she truly was a deity, although she was at best one-quarter divine. On the other hand, it could be she thought the

obvious chaos resulting from such a radical change was necessary for a grandiose scheme of her grandmother's scale. Alternatively, it could be as the people of the time thought - that she was completely insane.

With the loyalty of both the hobgoblin warriors and priests, and one-third of the House of Scorn - mostly disenchanting lower clerics - Drow'deltha was a force to be reckoned with. A council of clerics of the disbanded temple led the remainder of the shadow elves in opposition, although they fought a losing battle. The hobgoblins, who waited to prove themselves to their shadow elf betters, were excellent tacticians and ferocious warriors, seldom taking prisoners and slaughtering man, woman and child alike. Persephaine and her followers did what they could to alleviate the suffering and help refugees flee the carnage without giving away their position, for her sister had not forgotten about her. She kept moving, as her sister's minions were never more than a step behind.

Meanwhile, so my texts tell, plots brewed in worlds beyond this one. Hatemonger was livid at his granddaughter's usurping of his position, and saw his long-term schemes evaporate as her genocidal crusade consumed the Empire. Hatemonger did everything in his power to bolster the loyalist forces, but his upstart granddaughter always seemed to have planned a counteraction. Fearing that she coveted his very throne in the pantheon of the gods, Hatemonger became desperate enough to act against his divine nature. He arranged a meeting with one of his most hated enemies, Lady Love.

They met in a place devoid of good, evil, law or chaos - the perfect neutral territory for two rivals of godly might to negotiate. Lady Love was radiant, smiling with all the hated glory of the sun, and seemingly with foreknowledge that her nemesis must turn to her for help - which only added to the Despiser's revulsion and spite. They argued terms, but finally a pact was sealed. The Coinmaster, chosen as an unbiased third party, notarized the contract so that neither party could break the deal.

The two deities came to their worshippers in a vision, relaying a plan in which to topple the pretender to the throne. I have no doubt that the Hatemonger carefully chose his words when explaining the situation to his priests as not to lose face, but that is a moot point. At any rate, the two factions met as their deities had, and an uneasy alliance formed.

Hatemonger's remaining armies launched a final desperate attack against the capital city of Halibeth-Jolieriel. The resulting battle is a testament to the shadow elves' tenacity and valor, as they made a good accounting against hobgoblin forces that outnumbered them four to one. While the battle raged on, Pale Golden Daughter and a small band of elite followers managed to make their way into the Grand Temple, fighting their way through some of

the greatest warriors of the Empire. Finally, the two sisters united again, and a battle ensued of epic proportions. Magic born of book and faith clashed, fiendish abominations were summoned and sent to combat holy messengers, and both fire and lightning lit up the immense caverns. The written histories state that the siege of the city stopped when the twins began their battle, as the armies below watched intently to see who would emerge as the victor.

When they had both spent their magical energies, the sisters engaged in a sword duel: Hatemonger's favored wielding the jelyenesh of her office and the gaz'zirad that slew her grandmother, while Pale Golden Daughter used the sword Dawnfire, taken secretly from the palace. At this point, the only sounds heard in the entire empire were the sounds of the twins' swords clashing, ringing out for miles around. Finally, Persephaine scored a strong hit against her sister, and followed up by slicing cleanly through her neck. Sheathing her sword, she dragged the body and severed head to the grand balcony of the temple, presented the remains to the onlookers below as a sign of her victory. It was at this time that the deities of the shadow and twilight elves finally made their presence known, in order to enact the final terms of their pact.

THE SECOND EXODUS

Hatemonger appeared to the new Empress' right, a male dark-skinned elf of perfect body, while Lady Love manifested as a beautiful twilight elf of unbelievable majesty, donned in a flowery robe. Persephaine told her people the price of deposing her wicked sister - they must choose to whom they would swear allegiance. Those who wished to walk the path of the Radiant would stay in the empire under the Elenons, forever the guardians of the broken shadow elf empire. Those who wished to continue their service to Hatemonger must migrate to the new promised land, but leave their most powerful artifacts and their historical records under the vigilant eyes of the twilight elf sentinels. The Moss Beards were given the same choice, but the hobgoblin mercenaries were simply cast out on the surface. The gods gave the people a fortnight to decide their fate, and word spread quickly throughout the empire of the mandate handed down. When the deadline expired, one-third of the shadow elves and half the dwarves chose redemption, while the loyalist majority (including several members of the royal family) traveled through giant inky portals of darkness, with no idea what lay beyond. My people recorded this event as the Second Exodus.

FROM SHADOW TO DARKNESS

Arriving at their destination, beneath the Krimppatu Mountains of Svimohzia, the dark elves found that Hatemonger had not provided them with caverns as numerous or large as those previously enjoyed. Though their population was grievously thinned, and this was more

space then they truly needed, a splinter of anger began to grow in their hearts. This was the beginning of the Great Divide – but I get ahead of myself.

Now in their new home, the first task was the building of a new empire. Meluria II, the oldest of Meluria the First's surviving granddaughters (through one of her less than noteworthy sons), became the new Empress, while the second eldest granddaughter took the position of high cleric. Meluria II, a key figure in the loyalist armies, proved to be a dedicated and wise leader in this time. She rallied our demoralized people with hope, and is said to be the first to coin the name "drow", or "dark elf" in Low Elven, for our people. Perhaps, from some dark land beyond, Drow'deltha's spirit smiled at that.

One of Meluria II's first acts was the construction of the capital, to be called Nal'loreian. She also granted titles and houses to individuals of the lower class who showed heroism during the war. Even a few Moss Beard dwarves received this privilege, cited as unusually exceptional specimens of their race, worthy to live amongst the shadow elves. Much like her great-grandmother Joleriel, Meluria II convinced her people that their latest defeat was, in fact, a triumph. Now, she claimed, they were free of both their hated cousins and the damnable dwarves, and once the capital was completed and society restructured, life would be even better than before.

The rebuilding process was somewhat slow, as the drow no longer possessed their greatest magical devices or artifacts, but gradually they made the caverns of the Krimppatu Mountains into something to be proud of. Within the span of less than a century, civilization beneath ground began to flourish, and the House of Scorn was again at full strength. A group of spellcasters, though they lost many powerful members during the war, formed a new Arcane College, and the construction of several more cities began. Indeed, we may have been on the verge of another golden age, but fate decided otherwise.

THE WAR OF ALL DARKNESS

A scouting party, looking for suitable caverns for expansion, was the first to discover our newest enemies, though they may already have known of us. These warped, tentacled creatures, whom we eventually learned to call illithids, or mind flayers, instinctively decimated the scouting party. Only one survivor returned to tell us of the horrific alien beasts. The dark elf army sent groups of soldiers to investigate, but none returned. The mind flayers then decided to take the offensive.

Our army, although strong, was ineffective in halting the mind flayer advance. They used grimlock and umber hulk slaves as fodder against our infantry while they stood behind, using strange magicks to break our ranks. Fortunately, the raids were infrequent, and sometimes months would pass

between attacks. Unfortunately, the mind flayers eventually stepped up their offensive and began hitting us more rapidly. Our once flowering population now showed a decline, as we lost both numbers and sources of food. Thus began what our historians called the War of All Darkness.

When events seemed most grim, a miracle of sorts occurred. Captain Jeleksiar Xeb'beth and his men, searching for a tunnel through which they could strike with a surprise attack, encountered a mind flayer ambush. The illithids, using their bizarre magicks, sensed the coming of the small band and set a trap for them. The soldiers were promptly defeated, and most already devoured, when several unlikely saviors arrived on the bloody scene.

Six humanoid shapes seemed to manifest from the darkness, donned in the simplest clothing, and bearing only staves, slings and other strange weapons. Despite their oddity, they made short work of the mind flayers, displaying extraordinary physical feats. The remaining dark elf soldiers, one of whom was Captain Xeb'beth, looked upon these new beings with both shock and awe. The strangers were content to ignore the dark elves at first, quietly taking trophy heads from the mind flayer corpses. Captain Xeb'beth, swallowing his fear, managed to utter a few words, but to no response. He tried greeting them in several languages, finally gaining their attention through an older form of High Elven. The new beings' seemed confused this time, waiting a moment before responding. Finally, the leader, whose name was Per, responded to the greeting in the same language, opening a dialogue between the two.

Both our peoples, the dark elves and (as we later learned) the githzerai, are normally quite distrustful of other races, and prefer to be self-sufficient and isolated. However, an overwhelming hatred of a mutual enemy can change such things, if only temporarily. The group agreed to return to Nal'loreian with Captain Xeb'beth and his men for further discussion of the possibility of an alliance. Here, the evil dark elves thought to themselves, was an opportunity. Surely, in exchange for providing some small service for their forces, the monks would instruct them on both the mind flayers themselves and how to defeat them.

And so it was. The Unwritten Page had little trouble explaining to the people why we were allying ourselves with strangers we knew almost nothing about, for both commoner and noble knew well that it is easier to backstab a friend than an enemy. Several dozen monks were sent to our aid, although this proved to be more than enough, as they allowed us to not only recover the caverns and grottoes lost to us, but also to expand further into the illithids' home territory. Once the mind flayer cities lay in ruin and their remaining numbers driven into seclusion, the monks bid their farewells and returned to whence they came, taking in payment a small number of our males as servant warriors. We were hardly sorry to see the outsiders

go, as there was some apprehension that they might be tempted to take some of the land won from the illithids. Their leader remained, promising to teach us the ways of defeating the beasts before returning to his home. It was he that founded the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist, to train any dark elves seeking further knowledge in his ways. What's that? You think it odd that a female dominated race has any sort of Brotherhood? The answer is quite simple - the females were uncertain of the dangers involved in this fighting technique, so it was decided that only men would be risked. Captain Xeb'beth was one of the first students.

The conflict with the mind flayers lasted only a few years, but time exaggerated this into a war in the legends of my people, and so it is recorded as the War of All Shadows.

A PAUSE IN THE CONVERSATION

As he had a few nights prior, my host made his polite leaving a half-hour before dawn. As I sat upon my bed and consumed my early morning meal, questions formed within my mind. If Mithelizek's claims of twilight and shadow elves remaining in the Elenons were true, why have I never heard of it? I have more than a few half-elven contacts, and I have never heard of such a thing! Furthermore, if they did in fact exist, then what has become of them? Is there anyone alive today who is in contact with this lost city of elves? I have a feeling that my host's history lessons are not quite over, so I will have to reserve these questions until a later date.



MITHELIZEK CONTINUES HIS TALE

"You seem impatient tonight, friend human. No doubt even a historian can stand to hear only so much history, and you have many questions. Fear not, for there is little more to cover. Centuries passed by without any great tragedy or scandal. Meluria II seceded to her daughter, Meluria III, becoming the first Empress to live a full life and die by natural causes.

The soul of Meluria III, however, contained all the evil that her mother lacked. She set our people a grand challenge - to seize our destiny as rulers of the world. With the support of the elderly high cleric, her mother's sister, she claimed that it was the will of the Despiser, and the people believed. What surprises me somewhat is that Hatemonger himself did not take a hand in proving or disproving this claim, as he had done in the past. Some tomes state that the Confuser of Ways opposed Hatemonger at this time, drawing his attention away from the Krimppatus. Perhaps this is true - I do not know. Nevertheless, it is not written that he interfered.

Information on the reign of Meluria III is fragmented and vague, but it is certain that she led a terrible war against the surface, over twelve millennia ago. For some time, the Empress succeeded, even going so far as to form a stronghold in the plateau where the human Meznamishii now live, and claiming the Dashan Mountains of the stone dwarves for our own. You see, though we had lived underground for some time, we had not yet grown as sensitive to light as we are today - I will come back to this later. Yes, the dark elves ruled above ground and below, and few could stand against them.

However, the dark elves eventually grew complacent in their power, until combined forces of elves, hobgoblins, dwarves and gnomes rose against us on several fronts. The battles lasted many days and nights but, in the end, the remains of my people returned to the Krimppatus, bearing the dead bodies of their Empress and royal family. On their way, the survivors were again attacked by bands of dwarves, seeking to eliminate as many females as possible and ensure the death of our race. They killed many before the dark elves could flee beneath the mountains, though they were unsuccessful in their final goal. We survived, but at the cost of many lives. Thus began the Great Divide.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Defeated and leaderless, the dark elves threw up their hands and cried bitterly, "Where is Hatemonger? Why has he abandoned us?" For weeks they wailed, screamed and cursed, but to no avail - their god failed to respond. Though the clerics of Hatemonger were quick to respond with reports of a vision in which the Confuser of Ways interfered in Hatemonger's plans, the damage was done. Though a scant few clung to their faith in Hatemonger, the remainder

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of the dark elves turned to the other gods of evil, particularly those of chaos. These churches were the Temple of Strife, the Temple of Sleepless Nights, the Conventicle of Affliction, the House of Vice, the House of Knives, the Church of Endless Night, and the Order of the Passionate One. But I shall speak more specifically on religion later...

With the fragmenting of their religion, and no ruling nobility to guide them, dark elf society fractured as well. Each individual city became home to anywhere from one to twenty clans – groups of families related by bloodlines. A so-called “royal” clan and a council of the noble clans ruled each city as an independent nation or city-state, with smaller cities paying tribute to larger ones. Advancement in these governments came through assassination and inter-clan wars, with few royal clans maintaining their vaunted position for more than four or five centuries. Most nobles came from the remaining spellcasters, though powerful warriors also claimed the position. Egalitarian notions spread, due to the dwarves’ slaughter of our females, and the need for wise elders (even males) in powerful positions. Over time, individual clans became matriarchal, patriarchal or neither, depending upon their own traditions. As for the former capital city of Nal’loreian, it became a matriarchal city-state, with power over several nearby cities.

I see from your face that you are surprised with this change in attitude. Again, let me remind you that we are discussing events that span from decades to centuries – these changes did not happen overnight. Yet, they occurred, and perhaps the surface dwellers slept easier, for our constant infighting kept the dark elves far too busy to worry about those who lived topside.

RETURN OF THE EMPIRE

Yet, this too came to an end. Almost ten millennia after the Great Divide, an ambitious elder Matriarch of Nal’loreian became convinced that her people had grown weak and depraved. This Matriarch, Setimeka by name, realized what she must do - reform the Empire under her rule and bring pride back to her people. Naturally, this took many years, for the leaders of the independent city-states were little inclined to give up their power. But Setimeka was strong, and with the support of her clans, nearby cities, the House of the Unwritten Page, and many warriors (who now worshipped at the Temple of Strife), her victory was almost inevitable.

The city-state of Nal’loreian again became the capital, from which the elder Matriarch ruled for several years before her passing, though she refused the title of Empress. “I have served as the Matriarch all my centuries,” Setimeka claimed, “and I see no reason to change at this late date.” She was awarded the title upon her death, and her eldest daughter, Empress Setimeka II, claimed the throne.

To say that she was a mediocre ruler is generous, for Setimeka II lacked the flair and charisma of her mother. She was even quite plain looking - not a powerful font of inspiration in any facet of leadership. The only time she reaped any respect from the populace was when she singled out an individual for her frustrations. In fact, it was very likely that a political rival, or one with close business ties with her two younger sisters, would assassinate her. With no desire to be culled, she decided on a desperate course of action to divert attention from her, while instilling fear within her enemies. She called a veraliak.

THE VERALIAK



A veraliak is the formal calling of a hunt against a heretic or traitor - a violent and senseless process when handled by zealots like the dark elves. The first victim of Setimeka II’s veraliak was noble Chel’lestra of House Freamar, one of the Empress’ most powerful rivals. The Empress waited until Chel’lestra came to visit, placing her in the palace guest quarters for a hired Brotherhood assassin to perform his duty. When the deed was done, without alarming the other residents of the palace, the Empress joined her servant at the death scene. Being a spellcaster of some skill, she created an illusion that altered the appearance of the corpse, choosing to make her victim appear as a twilight elf. After the magic veil was finished, she then placed several items about the room from a secret compartment in the wall. These included the vestments used by a priest of the Parish of Love, a dagger and a small vial of poison. Once satisfied with her handiwork, she sent her assassin away.

She then let out a scream, which soon brought several guards to investigate. They found the Empress lying dazed near the corpse of what appeared to be a twilight elf with a snapped neck.

She claimed to have come to Chel'lestra's room in response to a summons, but the traitor attacked her from behind the curtains with the poisoned dagger. Using her training, she overcame her assailant, breaking its neck in twain. Upon the noble woman's death, so she claimed, Chel'lestra reverted to the form of a twilight elf, thus provoking the Empress to scream in sheer terror. The guards, seeing the forbidden religious items of their most hated goddess, believed unquestioningly, and soon word of the twilight elves' presence spread like wildfire. The veraliak started soon after.

Soon, the houses of the Empress' most powerful rivals fell one by one, as rumors turned into accusations, and then into arrests. House Freamar was the first to disband, three days after the death of its matron. Seven more houses saw similar fates, although the fear spread throughout our halls was so thick that evidence and trial were no longer necessary.

As Setimeka II destroyed her most powerful enemies, and her covetous sisters cowed in fear, common sense dictated that she call off the veraliak. It had, after all, served its ultimate purpose. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, she did not relent. Why exactly she chose to allow the veraliak to continue is something no one knows. Perhaps her distrust of other clans grew, perhaps having her first taste of true power intoxicated her, or maybe she found the taste of blood too seductive to resist. In any case, the madness continued, and the veraliak rolled onwards.

Her focus moved away from the noble families of her clan to the merchant families, but once she had her fill of their blood, she moved on to other, lower families. Her bloodlust was infectious, and many neighbors accused one another of being either a twilight elf or being the servant of one. Soon, chaos reigned, and executions became a daily event. She no longer needed even the most inadequate excuse to point her finger, she simply chose a target and destroyed it. She then targeted her older brother as being a heretic. This proved a grave error on her part, however, for her older brother was the head of the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist, and its disciples answered to him only. Within three hours of making the accusation, Setimeka II was found dead, her body a shattered heap. The last sighting of her older brother, Monrek, was by his next youngest sister, Culexi. He walked up to her, handed her the crown and gaz'zirad of the clan, and simply stated, "We are leaving now." Monrek, and all the male members of the Brotherhood, were never seen again.

The female students – yes, the Brotherhood began accepting female students over three millennia prior - were

instructed to stay and serve the new Empress, Culexi the First. The highest-ranking female disciples left behind founded a new school - the Sisterhood of the Obsidian gaz'zirad, answering directly to the Empress. The new Empress' first proclamation was officially to end the veraliak. The second was to clear her brother's name of all charges of heresy, and formally pardon him for the murder of her sister. Her third was to respect the absence of the Brotherhood, and to make illegal any attempt to follow or track them.

Sadly, those events still affect my people to this day. Veraliaks are still called in order to strike mistrust and fear into the people, but never at the length or scale used by Setimeka II. As for the Brotherhood, they are scattered about the world, in some of the most secluded places in Tellene. I know of one ashram, located deep within a sandstone labyrinth under the dunes of the Elos Desert. They are no longer pawns of Hatemonger, that is for certain, and their separation from our society over the centuries has created interesting changes in their views and beliefs.

RECENT HISTORY

Since the departure of the Brotherhood, there were few major catastrophes - aside from the routine inter-clan wars - and the next two millennia passed without interaction from the outside world.

The current Empress, Asaibakil, proved to be a very effective leader indeed, not to mention the most liberal. Her manner of leadership favors a more open-minded approach to dealing with the world, even concerning religion. A few neutral religions now enjoy legal status among her city, and those cities that follow her lead, though many regard these as lesser faiths. Most dark elves merely pay lip service to these beliefs in hopes of currying more favor amongst the gods. Furthermore, we occasionally allow other races to dwell within our lands, albeit under great restriction. They require permission and authorized traveling papers, and all sentries have the right to stop an outsider and demand to see these papers at any time.

Some fifty years ago, Asaibakil forged a trade agreement with the Golden Alliance merchant's guild. This proved lucrative for both sides, as the Alliance enjoys our rich gems and created metal handiworks, while we are quite happy with the foodstuffs and wooden crafts our people have not enjoyed in thousands of years. In addition, the slave market finds a welcome home in our lands, with human, elven and dwarven slaves performing most of the actual work. Other surface races are often kept as pets. For example, I knew a noblewoman who kept one of the merfolk in a large glass tank, much as some human kings keep colorful fish as pets.



Chapter 2: Society of Shadow

Unfortunately, they seem to die in captivity after a year or so, but it was quite a novel thing while it lasted.

The most important decree of our current Empress is the reclaiming of the Dashan Mountains. You may have heard recently of the battle between a group of human and gnome miners and a dark elf war party assembled under the ground. I hear tell that the humans congratulated themselves heartily for their victory. Of course, it is more likely that the "war party" was merely a small group of ill-prepared scouts. Still, it reminded the surface races that we still exist, and that the land underground is not safe for those who dwell in light."

NARRATOR'S INTERLUDE

At this point, only an hour until dawn, there was a knock at the chamber door. Mithelizek answered to find one of his servants, claiming to have urgent news. Excusing himself, my host stepped out into the hall to hear his servant's message in private. It was at this time my eyes glanced upon an unsealed scroll, jutting out from between some books on the desk near the far wall. Now, as I heard the door close, I stood up and walked across the room to examine it. Though my researches have not made me completely fluent in Draconic, my curiosity had taken hold, and I could not resist.

Taking the scroll in my hand, I saw a broken seal identical to the one on the message that brought me to this place. However, although the seal was the same as I had seen before, it made no mention of Mithelizek. In fact, it was addressed House Halibeth! Unrolling the scroll, I saw that the content was far more intriguing than I had hoped - it seemed to describe a bizarre ritual employed by Drow/deltha! The wording implied that this was a partial copy from a longer text, although Mithelizek's possession of this particular piece suggested a very important section of lore. Quickly skimming the words and committing it to memory as best that I could, I carefully replaced the scroll and quietly returned to my seat. He returned several

DARK ELF RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution. Dark elves are clever and quick learners, but they suffer from the same physical frailty as other elves.

Medium: As Medium creatures, dark elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Dark elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to magic sleep spells and effects, and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells or effects.

Darkvision: Shadow elves can see in the dark up to 120 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and drow function just fine with no light at all.

+2 racial bonus to Escape Artist, Move Silently and Spot checks. Dark elves have a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks.

+2 racial bonus on Craft (Alchemy) checks to identify or make poisons.

+2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells or spell-like effects.

Light sensitivity: In direct sunlight, or within the radius of light from a continual flame or daylight spell (or similar effects), a drow suffers a -1 penalty to all skill checks, attack rolls and saving throws. This sensitivity slowly occurred over the past twelve millennia since the Great Divide.

Automatic languages: Drow and Undercommon. Bonus Languages: Abyssal, Draconic, Ignan and Terran.

Favored Class: Varies with sex: cleric for females, wizard for males. A multiclass dark elf female's cleric class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 60 of the D&D Player's Handbook). A multiclass dark elf male's wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass

minutes later, noted the time and suggested that we retire early, as the lectures concerning history were complete. I agreed and went to my chambers and dinner.

Now feeling secure of my privacy, I relate what I have memorized from the page:

...unclear at this time. Despite the intentions of her fiendish lover, she related the Ritual of Descent to the young

princess. The ritual, painstakingly scribed from the remains of the former Empress' diary, was a complex and prolonged procedure, requiring both a high rate of endurance and keen intellect. A key element in the ritual is a chosen weapon, the Jelyenesh of the Black Hells, previously used in ceremony and currently abandoned in the remains of the old Empire where the hated twilight elves now dwell. We could not ascertain whether the sword possessed special properties, although we believe it may have changed drastically from the ritual, perhaps achieving the status of the most cursed blades. It certainly took on intelligence and powers it was not previously recorded to possess. Drow/deltha claimed a new echelon of personal power, perhaps bolstering her beliefs in her own godhood. As for the ritual itself, she mentions having scribed more than one copy, some of which may still...

The page cuts off there, leaving the existence of this ritual unknown. Nevertheless, it told me that Mithelizek selectively edited his history lesson. But why was this necessary, and why did he use the same seal as the royal family? Was he in fact a member of this house, and if so, why exactly had he left?

It dawned on me as the questions ran through my mind - if Mithelizek was indeed a member of the royal line, then the blood of both Lady Love and Hatemonger ran in his veins as well, albeit thin. This causes me some concern, as I realize his research concerning the ritual may not be merely a scholarly pursuit. Surely, I will get little sleep tonight...

IN WHICH MITHELIZEK DISCUSSES DARK ELF SOCIETY

"You look tired, my scholarly friend! Did you have trouble sleeping today? If it would please you, I could have my servants turn over the mattress, or - very well, I simply thought I would offer. As I have promised, our next subject of lecture shall be the culture and characteristics of my people, starting with the basics.

PHYSIOLOGY

In silhouette, we are nearly indistinguishable from any other elf. However, in full light our appearance is striking. Unlike the surface elves, our skin is darker, with shades ranging from the deepest jet black to a dark slate gray, though these lighter shades are quite uncommon.

Our hair is bone white in color, and facial hair is found only in drow where flows the blood of other races. This is considered a mark of weak blood, and many with this defect often take to the monk lifestyle, where solitude abounds and strength of mind and body is more important than appearance. Those who come to terms with their facial hair often let it grow long, as if in defiance of custom.

Dark elf eyes are adapted well to total darkness, though in such instances we see only in black and white. Our eye colors tend towards shades of amber, blood red or violet. The pupil is usually black. Occasionally, a drow may be born with pure white eyes. Some believe this to be a mark of favor from Beraclya the Dark One, though they see no better or worse than those with normal eyes do.

Our voices are fluid, but heavier than those of other elven races. Our voices are also versatile, for we have a wide range of tone and pitch. I myself am capable of speaking the light, airy languages of Tellene, such as Reanaarian human, Gnomish and Elven, or the darker, guttural tongues of the dwarves, orcs and Fhokki humans, with little or no accent.

We are among the shortest of the elves, our once-tall members bred out over time. After all, height can be a great hindrance underground. Our males average around 4 feet and 3 inches in height, and no taller than 4 1/2 feet. Weight is approximately 95 pounds, with our heaviest males at 110 pounds.

Drow females are very similar to their male counterparts, with only a few exceptions. They generally have the same skin and hair coloration, but they never possess facial hair, and their body hair is less prominent. The average height and weight of female drow is less than that of the male, but the difference is small (perhaps two inches in height, and 10 pounds in weight). Drow females can be as muscular as males, but most are not.

A dark elf reaches adulthood at about 110 years, and usually expires of old age between 500 and 600 years of

age, if accident, disease or frequent violence do not claim the elf first. However, I have heard of drow who lived to be as much as 750 years old, though such are uncommon, given our chaotic nature.

Finally, we do not require sleep, as you humans do. Instead, we meditate in a deep trance for some 4 hours each day, which provides us with just as much rest as your 8 hours of sleep.

PSYCHOLOGY

The base values of our society, dominance and chaos, are interrelated, and so I shall do my best to explain them together rather than separately. These values, I am sad to relate, come from our basic insecurity over our place in the world, and our failure at dominating the surface. This failure festered in our hearts for many years, and now we demonstrate our power by crushing those below us and backstabbing those above us.

This urge to dominate manifests itself in every aspect of our lives, most often taking shape as mad schemes, haphazard plans and unpredictable struggles for position in the hierarchy of a clan, city or the Empire itself. You see, the more drow one commands, the more prestigious the position. As such, we do not define dominance only in physical terms. It is power over others – whether this be physical, financial, psychological or other – that is important.

Naturally, my people are in a constant state of conflict because of this belief. The Empire is necessary to maintain some semblance of order, but this means that there can only be one completely dominant drow – the Empress. The others must therefore be losers. However, we have been able to rationalize this, by claiming that currently they are not the most dominant, but that this is not final, and they have not lost anything permanently. We can accept a setback because we believe that, ultimately, we will regain what we have lost, and more.

One aspect of dominance is the ability to publicly perform a chaotic act, such as taking the life of another, without repercussions. You see, anyone can murder another person, but one who can kill in the middle a crowded party full of officials, nobles and royalty, and then walk away unmolested, proves his or her dominance. It is not even necessary to treat the victim fairly, for it is important what you do, not how you do it.

Though our need for dominance often manifests in physical acts, we do not give these any greater consideration than other types of dominance. You see, a dark elf can also prove dominance by exerting non-physical power or influence over others, often forcing them to perform an act they normally would not.

For example, a drow general has dominance over his men, and can order them into combat even in a losing

situation. By doing so, they acknowledge their general's dominance. If they refuse, the general loses his dominance over his troops. I believe you humans call this a "loss of face." At this point, the general has two choices. He may attempt to regain his dominance with physical intimidation, threats to the soldiers' families and so on, or he accepts his loss of dominance. If the soldiers bow to his threats, he keeps his dominance. If they continue to refuse, he has lost his dominance. Assuming the general is not killed, the story quickly spreads, and he will quickly be challenged for dominance in other aspects of his life. Naturally, most drow prefer death over a loss of dominance, unless they are confident they can soon regain it by other means.

The Empire clearly determines who gives orders and who takes them, ensuring that commands are executed. A hierarchy also provides every member with an indication of exactly who they have surpassed, and who has surpassed them. This allows us to measure our progress in terms of rank in the hierarchy, and gives us a medium in which to exercise our dominance, and targets upon which to free our chaotic nature. As a result, we impose a hierarchy upon almost everything we do.

We are also quite greedy, viewing others and their possessions as goods we must possess to prove our dominance. Material wealth is a sign of civilization and of strength, and so we hoard whatever we can take from our enemies. The more wealth one possesses, the more people he or she must have dominated, though this is not necessarily true. One may possess dominance over many without being of great wealth, and vice versa. Wealth equals class, but class does not necessarily equal dominance.

However, though we can be cruel, arrogant and hedonistic, we can also be courteous and urbane, even to our deadliest rivals. We also have a great love for objects of beauty, and surround ourselves with them. Of course, such objects are not only valued for their aesthetic appeal, but for the status and power they represent.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

As I mentioned previously in my dissertation on history, one may find many dark cities beneath the Krimppatus, each home to anywhere from one to twenty clans – groups of Houses (families) related by bloodlines. During the Great Divide, a council of clans ruled each city, though this practice changed somewhat upon the reformation of the Empire.

Now, a single clan rules each city, paying fealty to the Empress. The position of Empress is hereditary, except in extreme cases when an upstart seizes the throne through conflict. The Empress rules from the capital city of Nal'loreian, and is advised by the Council of Three. The council represents the military, the clergy (of the most dominant church), the wizards (who are mostly of noble birth), and the civil

government. In truth, this should be called the Council of Four, but the name existed generations before the creation of a civil service, and so it has stuck – much to the chagrin of these last members. Also, my people consider “odd” numbers (3, 5, 7, 9, and so on) luckier, or somehow “better” than even numbers. It is a quaint superstition, is it not?

Each of the four council members has his or her own agenda, and constantly tries to gain the majority of the Empress’ attention. The clergy most often has her ear, but all have held the highest spot at one time or another. Of the four factions, the military is considered more important, but all are considered equal in dominance, and most drow are concerned only with their place in their own faction’s hierarchy.

These four branches of the upper class support their members with food, housing, clothing and a salary. The quality and quantity of this support varies with the rank of the person. The upper ranks of the hierarchy have large salaries, fine clothes, and can afford large estates. Lower ranks have small homes, and live comfortably, but are not wealthy.

The rest of the society, nearly two-thirds of the population, is composed of slaves – usually humans, elves, dwarves and the occasional gnome. They are inferior to members of each of the upper castes, and must follow the orders of all four. Naturally, no formal hierarchy exists within this group, though the slaves of the wealthiest drow rise to the top.

Government

Dark elf law is an interesting paradox, due to our fierce sense of individuality and chaotic souls. So how is it, you may have asked yourself, that these elves have prospered so long living under the rigidity of a structured Empire? The answer is simple: fear and dominance.

Fear is the greatest leadership tool, for it is the only one true constant that has allowed each Empress to hold the reins of power within her grasp. Setimeka’s power waned during her first few years because no one had just cause to fear her; but when while she gleefully rode the tide of the veraliak, the terror she sowed caused her power to reach an apex. However, her subjects cannot live in total fear, or else they would be useless, nothing more than quivering mounds of jelly. This is not exactly effective against an enemy, so the level of fear maintains at an optimum level of respect. Once the balance is set, the other (and perhaps most important) element that a dark elf truly understands comes into play - might.

As I mentioned before, dominance - and the sheer, unadulterated power that goes with it - is what every elf in the Empire lusts after, as it is the greatest force in our ambition-driven society. Whereas laws in other cultures are enforced because they are written to be enforced, our laws are only enforced when it is decided they should be

enforced. Allow me to give you an example: when a thief is caught stealing an apple from a fruit merchant in a human city, the guards chase him, put him in jail, and dole out punishment. A written law in the city’s charter dictates all this. Now, picture the same thief in one of our cities. The merchant notices the thief, and he begins to run as the merchant screams for the guards. The guards must make a decision as to whether or not it is worth their time to chase the thief. They base their decision on several factors: how much dominance does the merchant have – how high is she in regards to the social hierarchy? Is she low enough that their refusal to help will not come back to harm them later? Is she dominant enough that catching the thief will curry great favor upon them? Moreover, is the thief someone whom it would be in his or her best interest to see caught? Although such behavior a human only sees in corrupted guards in their cities, this is an accepted and expected practice within ours. If the thief lives but is caught, he is brought back to the merchant, where the victim decides the punishment. An insignificant punishment is never the case, and maiming and death are common even for the most petty of larceny. The guard then expects some reward at this point, whether it is monetary, items, or favors, unless there is a predetermined deal in play - which is often the case with the wealthier and more dominant merchants.

As such, the guards usually rarely trifle in the affairs of the lower class, so lynch mob justice is often the case. Open street warfare occurs in the vilest of feuds, and street gangs are often employed in retributive strikes. As violent as it may seem, the lower neighborhoods may teeter on the brink of anarchy, but never cross that threshold. After all, that might garner the attention of those above, and riots may cause a veraliak, a reality that cools even the fieriest of rages.

The only relatively civilized method of resolving disputes between two feuding families is the piethel, an old contest dating back to the twilight elves. Once the matrons of the quarrelling families agree to hold a piethel, a third family matron takes the role of arbitrator. The contest starts through gift giving of all things; each family goes back and forth trying to top the previous gift. This is not an act of generosity, however. It is a show of how much the family values winning the argument over their material possessions. Quickly, the contest goes from the giving of small to expensive gifts, as the families bestow their homes and lands, heirlooms, and perhaps even family members. The contest stops when a family decides that winning the dispute is not worth the price paid to best their opponent. The winners receive compensation for their material goods, and the losers must pay this restitution along with compensation to the third party for their services as a referee. Entire bloodlines and city blocks have been decimated by prolonged piethel ceremonies.

The middle class plays a more subtle game, since professional guards and assassins are more affordable. The Courts of Inequity, who serve as magistrates, are now becoming popular among the lower and middle classes, although the latter still seems content to handle things by the old methods. However, the lower classes use the Courts more often than in the past, and a notable decrease in deaths in the slums of the bottom of the cities has been the result.

Males and Females

The Empire as a whole is a matriarchy, though individual cities are egalitarian, and free to live as a matriarchy, patriarchy or neither. Matriarchal cities are, however, still the most common. I shall limit this discussion to such cities, for I am sure you are already quite familiar with patriarchies and republics.

In a matriarchal city, males rarely own land, handle money or enter into business contracts - either his wife or the matron of his House must handle these duties. There are only three options for a male to make any advancement within these cities: the Arcane College, the civil service or the military. Despite being second-class citizens, the males' natural affinity for arcane magic allows an avenue for social climbing. All males test for intelligence and proficiency for magic at an early age. Those found worthy enroll at the nearest school of the Arcane College, where they train and later gain an apprenticeship under an established master. Contact with the family breaks off at this point, but is grieved little by his relatives, who place little stock in their males.

Males can join the ranks of the priesthood, but only as lower acolytes. The most common route taken by males is the military. Soldiers learn both basic literacy and combat skills, and the chance for advancement entails both monetary and societal rewards. Those who show the greatest potential are often recruited by a church to become "keel'thaile," or holy warriors - the highest honor a male can achieve. The keel'thaile enjoy rank and privilege nearly equal to a high cleric, and can actually give orders to a female. Like male wizards, male priests and soldiers are "dead" to their families once they join, so that no family may enjoy status due the actions of a male. The only exceptions are the male's in-laws, of whose House he is now a member. Unmarried keel'thaile must take a vow of celibacy, although this rule behind closed doors sees little enforcement.

There are, of course, several illegal options open to a male. The criminal underworld is, in fact, the male's domain. Smuggling, petty skullduggery, black marketeering and all manner of theft are open doors provided he does not anger the wrong people. Of course, those rare individuals who long for a life outside the chaos of the city often escape to the remote ashrams of the Brotherhood, of which I have spoken before, and will describe in more detail later.

In contrast, the opportunities for the female gender are almost limitless. A woman automatically receives an education through the church of her choice, and positions of bureaucracy and financial dealings are mostly handed down to lower born women. All females attend the same schools, in order to breed contempt amongst the next

Earth Druid Class Features

Except as described below, the earth druid, or "earth shaper," has all of the standard features of a surface druid as described in the D&D Player's Handbook.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Including those weapons described in the D&D Player's Handbook, earth shapers are also proficient with the dural'lan (see Chapter 5 of this book). The earth druid may also wear spore armor (also Chapter 5). Shield proficiencies remain unchanged.

Spells: Earth druids, like standard druids, can cast any of the druid spells from Chapter 5 of this book, the D&D Player's Handbook or from Chapter 11 of the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

Animal Companion: The earth druid still receives animal companions as normal, but they are always subterranean animals or vermin (bat, monstrous centipede or monstrous spider). Two other possibilities (dire rat, snake) are noted in the Druid section of the D&D Player's Handbook. Bats and vermin are listed in the D&D Monster Manual. At the DM's discretion, an earth druid might be allowed to take a surface animal companion, provided it fits the campaign.

Swift Climber (Ex): This ability replaces the woodland stride ability. Starting at 2nd level, an earth druid gains a natural climb speed equal to his or her normal land-based speed. Having a climb speed means that the earth druid never has to make a Climb check to simply climb at his full speed. The earth druid gains a +8 movement mode modifier on Climb checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. The earth druid can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if circumstances would normally prevent him or her from doing so.

Resist Earth's Pull (Ex): Starting at 4th level, an earth druid gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against any spell-like abilities of creatures with the Earth subtype (such as blue and copper dragons).

Nature Sense (Ex): This ability also lets the earth druid accurately determine the direction of wind currents, determine the general location of sound he or she hears, and foretell natural earthquakes and tremors for the next three days. However, this ability only functions underground. This ability is otherwise unchanged from the standard.

generation, which we believe inspires the fierce sense of competition that culls the weak from the strong. The middle and upper classes receive additional education beyond that provided by the church, free of cost. The eldest daughter receives a position in the church, either by her mother's direct decree, or through blackmail or other means. Younger daughters become clerics, high-ranking military officers, heads of merchant guilds, or wizards (though this last is uncommon).

Can you imagine my shock, little scholar, when I journeyed to other lands and found that men rule most kingdoms? Believe me, when one seeks to meet clandestinely, mistaking your contact's housemaid for the mistress can be quite dangerous! Fortunately, I soon learned how the surface world operated, although I still find it quite alien. Nevertheless, as you can see by my choice of servants, I do not find it unappealing.

CLASSES

There are many roles for drow in our society, but some are more common than others. Combat oriented positions are common, for most of our citizens take military training at some point or another in their lives. Of course, you humans accept some roles in life that a drow would sneer at – Basiran dancers and paladins, for example. The illithid-like talents of the mind are unknown to us, and I know nothing of the psions and psychic warriors you speak of. Spellcasters we know of, but that art was lost to us after the Second Exodus.

Adept

Drow adepts are uncommon, but most drow cities have a small number of them. Because adepts are always male,

our churches train as many as they desire, not necessarily as many as they can. Females, of course, are accepted as full clerics.

Aristocrat

Almost all members of our upper and middle classes are aristocrats, at least as you would consider them on the surface. They are wealthy, politically influential, and have access to all the best goods and opportunities. Most wizards, in particular, began as aristocrats.

Barbarian

Dark elf barbarians are almost unheard of, though not impossible. After all, there are the rare occasions where a small farming settlement is wiped out by savage invaders. On these occasions, young children are sometimes the lone survivors, with no one to watch over them. Though most eventually expire, there is the small percentage that manage to survive, and eventually form a small tribe of uncivilized, primitive nomads of the underground. Seldom does a civilized dark elf encounter these uncouth orphans, and the population at large considers them nothing more than the stuff of folklore. However, they do roam the uncharted depths, occasionally surfacing to raid small villages in search of supplies and captive mates to increase



their tribe's number. So far, such attacks have been too infrequent and little documented to raise the ire of our military, but with each decade their number grows...

Bard

Bards in our society are quite different than those that live in the sun. Instead of carefree scoundrels who ply their way by entertaining - and occasionally swindling - people, they are tools of the Empire, used to spread propaganda and monitor the mood of the masses. Those who show a gift of words at an early age are sent to the House of the Unwritten Page, where they memorize the dogma of the Empire, while receiving education in history and literature. When their education is complete, they spread Empire-approved "morals" via charming stories and epic poems, with some musical and theatrical acts in order to provide diversion to the occasionally disenchanted masses. All the

Special Totems

Except as described below, the drow shaman has all of the standard features of a shaman as described in the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

Animal Companion, Swift Climber: As per the earth druid class, above. Note that the DM must approve any animal companions other than the shaman's Totem (some of which may have too many hit dice for the shaman until he advances beyond 1st level).

Animal Totem: The drow shaman still receives his or her Totem as normal, but they are always subterranean animals or vermin, as listed below. At the DM's discretion, a dark elf shaman might be allowed to take a surface animal Totem, provided it fits the campaign.

Sample Totem Benefit Bat Shaman gains Blindsight(MM); Stealthy feat, Centipede Shaman gains Toughness feat; Resist Poison Rat Shaman gains Agile feat; Resist Disease feat, Snake Shaman gains +2 Int, Spider Shaman gain's movement is unaffected by webs, Resist Poison feat.

while, of course, they keep their ears open for any words or acts that could be construed as heresy or revolutionary. They claim territories in which to perform their act, and are regular sights at taverns, town squares and other places where people congregate.

Brigand

Brigands lack the elements of subtlety and deception that allow criminals to keep their heads on their shoulders and their internal organs in their original positions. Therefore, it is seldom seen among dark elves, although there have been some infamous Moss Beard dwarf brigands who served as privateers for the Empire, stealing from neighboring dwarf and gnome lands.

Cleric

Clerics - who I have mentioned are always female - are quite common among my people. Each is trained by her own church, and even the most humble cleric commands respect from her social betters, at least in public. They are zealots of the highest order, inspiring dread and respect from the populace, as they are constantly on the lookout for spies and heretics, real or imaginary. Their only true enemies in society are themselves, as ambition is the driving fire in the church as it is in the Empire, and the chance of promotion and power is always foremost in the cleric's mind.

Clerics of the lesser chaotic churches are less concerned with such matters, although still paranoid of their brethren. They still garner some respect from society, albeit patronizing at best.

Commoner

Though they enjoy lives much better than their human counterparts, I suppose you could classify much of our lower class as commoners. This includes the slave overseers, head farmers and some merchants and manufacturers. No one chooses to be a commoner - they are either born to that station, or lack the abilities to serve in any other social class or position.

Druid

Although we are often suspicious of loners and hermits as possible dangers to the Empire, druids are an exception. Since the underground is a delicate and unusual ecology, druids enjoy solitude and solace in exchange for advice and magical assistance in natural matters. Much like their woodland cousins who shape the trees to provide living space, dark elf druids can move rock and soil in order to provide living space without disturbing the fragile ecosystem of the earth. Although their lifestyle is peaceful and serene when compared to dark elf city life, they often embrace the cruel predator aspect of nature of the beasts of the underground. Arriving in a druid's territory unannounced can be a fatal and horrifying mistake.

Expert

All of our specialized laborers are experts in their field, including weaponsmiths, blacksmiths, engineers, and more. Because slaves perform most of the manual labor, experts are found almost exclusively among our lower and lower middle class. However, I suppose some slaves could be experts in one field or another, and a high-ranking soldier or cleric might have expertise in some field.

Fighter

Most of our army is comprised of warriors and slaves, but those who climb seamlessly through the ranks are considered true fighters. Whether patrolling the borders, or making daring raids on dwarven settlements, they seek

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glory and dominance through superior tactics and strength of swordarm. Outside of the military, merchant companies employ fighters in the role of defensive guard or offensive thug. Fighters who find this work tedious, and desire to strike out on their own, often become adventurers.

Gladiator

As long as there are slaves and criminals, there will always be gladiators in the Empire. We have enjoyed gladiatorial combat for millennia, the concept first being introduced by the Moss Beard dwarves, when they gained citizenship. Although mostly a male dominated sport, occasionally a female commits a crime so grave that the humiliation of blood sport appears to be the only just punishment. Such events are the most popular, as the downtrodden males of the Empire jump at any chance to see a haughty female brought down to their level, preferably soaked in blood.

Infiltrator

Infiltrators have been amongst my people for many years. Because of the thick distrust and paranoia saturating our society, infiltrators are ample in number and always in demand. They often work for the Empress, the Council of Three, the Shadow Army, the Arcane College, and in the payroll of many a noble and merchant house.

Monk

Yes, we have a long tradition of fighting schools, the two most well known being the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist (now departed from us) and the Sisterhood of the Obsidian gaz'zirad. The Sisterhood has the most schools in the Empire and, like all sanctioned schools, only allows female members. They are also the Empress' own private stock of assassins, dispatched to remove any individuals deemed a great threat to her. They occasionally lend out their services to the clergy, or even to the Golden Alliance, as a goodwill gesture or in exchange for favors. Even those outsiders who are generally ignorant of our ways know of the Sisterhood, and the rumors and myths surrounding them have elevated them to an almost legendary status.

Paladin

Many years ago, there was a young dark elf male. This young elf was a social pariah, as he had delusions of honor and virtue, and refused to remain silent on such subjects - despite his family's constant urgings. One day, the youth fled, leaving his underground world and somehow making his way to a temple of the True, in Monam-Ahnoz. The priests there were initially wary of the young elf, but eventually grew to trust the altruistic exile and educate him in the ways of the Blind One. He remained under their tutelage for several years, and proved to be a quick study. When he took up the mantle of paladin, legend states that sunlight no longer plagued him as it does others of our race. He adventured in the name of justice and truth for many years, earning the trust of many in western Svimohzia, even earning the right to call his ancestral enemies by the name "friend."

Eventually, he returned to us in hopes of converting some of our number. Of course, he was soon beaten, stripped and dragged to the stocks in the City Square. During the first week, he was force fed hallucinogenic mushrooms, while his family was systematically drawn and quartered before his eyes. With all his friends and family destroyed, the physical interrogation began. This lasted an additional three weeks, and worked in shifts to assure that he had no chance to trance. When the paladin finally renounced his faith, he was permitted death by disemboweling. His skull still adorns a spike near the Empress' palace, and the mushroom wine cultivated from his rotten corpse is considered the most unholy and valuable vintage ever to be brewed.

There has not been a dark elf paladin since.

Ranger

Due to the rarity and unpredictable nature of our druids, rangers are often a favored option in matters concerning the subterranean. Sometimes called "cavers," they are often employed as pathfinders and scouts whenever the Empire decides to expand its borders deeper into the underground. Their knowledge of subterranean flora and fauna make them excellent advisors on exploratory missions, and they are also useful as diplomats - or fighters - when encountering savage races.

Rogue

All cities have their criminal element, and ours are no exception. Smuggling, narcotics, fencing, racketeering, kidnapping and simple theft are all frequent happenings, and the opportunities for a young and enterprising rogue are nearly infinite - provided the entrepreneur belongs to the local thieves' guild. The thieves' guilds are one of the worst kept secrets in the Empire, but they rarely - if ever - steal from the clergy, and are generally left alone by the authorities. Rogues with a more constructive spirit find themselves drafted by the military to act as scouts, spies

and internal security. Many also make a profitable living as security advisors for noble Houses.

Shaman

As I mentioned before, there exist tribes of feral dark elf barbarians, skirting the edges of the Empire, occasionally becoming bold enough to raid a farming settlement or outpost. Along with these savages is the shaman – a wise man or woman who guides these people in their worship and provides wise counsel in their lives. I hear that these simple folk do not worship the gods, but pay homage to the unseen spirits that represent the rocks that protect them and the underground waters that give them life.

Sorcerer

The Empire considers sorcerers dangerous, for they cannot control their creation. In fact, many churches preach that such a path of magic is a heretical abomination and those who practice it are heretics to be cut down.

As such, individuals born with this unique talent often seek to disguise themselves as wizards in order to hide their secret while practicing their craft. Others find themselves in the underground, using their talents against the Empire that would have them destroyed. Most seek solitude in which they can increase their abilities in peace, but few are willing to defect to find it.

Warrior

As I have said, most of our army is comprised of warriors. We call them *thaile* in our tongue, and the greatest of these become true fighters, or *keel'thaile*, serving a church as holy warriors. Our basic military training results in many non-military drow having some experience as a warrior in addition to their other roles.

Wizard

My people are proud of our long-standing arcane mastery, particularly the males, for here he can actually grasp power within his own hands. Where other cultures are mistrustful and jealous of those who wield magic, our people have a healthy deference and curiosity of such things, and the wizard is a well-respected member of the community because of it. Male wizards may undertake military service, though most remain at the Arcane College to teach and conduct magical research and experimentation. Wealthy noble families, from whom most wizards come, often retain their kin as paid advisors even if they are now attached to another House by marriage. Females sometimes pursue the arcane arts, but most are content to travel the easier and wealthier paths before them.

It is said that our wizards of the dark elves also deal with demons from the Abyss in their bids for power – a quaint notion.

The physical aspects of dark elf mating and child-birth closely resemble those of other elves and humans. Marriages, however, are strictly for political purposes. The parents of the groom offer dowries to attract potential brides, usually in the form of material goods, slaves or a prominent position in the military or civil service. These are often loveless affairs, and the idea of romance in drow society within the boundaries of wedlock is almost unheard of. Any instances of romance more likely occur between female and male courtesans.

Once conception occurs, the female carries the children for between eight and nine months, during which time she becomes increasingly less active, her belly swells and her breasts begin producing milk. This is a gradual process, and for the first month or two there may be no noticeable changes. At the end of the pregnancy, the female gives birth to a single child – hopefully a female. Twins are extremely rare among my people, and triplets are unheard of.

In less than a week after the birth, the mother has returned to her position in society, leaving care of the baby to the father and a wetnurse, or to be raised by the family's church. By the age of ten, our children have mastered their native tongue, and begin their education under a private tutor or within a small, structured class of other youth of a similar age. Upon reaching the age of 20, male and female children enroll in a more advanced school, where they learn to fight with real weapons, wear armor, and execute drills and formations, as well as undertake more formal studies in literacy, mathematics, alchemy (mostly poisons), and artistic skills. This training lasts eight years, and is intense and rigorous – though not nearly as harsh as true military training, which I shall tell you more about later. About 5% of each age group die or are too weak to finish the basic training. Males who fail are consigned to the lowest ranks of military service, just above the slaves, while females are returned to their House and remain useless members of society until their death. In this case both sexes are, however, prevented from breeding.

After this training is complete, each adolescent drow may seek an apprenticeship in the field of their choice, though the House tends to choose their path more often than not. Most often, females follow a religious path, where they have the most power, while males are placed in the military, for the same reason. Others may be apprenticed as merchants, artisans or other professions.

We consider our children adults when they reach their first century plus ten years, as they have developed fully and have completed their schooling and apprenticeships. At this point, they are considered full citizens, and can now gain dominance by advancing through the ranks of their profession. They can also marry.

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Though I have told you that a dark elf may live to be over 700 years old, most do not live to see their 400th birthday. Life in our lands is difficult, with the constant struggle for dominance, inter-clan wars, and raids upon the surface or the Dashan tunnels. In fact, I would say that about 75% of my people die before the age of 400. However, one of the few beliefs that we share with you humans is a solemn respect concerning death. Even those with no claim of dominance receive funerary rites by their church, and we espouse many common funeral practices. The traditional color to signify mourning is olive green, seen as the color of loss in dark elf eyes.

Of course, although the funeral is a free service provided by the Church, the disposal of the body is not. You see, life underground makes burial of bodies difficult, if not impossible, and cremation produces excess smoke, which is not safe. For those who cannot afford the incredibly expensive interment into the Empire's limited number of catacombs, the church takes away the body, which the family never sees again. In truth, the bodies wind up at the mushroom farms, for they are well suited for the fertilization of edible mushrooms and lichen. The remaining bones, teeth and all other remaining detritus are ground down into meal for bread (known as "bonebread").

Prominent members of the clergy have their own methods of honoring the dead. When a high-ranking cleric or one of the keel'thaile passes away, an extravagant funeral takes place in their honor. Afterwards, the other priests strip away the flesh from the body down to the skeleton, and the bones make their way into artwork in the local temple ossuary. Our ossuaries comprise the main worship hall of the temple - a collection of thousands of bones arranged to form the pulpit, religious icons, chandeliers, tapestries, and several other implements of the church. Many a pilgrim has been awestruck by the dark beauty of the macabre masterpieces of our ossuaries, often describing the sight as both terrifying and glorious.

Our hated cousins often spread rumors that we, with our "disrespectful" practices of funeral rites, also practice necromancy. However, this is not the case. We still retain the elven distaste for the undead, and are swift to destroy such creatures and those who create them. Those who believe otherwise, and attempt to practice this foul magic among us, have little time to appreciate the graveness of their error.

HALF-ELVES AMONG THE DROW

We take great pride in our bloodlines, and though we may jest that a surface half-elf is a slight improvement on a full-blooded one, the idea of a dark elf halfbreed is pure sacrilege. As such, visiting humans, elves or orcs are never allowed inside any House of Vice, even should they somehow gain permission to visit our cities. They must

also be accompanied by a dark elf of the same sex while conducting business within the Empire. Should such a coupling ever take place, I can assure you that both parents and unborn child would be immediately put to death. As of yet, I can say that there is no record of such an abomination ever being born.

HABITAT

Though some visitors claim our architecture is slightly dark at best and downright macabre at worst, I find it quite sophisticated and beautiful, almost hauntingly so. All our buildings are crafted of stone, with the darker colors such as obsidian, basalt and black jade being preferred. Tall, thin arches, towers and steeples dominate, with the highest points actually joining the cavern ceiling. Yes, we make great use of height - even a person's social standing is proportional to the level on which they live. The ground floor is limited to shops or other commercial businesses, with the next one or two floors often having fine, though not luxurious, apartments. The room size, quality and cost increases with each level, so the wealthiest tenants always reside on the upper floors - a very intentional remainder of just who is dominant.

In addition to the core of the city within the central cavern, we have what you humans would consider suburban - fungus farms, worm ranches, slave quarters and an occasional manor house. Travel in both city and country is accomplished primarily by means of a network of tunnels and cliffside staircases. Our city streets are also well-traveled, but they are rarely wider than two wagon widths, and even the sparsest stream of traffic slows passage through them.

Small watchposts and citadels dot the smaller caverns in the network, and umber bulk farmers tend to drive their herd around the various fungi-rich grottos found here. Waterways connect cities built near the underground rivers and tunnels, but are not widely used due to fears concerning aboleths and other aquatic menaces encountered in the past.

RECREATION

Of course, we are not always on guard or preparing for war. My people enjoy the finer things just as you humans do. In fact, with our slaves doing most of the actual labor, we can indulge our pursuits more often. For example, we have a game similar to your chess. However, the empress is the prize piece, and there are another four slaves - which you call pawns - that move in an "L" shape half the size of your knight piece. Dice are also popular in gaming and gambling, even among the clergy and royalty.

More physical games include bowling, prisoner's base, and hoodman's blind - which you call blind man's bluff. Children wrestle, swim in the underground lakes, fish for

the blind cave fish, run foot races, and so on. Adults often enjoy themselves with monstrous spider fights, bullywug baiting, or hunts in the surrounding caves, some of which are actually kept as wild game preserves for just such occasions.

We also use great bats to hunt small prey. Each city has at least one such drow assigned to train young bats for this sport. We are quite affectionate towards these creatures, and manage sanctuaries for them - caverns set aside for the sole purpose of housing them. Harming a bat is a serious crime (and heresy to clerics of Blacksoul), so punishment is swift and harsh to any that do so. Seeing a bat fly past you outside the sanctuary is a good omen. Our lamp lighters also maintain the sanctuaries and observe their populations, and the Arcane College apprentices gather bat droppings for use in spell components. Our alchemists have experimented with the substance for years, although I can hardly imagine what they might come up with if they finally manage a breakthrough. Select keel'thaile of the Church of Endless Night train dire bats as aerial mounts, but the rarity of such creatures has reserved this right for only the most elite of them.

In addition, we are a race of great sculptors. After all, we are never lacking in material. Should you ever be fortunate enough to visit a dark elven city, I feel sure you would be amazed by our work, though you might not appreciate the subject matter. Nude, aroused drow and bloody struggles are fairly common, as are snakes, rats, bats, scorpions, skeletal dragons, spiders and other such underground creatures. We also remember well the ravens and black cats of the surface, and these may also be found in our sculptures. In fact, these latter two are the most favored pets and signs of great status, for they are quite difficult to obtain.

Other forms of artistic expression come across as being austere - paintings usually favor grisly battles with full detail, while the poetry and songs of our bards lean heavily towards gore and twisted humor. Even cautionary tales told to children there are enough to make the most hardened pilgrim shudder.

DIET

Drow farmers cultivate a number of edible mushrooms and lichen, with green gill, oysters, and sweet top mushrooms being the most predominant. Kreitiz, a type of alcohol derived from shrieker mushrooms, is a popular drink. It has a very bitter taste and I am told is quite heady even by dwarven standards.

Several subterranean creatures, the most predominant staple of meat in our diets, are domesticated and bred. The most common is the umber bulk, or the "dire whirli' bug". A lesser cousin of the fearsome umber hulk, this stupid creature consists of a large chitin shell, resembling half an egg. The shell is five feet tall, eight feet long, and weighs

almost two tons. Its massive girth is propelled by dozens of stubby legs that move it along quite slowly. Small pairs of beady black eyes sprout out at the front. They are not very bright and easily herded from one grotto to the next, where they graze upon lichens and any other fungus they can scoop up with their slender tongue. Their short lives consist of little other than constant feeding, although they mate at least twice each year.

Umbur bulk cows produce a clutch of four to six eggs. Calves reach maturity in four weeks, and join the herd without the aid of their mother. Umbur bulks remain non-aggressive by nature even when guarding calves, and will pull their eyes and legs into their shells when threatened. A good sturdy spear can easily pierce the shell, so slaughtering them for meat is an easy task. The meat yielded is gray, and tastes somewhat like your chicken. We enjoy other meats, but domestication has been limited and not as successful as the umber bulks. Although we have failed in all attempts to domesticate them, roper flesh is a fond delicacy in drow circles.

We use few spices in our foods, and are proud of our capacity for alcohol, though we prefer wines and liquors to ale or mead. When alcohol is not available, we drink umber bulk milk, usually sweetened with sugary rock candy, which children enjoy as a treat. The lower classes favor a special fungus tea, and the slaves drink only water.

Dark elves consume three meals each day. The first, metharok, is a warm meal of soup and bonebread. The second meal, laravortha, includes roasted meat or worms (raw or roasted, but never living), bonebread, prepared root slices and wine. The third and final meal of the day, defelarik, includes a soup with bonebread for dipping, followed by roasted meats or worms, chopped insect meat cooked in the carapace, and wine. Dessert, when available, includes liquors and surface fruits.

CLOTHING

Dark elf clothing is crafted to demonstrate social status first, and practicality second. Silk from monstrous spider webs is most prized, though the fur of monstrous spiders, snake skins, shells of giant vermin and hides of monstrous creatures all find their way into clothing eventually. In addition to the standard breeches, surcote and boots, most drow wear gloves of some kind, and a hooded cloak.

The quality of one's clothing reflects social status, as does the condition in which the owner keeps it. Wealthy drow keep several sets of clothing, and often decorate it with House symbols and fine embroidery. Lower class families have less clothing and less decoration. Most slaves have one set of clothing provided by their masters, including a tunic with sleeves, heavy pants and shoes. This clothing quickly gets dirty and worn, but it does an adequate job of keeping out the cavern chill. The household slaves of a

wealthy family, however, may be dressed almost as well as a lower class dark elf.

In addition to their clothing, most drow carry some weapons and equipment about their person. Many favor daggers, for their use in combat and non-combat situations, but most common types of weapons abound. If a dark elf's profession also requires some specialized tools or equipment, he or she likely carries it on his or her person at all times.

Drow in the civil service wear no formal dress or uniform, other than a sash used as a symbol of rank and station. The color of the sash conveys the profession of the wearer: gold for those dealing in money and the treasury, red for the House of the Unwritten Page, gray for architects and engineers, bone white for the teachers, purple for the healers, blue for food and water services, and so on. Those of the military, naturally, try to dress in a manner appropriate to their station. They carry fine, jeweled weapons with them at all times, and often have fine clothes, expensive jewelry and trophy items from fallen foes and great beasts. The clergy wear the vestments of their office, but also make a point of displaying, if possible, any item given to them by the Empress or high cleric. In all professions, the women dress little differently from the men, though those of a shapely figure proudly display it, using the cut and curve of their clothing to accentuate or reveal their natural lines.

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

Among my people, few care to join the profession of healer – as such, we have merely a handful of divine spellcasters and basic herbal remedies. Furthermore, healing is prioritized based upon dominance. Those with the most political and social power are attended upon first, even if they are merely wounded, and a drow of less dominance lies dying nearby. Once they have tended to the most dominant, the healers then move on to the others. If it is within the healer's power to heal the individual, he does so. If it is not, the individual is immediately killed (to prevent suffering) and the healer moves on to the next patient.

Of course, there are exceptions to these rules, depending on circumstance. A great warrior or cleric may be healed before a more dominant drow, and those of the royal family or upper classes are rarely "put down," even if the healer can do nothing.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

Over millennia, we have been intolerant of all others in the utmost, with the exceptions of a few servant races, although I use that term in utmost sarcasm. If not for the Moss Beard dwarf clan, I scarcely believe we would have survived those pivotal first few decades underground. Except for our slaves, the descendants of this clan are the majority of non-drow within the Empire, and they have

celebrated its triumphs and endured its defeats along with the rest of us. Despite all this, they still fall victim to prejudice and harassment from time to time, but this only holds true within the lower classes. A Moss Beard noble knows nothing of these things, and enjoys the same comforts and safeties as her dark elf sisters. In fact, many of their females are in the upper hierarchy of our clergies, although they are a small minority.

The naturally underground-dwelling dwarves of the Dashan Mountains, who are known as stone dwarves or "durvalk" by the Moss Beards, despise us, and we them. We meet only in battle, as we strive to conquer their souls and their lands. As for the deep gnomes, they are rare visitors to our cities, preferring to live in distant, isolated cities.

As for the Kargi hobgoblins, although the current generation had nothing to do with their ancestor's attacks upon us, old memories refuse to fade with my people. I liken it to a father buying his child a hound. The hound faithfully serves his young master, but then one day bites his hand. The father takes the deceitful mongrel away, and replaces him with a new dog, very similar in appearance and temperament of the old one. The child knows that this is a completely different dog, but the sight of the dog's teeth dredges up memories that make the child untrusting of any hound. And so my people are, as in all things, divided over the issue of working with the hobgoblins, and some of the cities actively oppose the plots with the King of Ul-Karg and do what they can to foment chaos among the hobgoblins. Yet, we assisted them from time to time against the neighboring human nations whom they so despise, and deal with them for surface goods.

Ah, the humans – another race we have little inclination to trust. Asaibakil allows some such beings within our lands, feeling that the key to executing schemes outside the Empire lives with this far-spread race. It is true, they bring us new gods and exotic goods with which we enrich our culture. However, our trust is something that no one can afford, and that no one has ever fully earned. Unlike our foolish surface kin, we never had to taste betrayal at their hands to understand what they are capable of. We know of those centuries in Brandobia, and later in Svimohzia. Their actions of ambition and treachery often mirror our own, although they deny the evil in their souls by attempting to claim virtue and just cause through tricky rhetoric. Having mastered the arts of subterfuge, we already know better than to trust anyone so much like ourselves.

I should not even have to point out how we feel about our detested surface kin. In fact, I believe the last surface elves to visit us were the wild elf monks who assisted us against the illithids so long ago. The surface dwarves and gnomes we also despise, and raid against their mining camps. Halflings we never see, but I am sure my people

would look upon them no better than the other races who live in the sun.

The illithids, as I have mentioned before, may now walk freely within our lands, for they show us the respect we deserve. Still, it is both a rare and uncomfortable experience for both parties. Kobolds and goblins are either indentured servants or slaves, but can never truly garner citizenship. We hold contact with two dragons that make their home in the lofty peaks of the Krimppatus, although the exact nature of this relationship is a mystery even to me. However, it is common knowledge that our relationship with the gold dragon Garindharyx was a brief and violent one, as his skull adorns the main archway of the Empress' palace.

Our most respected visitors are the werebats, or "manehelb" as we call them. The clerics of Blacksoul believe that he touched the manehelb, who are born with this natural lycanthropy, and petitioned the Empress to grant them many privileges normally reserved for females of high blood. The bat, you see, is the unholy animal of Blacksoul. The Empress agreed, but with one provision – the manehelb are forbidden to infect other drow, even willing ones, with its disease. Our blood, she claimed, must remain pure. Both clerics of Blacksoul and the Rotlord rose up against this, but the Empress held firm and her soldiers – along with clerics of the other temples – soon quelled the disturbance. Of course, by then, many had already submitted to the manehelb's bite.

Though the afflicted werebats – called "manevolk" – eventually gained control over the change, the Empress' claim proved its merit. You see, the major problem lies within the alteration of the recipient's body. Any progeny born by an afflicted werebat female are... strange. Nine out of ten times, these monstrosities are stillborn, but that tenth is a cursed creature. Imagine a shorter, even more slender dark elf with the wings and face of a bat. My people, being the ever-foolish zealots, consider these unnatural elves thrice blessed, and do everything they can to make it feel as such. However, these monsters always learn to fly, and upon doing so, migrate somewhere to the west, never to return. I can only wonder what happens to them, but I am sure the facts would be quite disturbing.

The only manehelb we have seen are of human stock, although a demonstration of their powers verifies them as anything but human. To separate them from the lesser and expendable humans, a gold medallion around their necks signifies them as werebats in human form. They rarely stay for more than a few weeks at a time, using the Empire as a resting-place for their deeds in the outside world. They come in small packs of half a dozen or so, housed in lavish quarters and treated as guests of honor. In exchange, the pack priest (there always seems to be one) we ask to participate in a few religious ceremonies during the stay,

and we sometimes exchange certain favors with the other members. Mostly these favors involve errands to be done in - or often, to - the outside world.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

Each drow city is very self-sufficient, and so we rarely trade among our own kind. The most common trading arrangement is between one drow city and another. Distant cities usually make trade pacts so that they involve a variety of goods. These agreements are heavily formalized, but mostly indicate that one city

will exchange its excess of certain goods with the other city, and vice versa. When one city has a surplus in goods, they send a trading delegation to the other city to exchange what they can. The most commonly traded goods include clothing and foodstuffs, as one tribe may have access to types of fungi and cave-dwelling creatures that the other tribe does not.

As rare as trade is between drow cities, they even more rarely trade with another race, but it does happen. Only certain groups of hobgoblins are willing to openly trade with us, and only some of my people can actually stomach doing it. We much prefer to raid the stone dwarf settlements in the Dashans, or isolated hobgoblin tribes, if they have something we want. We have no other significant trading partners. An isolated city might consider trading with stone dwarves or deep gnomes, but such trading would be only temporary – and quite rare, given the animosity between the races. No cities have yet tried to trade openly with Svimohz merchants, though individual dark elves - cloaked, hooded and gloved - attempt such relationships secretly. Those that succeed find this trading to be quite profitable.

Among humans and hobgoblins, mining of platinum, gold, coal, tin and gems are our most lucrative exports, but we are also known for our weaponsmithing and crafting of jewelry. There is also a market in gypsum, marble and alabaster. Adamantite and mithril we consider rare and sacred, and almost never sell or export them. We import many surface creatures for slaves or pets, as well as surface fruits and vegetables, alcohol, drugs and works of art.

MILITARY TERMS

Soldier or warrior = Thaille
 Slave = Shahimn
 Regular = Mehraiga
 Regular leader = Ranabimni
 Corporal = Cynirkim
 Sergeant = Shiveikim
 Lieutenant = Toramaika
 Captain = Jelarek
 Major = Werlakari
 General = Asairvalk
 Field Marshal = Telakarah
 Squad = Klabour
 Platoon = Klameta
 Company = Klazarim
 Battalion = Kalagurek

LANGUAGE

Our language incorporates the same alphabet as other elves, with two additional letters, K and X. These, as well as Z are common in our tongue. Hard and double consonants

also appear more frequently than in surface Elven. Any potential newcomers to our Empire (those of non-dark elf blood who qualify for visiting) should be able to speak Drow fluently, determined by a test with both oral and written components. Those who fail receive no traveling papers and should leave with great haste.

In contrast, the Empire encourages the ability to speak more than one language, and many a dark elf learns different tongues. The languages of our enemies, such as Dwarven and Elven, we learn at an early age, leaving some of the human languages for later in our education. Our most common languages are Drow, Undercommon, and Abyssal, and sometimes Terran, Hobgoblin, and Draconic.

Tone is a key aspect of communication between dark elves. Females and many high ranking individuals frequently use a condescending tone to those they consider subordinate, but their forms of speech do not change. The exact degree of condescension depends on the difference in dominance, but it is a very subtle thing, and those not trained in our language rarely notice it.

RELIGION

As I have mentioned before, our culture no longer favors one god. Instead, we approach religion in a more casual way. Each god has dominion over various aspects of life, and we pray to the deity that influences the area of life in which we seek assistance. We revere the Gods of Chaos and Evil; our current most worshipped deity is the Prince of Terror, whom we call Kheiskhari. Warriors favor worship of Shambourki, the Creator of Strife, or Ill-luck, while those of the lower classes revere Lhaghari, the Vicelord. Gherhimn, the Rotlord, is also a favorite, as we like to use plagues and diseases against our enemies. Valandar the Avenger and Beraclya the Dark One are also strong contenders for the hearts of my people.

The Confuser of Ways is not openly revered, for my people believe that he deceived the Despiser millennia ago, and that it was through his treachery that we were condemned to a subterranean existence. Naturally, the Despiser also remains one of the least worshipped evil gods.

All of the chaotic and evil gods have some presence among us, though those of a more neutral alignment have few full time worshippers. Of them, Jennaentariel the Laugher is the most popular, because of his influence over passion and wine. In addition, the Locust Lord receives some form of homage in times of famine.

WARFARE

Military life is universally a hard life. With the exception of a male of wealth or noble heritage, or a female with the proper education, one must work their way from the bottom, and the ladder is a slow and perilous one.

The first thing a new recruit learns is that he is worthless. He is less than slime, he is an embarrassment to his house and family, and his life is both trivial and bothersome to society. The training of soldiers is nothing short of inhumane. I have witnessed veraliaks that were more merciful. For the longest six weeks of their lives these recruits receive little sleep, almost no food and water (which is also moldy and stagnant), and are constantly training. Many die within the first week from starvation and exhaustion, although some trainers kill the weakest individual as a motivational tool.

Those who survive take the rank of Regular, with the most promising going on record as possible recruits for the keel'thaile - the honored and chosen warriors of the church and Empress. Although these barbaric practices do not make for an immense army, they do make for an effective one. A soldier in the Shadow Army can survive the harshest conditions with very little to keep him alive. His ability to survive anywhere, for as long as ordered, discourages the dwarves or hobgoblins from attempting any forays into our territory.

Hierarchy

Like drow society, the military has a defined hierarchy of dominance. Here, power resides at the top and rank determines where in the power structure one resides. Every rank takes orders from his superior, and each superior takes order from his superior, all the way up the line to the Empress. She commands the army's movements in general, leaving the specifics to her top military advisor, and each level is responsible for completing their part. Whether they accomplish the order themselves or pass the order down to their subordinates, they are responsible for its completion. Thus, as power resides at the top of the hierarchy, so too does responsibility.

The drow military is known as the Shadow Army. All members of the military are referred to as thaile, meaning soldiers or warriors, but each thaile also has a rank name that refers specifically to them. The Shadow Army has nine ranks, the top five ranks being the Telakarah (Field Marshal), Asairvalk (General), Werlakari (Major), Jelarek (Captain), and Toramaika (Lieutenant). Each has some power to delegate responsibility and to give orders, but they are not part of a unit. The bottom four ranks, Shiveikim (Sergeant), Cynirkim (Corporal), Mehraiga (Regular) and Shahimn (Slave) make up the bulk of the army, and do most of the fighting.

The basic military unit is a klamour (squad), the smallest fighting force, and consists of seven mehraiga, one cynirkim, and one shiveikim. The commanders never send out fewer than one klamour on a mission, except for scouting parties where smaller numbers are preferred. These scouting parties contain only three mehraiga and one cynirkim.

In a full squad, commands are given to the shiveikim, who must lead his men in executing the order. The shiveikim can make minor decisions, but the officers expect him to lead them wisely. Doing otherwise means a loss of dominance. The cynirkim is the second in command, and assists the shiveikim with his duties. If the shiveikim falls in battle, it is up to the cynirkim to lead the klamour until a new shiveikim can be chosen. Though there is no mechanism for determining rank within a klamour, a hierarchy naturally imposes itself as certain mehraiga demonstrate superior skills and abilities.

All klamour are combined into groups of three, forming a klameta (platoon). A toramaika commands each klameta, though his second in command is usually the klameta's most dominant mehraiga – a special position known as ranabimni. When the klameta is not fighting, the toramaika is responsible for training the unit to work together. They practice cooperative fighting techniques, learn hand signals and verbal commands and work on marching and fighting in formation. All the units in a klameta are of the same type, and a typical klameta has about 27 thaille.

One step above the klameta is the klazarim (company). A klazarim is commanded by a jelarek, and it is the largest unit that contains troops of one type. All the klamour in a klazarim are stationed in the same area, and they train with each other on a regular basis. Like the other officers, the jelarek is expected to lead his klazarim into battle, coordinate with his subordinate officers, and coordinate the training for the unit as a whole. Since the jelarek are the highest level commanders that control units of a single type, they are expected to be experts at that form of warfare. In large battles, the asairvalk and werlakari usually make troop movements and execute strategy with the klazarim, and they are expected to perform as completely cohesive units.

The Shadow Army has two classes of units, broken down into five basic types: infantry (light and heavy) and artillery (archers, crossbowmen and slingers). Each klazarim consists of units from one type, and is the largest single type unit. A light infantry klazarim usually contains four klameta, a heavy infantry klazarim has two klameta, a klazarim of archers has two klameta, a klazarim of crossbowmen has one klameta, and a klazarim of slingers has one klameta. Each unit type has a different standard armament and armor, as well as a different purpose on the battlefield.

Light infantry are relatively mobile foot soldiers. They are typically armed with shields, a longsword or flail, and armored in monsterhide or dark elven chainmail. Most have one or two backup weapons, such as a short sword, dagger or mace.

Heavy infantry wear heavier armor such as banded or half-plate, and so are slower but more heavily armed. They carry a longsword and shield or a polearm (usually a ranseur

or guisarme), and a small weapon or two. Heavy infantry are used to concentrate power in a small area by bringing a mass of heavily armed and armored troops. More experienced soldiers are placed in the heavy infantry, and the casualty rate in their units is often lower.

Archers favor shortbows, as longbows are more difficult to transport underground, and they rarely need such range. In addition, wood is difficult to come by, save through trading or expeditions to the surface. These troops operate as light infantry when not employing bows, favoring daggers, light maces and short swords. In melee combat, archers often attempt many light strikes over a single large one. They are not usually equipped with shields.

Crossbowmen serve like archers, but substitute a light crossbow for the shortbow. They favor punching daggers, morningstars and scimitars as their martial weapons. They use mostly hit and run tactics, attacking opponents and then vanishing into the darkness. Like the archers, they are not usually equipped with shields.

Slingers are equipped much like archers and crossbowmen, and are expected to fight in melee should their weapon be destroyed or the enemy reaches their ranks. They wear monsterhide, bone or fungus armor, and carry two or three melee weapons. They may or may not be equipped with shields.

Officers are given the standard equipment of their unit, though as leaders, they are more likely to acquire better weapons or armor as trophies. Some infantry officers (both light and heavy) may discard their shield in favor of two-handed weapons such as a greatsword or greataxe. Most shiveikim and cynirkim have armor that offers slightly better protection than armor worn by their unit, and toramaika and jelarek favor armor offering even more protection.

The werlakari commands a portion of the asairvalk's army, and each portion, known as a kalagurek (battalion), contains a klazarim of each of the five unit types. This means that each werlakari commands five jelarek. The kalagurek often work independently, and contain more than enough troops to handle all but the largest targets. Unlike the other officers, the werlakari is not expected to train his kalagurek together. As long as the individual pieces work within themselves, it is assumed that they will work as a group. Instead of training, the werlakari studies strategy and military history.

Above the major is the asairvalk, who controls the Shadow Army. The Shadow Army has four kalagurek, each with a full compliment of five klazarim. The entire army is rarely assembled on the field together, as it requires a large support staff and logistics management. Only the largest battles will see the entire army under the command of the asairvalk.

The general reports directly to the Empress' chief military advisor, the telakarah, who is the army's leading tactician

and Field Marshal. The telakarah is always male, though his lower officers usually include females.

Tactics and Strategy

Before a battle begins, the drow try to scout the area. If they can find hidden tunnels or cliff paths that skirt the enemy lines, they use them to surround the enemy forces. If no such routes exist, the dark elves identify advantageous places to corner or surround the enemy, as well as possible ways to flank or surround the enemy. When the scouts return, the officers formulate a battle plan, using any high ground they have identified, as well as any choke points, hidden tunnels or other terrain features. When the officers are ready, they lead the army to the battlefield. Slaves, naturally, are always in the forefront, and armed with lesser weapons than the thaile.

Once the fighting commences, the artillery units maintain their position for as long as possible. By using rock columns, tunnel walls and cave entrances for cover, the artillery units can easily stand and fire at the enemy, assisting their melee troops. However, as I have mentioned, the artillery units are equipped with armor and melee weapons, and can replace lost infantry units where necessary. In smaller caverns, tunnels and areas with many rock formations, we may avoid using missile weapons at all, saving them for open areas where our arrows and slings have the room to take flight.

In melee, the soldiers seek to prevent the enemy from surrounding them or isolating individuals and small groups. Even when the formation breaks or splits up, they make an effort to keep the enemy off their backs. Likewise, the drow formations try to maneuver themselves to attack the backs of our enemies.

Taking prisoners is a drow tradition, for it proves our dominance over others. In addition, prisoners won in battle are usually strong and healthy, meaning they make good slaves. However, the drow avoid taking a prisoner if the battle is fierce or just beginning. Taking the time to bind or otherwise secure a prisoner during an intense fight is too dangerous, and most drow take their prisoners at the end of the battle. Enemy commanders are usually slain, as their natural leadership abilities make them a poor choice for a slave. There is little sense in bringing your enemy home to stir up a rebellion, after all.

Sieges

Sieges are a rarity below ground, for we have little wood from which to build siege engines, and the terrain does not favor their mobility. Also, most underground cities are self-sufficient, and have no need to worry about supplies being cut off. Generally, we believe that a surprise assault is the best offense. However, we especially favor the use of assassination, poisoned food and water, plague or magical assault.

THE ARCANES ARTS

Although we have use for all schools of magic, necromancy is still distasteful to us. Its use is restricted to only those spells that do not directly deal with creation of undead – a rule strongly resented by the Congregation of the Dead, and one that I am sure they break in private. Patrol guards are rewarded with bonuses for information or the actual slaying of any undead they encounter, though this is usually limited to Eaten Ones and the occasional ghoul pack. However, exceptions sometimes pop up unexpectedly. During the early petitions of outsiders for trade agreements, a lich from Zenshahn arrived uninvited for the talks, along with his retinue of wights and zombies. He met with a vicious attack instead of a warm reception. The battle was fierce and we lost several men, but the result was the death of all the unnatural minions and the lich teleporting away within an inch of his unlife. Word spread quickly of this incident, and visiting necromancers now make certain to keep any such pets at home from that time forward.

Otherwise, we are very free and liberal with our magic. Alteration and transmutation specialists often find themselves members of the Artificers' Guild, while those skilled with evocation enroll into the military. Oh, I see that I failed to mention the Artificers' Guild before. Well, as you know, enchanted items, whether they are weapons, armors, rings, potions, or any sort of miscellaneous article are rare and valuable things. Expensive ingredients, long production hours, and high amounts of personal stress make even the most trivial of magic paraphernalia an incredibly cumbersome bother to create. As such, you only find them in the hands of the greatest wizards, nobles or rather lucky adventurers. Even then, they are many often secondhand items recovered from ruins and other ancient sites. Seeing the large gap between supply and demand of such devices, the Moss Beard dwarf known as Klass Broken Axe, an arcane student of some great potency, decided to mix her family's business with the world's magic.

Along with her apprentices and a small group of artisan colleagues, Klass founded the Artificers' Guild. Their goal was to not only create the finest of magical items, but also to expand the business as a whole from a cottage industry to the mass production necessary to equip an army. Through techniques both meditative and economical, she sought a series of methods to reduce time, cost, and physical stress upon the creator.

Her goal of expanding the business was an undisputed success, as the Broken Axe level of artisanship was complemented by enchantment, and even her estranged cousins envied the completed works. However, her second goal was never truly completed, as she never could manage an assembly line production. Regardless, the Guild earned her House the starting money to create the financial giant they would eventually become. The Guild's business has further

flourished by the free trade opened by the Empire's deal with the Golden Alliance. Klass' own hand forged more than a few artifacts abandoned in the Second Exodus and she, sadly, could not leave them behind. Official word is that she committed suicide rather than part with her life's work. Another mystery lost in time, I suppose.

ADVENTURERS

Let me close our discussion on society with that oddity, the adventurer. There are two types of adventurers in drow society: those we kill, and our own. The ones to be killed are a recent phenomenon, and we have only had this problem for a short while - since the Golden Alliance pact. Apparently, word spread as to our current location, and the treasure found within our Empire.

We were used to interlopers wandering our tunnels, but they were no longer stone dwarves, deep gnomes or the occasional hobgoblin merchant. Instead, they were fully armed groups composed of the other surface races - humans, dwarves, gnomes, half-orcs, half-hobgoblins, halflings and, much to our chagrin, elves. The last one was quite scandalous to us, as we were definitely perplexed and horrified at the idea of elves coming all that way to invade our lands! Of course, it was only small scouting parties that we encountered, and never an army.

Questioning them was fruitless, as they claimed complete ignorance to having any allegiance with any army or nation. Even the best torturers could not extract any meaningful information from them. At first, we decided to scare off these trespassers by painting warnings at the tunnel entrances they were known to enter through, along with a few severed elf heads as incentive, but this seemed only to encourage them. When we lined the twilight zones of these tunnels with clever traps, they always seemed to have one expert among them who could disarm it, as our interrogators found out.

After some time, it became apparent that no army approached, but these disturbing suicide rituals of the outside world still left our Empress and her council quite bewildered. Eventually, we consulted one of the humans representing the Golden Alliance, and questioned him about these strange interlopers. He listened to the story, and about how all efforts to discourage trespassers only aggravated the situation further. Quite knowingly, but careful not to seem patronizing, he rationally explained that these parties were not affiliated with any nation or organization, but independents commonly referred to as "adventurers". These mercenary groups, he said, often follow rumors involving lost treasure, usually underground. They seem to prefer salvaging items from underground locations, and the presence of monsters and traps only serve to heighten their thrill seeking.

Although the concept of glorified grave robbing seemed a quite unusual profession, some of our number also began to dabble in this strange behavior. After all, there were some strange, unidentifiable ruins within the deepest recesses of the Empire. There have been more than a few scholars who wished to further explore and study the origin of these ruins, but time and effort had not been available to those interested parties, and expeditions not considered important enough to organize. However, if a small party of independently financed salvagers wished to risk life and limb on the rumor of treasure, then the scholar's curiosity could be satisfied without being a burden to the Empire's coffers.

Of course, it would not do to have outsiders, especially elves, discover the secrets of the ruins, so the Empire decided that the city of Nal'loreian should found the first Adventurer's Guild. House Pleverusla is the main financier of the project, as Matron Zelene took an unusual interest in the novelty of dark elf adventurers. The Guild allows an alternative job for dark elves of commoner or criminal status, handing out assignments for the adventurers to undertake - with a small stipend for equipment and travel expenses. In return, they must tithe any of their earnings, plus an additional tithe to the guild's coffers, and pass along all the details of their journey.

Well, scholar, dawn encroaches us upon us again. It is time for my rest. I shall embark upon a trip tomorrow, and I fear that you must settle for my library's tutelage until I return. I warn you that security will be much tighter than you have been privy to, and you may find something harsher than a gentle reprimand if you attempt to overstep your bounds. Fare thee well, little human scholar, until I return."

MITHELIZEK'S DEPARTURE

Mithelizek was gone for a week. The slight glow of magical wards was now commonplace throughout the tower, so my access was even more limited than before. Still, the libraries I retained access to proved to be a wellspring of information on the Drow language. I am now happy to report that the primers I studied allowed me to grasp an understanding of my host's native tongue, and granted me a wider use of the books at hand. Unfortunately, this yielded little I did not already know concerning other facets of dark elf lore. The historical texts so far confirm the information relayed to me by Mithelizek, although I have a nagging suspicion that there is more than what he is telling. Of course, the restrictions on his libraries stop me from learning more. The servants are instructed to speak to me in regards to my comforts only, and no longer provide me any information concerning them. As I...

A servant just entered my room, telling me that Mithelizek has returned to the tower, and that I must pack my things in preparation for a trip. I do hope that this excursion

provides fresh information, as I have grown weary and frustrated from the tedium of this library. Of course, I must also wonder if my life is at stake, as it dawns on me if the price I agreed to pay could not be handled by my assistants after my death.

A NIGHTTIME JOURNEY

My trip now over, I take up my quill to write my experience before the details fade from my mind. As suggested, I dressed for cold, donning my wool cloak and heavy breeches underneath my robes. Mithelizek was dressed in his usual robes with little consideration for any cold. I found this odd, but tried to shrug off my apprehension. However, it had little time to fade before I found myself and my host in a desert, the subjects of a strong teleportation spell. Any doubts I possessed about Mithelizek's wizardly ability were now gone, as I strained my eyes into the darkness. The sun had set hours ago, and the heat from the sands had already dissipated, leaving the barren wasteland with only a chill breeze blowing across the dunes. "Welcome to the Elos Desert," was my host's - now guide's - only words.

We hiked westward across the dunes, finally stopping at the foot of a rather large rock. Chanting a few arcane words accompanied with hand motions, the side of the great rock gave way to a cavernous opening. The desert locale and cave before us gave me little doubt that we were visiting the ashram of the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist that Mithelizek had mentioned in an earlier lecture. As he led me down the darkened steps, I could only wonder what business these tranquil beings could have with an arrogant wizard such as Mithelizek.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE TWILIGHT FIST

We came upon the brothers during a training session in what appeared to be the dimly lit main chamber of the ashram. A wizened Old Master seemed to be overseeing the class, led by one of his students. Upon seeing Mithelizek and I, he signaled to his student, who in turn motioned for his fellow pupils - a mix of races - to stop. They promptly left the chamber, leaving only the three of us. There followed an exchange of words between Mithelizek and the elder drow, which ended with Mithelizek turning away with a reviled expression as he quickly followed the departing students. It was now only the Old Master and I.

He lit another small paper lantern such as already hung nearby, and hung it above us upon an overhanging sandstone arch. With better illumination, I could see that the Old Master was much older than I previously estimated. In fact, he seemed quite ancient even by elven standards. The hair on his scalp was almost nonexistent, and a thick, long beard of shocked white fell down to his hips. His face was a concentration of wrinkles, but his eyes beamed like hot coals, burning with wisdom and keen intellect. Silently, he eloquently poured two cups of tea from an earthenware pot, and although I saw no source of fire from which it had been heated, steam rose from the rims. As he poured, I removed my scribing tools from my pack, and he began to speak.

THE OLD MASTER SPEAKS

"I see that the wizard brought you here seeking knowledge and history. History is a great oasis of knowledge, but only to those who know how to draw from the deepest of its waters, and to drink it with the greatest thirst. However, you may be such a man, so I shall teach what I can.

The tradition of my order was born of blood and fear. Before the coming of the mind flayers, we relied on cold steel and fiery magic to strike down our enemies, but these things alone could not defeat them. Our gods could not remove the illithid threat, and neither betrayal, lies, hatred or greed could save us. These were all the things my people had, but none were the solution to their extinction. By choosing the path of evil, they doom themselves to die by evil hands.

When I was a young boy, I saw plays for the entertainment of my mother and our House. The event I remember the most about them was that, near the end of the play, the hero was placed in a situation where everything he tried to solve the problem failed. When every weapon he owned had failed in the defeating of his enemy, and when all other options exhausted, a likeness of a god descended down upon the stage, removing the problem at hand and saving the hero at the last possible moment. My young mind

actually thought it was he, and often I found myself hiding behind my mothers' robes. She explained that it was not any god, but only a puppet used when the playwright had no other ideas to resolve the story. The githzerai proved to be such a thing, appearing from nowhere and resolving the threat at hand. Of course, that is all they meant to the Empire, but for us it turned out to be much more.

The githzerai are an ancient race that has known only war for thousands of years. War against those who would once oppress them, war against the githyanki who betrayed them, and war against those would stop them from seeking their revenge. They were forged in the fires of slavery and tempered in the hammer of civil war - a fate that the dark elves also share.

Good and evil were concepts alien to the githzerai, for they only knew their one purpose. The need to make war with their immortal enemies dictated every aspect of their lives, and the ideals of duality did not fit into their lives. A sword knows neither good nor evil, but only that it bites the flesh and cleaves the bone of those it is wielded against. The githzerai had chosen to become such a sword, with their purpose the guiding hand. Order and chaos they did recognize, but not as opposing forces, but as differing shapes of a whole. Water can freeze and become ice, or boil to become steam and steam can settle and cool to become water again - law and chaos are no different. The githzerai live in a place that is the mother of all chaos, but can shape this raw potential into ordered shapes, and can free these things back to the chaos, which it came from just as easily.

The dark elf mind, like the mind of all elves, is a very fluid, chaotic thing. It is unpredictable like a flash flood, and roams about where it will like a tsunami, and rages headstrong like a torrential river. To bring such a thing into the ordered tranquility of a disciple's mind requires a dam builder of great will and patience, which the githzerai were. They taught us the aesthetic of simplicity, the joy of inner peace, and the power of true focus and discipline. We learned the true meaning of change and stasis, and if law could come of chaos, and chaos of law, then nothing was truly unbreakable, such as the mind flayers - or the Empire. The intervening puppet of fate forged a great blade from the minds and souls of dark elves, and handed the weapon to the Empress.

After several years, Per left us to our own fates, and Xeb'beth become the new Master. He was the first to meet the githzerai, and the greatest of Per's students. He was also my ancestor.

In my youth, some two millennia ago, I was a boorish young noble, with little care for the story of Xeb'beth and his deeds. Ah, yes, I see the doubt in your eyes, but it is true. Whether by chance, fate or a third power, I have been blessed with great longevity. I am the last remaining original - the last of those who departed from the Krimppatus so

long ago. Now, to keep our order alive, I take pupils from all races, if they are wise enough to find me. But to return to my story...

I was fast approaching marrying age, but with no future matron interested in my prospects. I showed no propensity in the arcane arts, no talents in military matters and very little interest in anything not involving debauchery or luxuriant self-satisfaction. My father had died in battle, and my mother was a hard woman. She was stoic and cool-headed, but also a very doting mother, and blamed herself for my behavior. As Mithelizek may have told you, our society does not tolerate a parent showing such unconditional love to a child. Having no choice but to avoid potential scandal, mother forced me to Master Xeb'beth.

I was not eager to go there. I threatened, pleaded, and cajoled my mother to allow me to stay, but she remained stone faced. Once within the hallowed dojo of my Old Master, I began to realize the opportunity before me. Surely my mother would finally leave me be if I failed to be hammered into one of these subservient killers. If the Old Masters could not break me, then she would have no choice but to allow my return. Perhaps I could become an adept of some church; a low-ranking priest with only a few duties of little importance. I was a noble son of a power House - certainly, no lowborn pauper could order me around! I was gravely mistaken.

The Shadow Army hardens men through rod and punishment, but the Brotherhood needs no such tools, as Master Xeb'beth could burn away my hubris with his presence and simple words of truth alone. When I first met him, I was certain that I could easily intimidate him. He was sitting near a reflective pool, deep within meditation. Like a proud lion, I roared out my introduction, and made it very clear who I was, what I could do, and how the little man could never hope to command the likes of me. He looked up, and with a soft voice replied, "If this is true, then you may leave."

I was not expecting the Old Master to be so calm and straightforward, and I was quite shocked. I gathered my resolve once more and explained that my mother would never allow me to leave until I had trained there. Again, he looked up, and spoke. "Then I shall train you." In return, I stated I would fail miserably, and then have my leave of this wretched place. He asked, "How does one fail?"

Once again, I was not expecting such words. I wanted him to either bow before me or become enraged. His behavior made no sense. Thinking him foolish, or perhaps a trickster, I shouted that failure was what happened when one tries to accomplish a goal but does not achieve it. Again, he spoke to me.

"I am certain," he said, "that if one tries to do something then he will fail. If he does set out to do something, then he shall not fail. However, you say you have the blood of

Blood & Shadows: The Dark Elves of Tellene

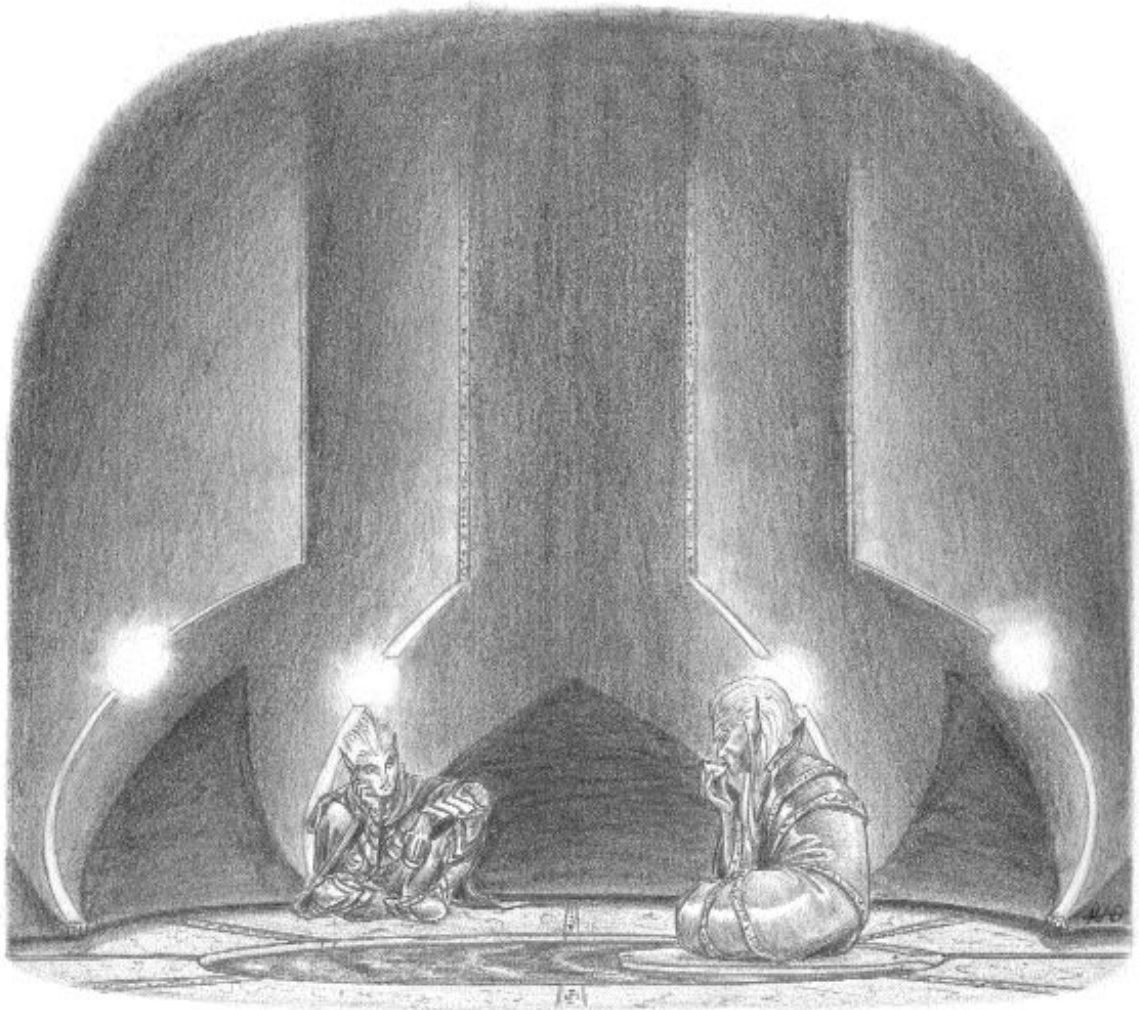
greatness within you. Great ones never try, and they do not set out to do things, but they do." He stood up and began circling me, sizing me up. "I shall give you a riddle. If you answer it, then I shall contact your mother and ask her to allow you back within her house. She granted me a favor once, and I have not collected it after all this time. This favor I shall ask on your behalf if you answer me the riddle by tomorrow evening. Here is my riddle: there is a mountain. Then there is no mountain. And then there is."

Although it was like no riddle I knew, I was determined to solve it. I surmised that the Old Master wished to know how a mountain could exist, and then disappear, and then come back. I sat down beside him next to the reflecting pool, and did not sleep or move from that spot until the following night. The first hours found my mind to be frantic and frustrated thing, as I desperately grasped at ideas with great alacrity but little satisfaction. As time passed, my mind became slower; less inclined to grasp at ideas but more intent on concentrating on the question itself and its meaning. Hunger and sleep deprivation made me think only of the question. I was calm, calmer than I knew was

possible, even though my freedom slipped through my fingers with every passing hour. I did not think about my problem, my mother, and my missing comfort - only the riddle existed in my universe. The words faded after time, and the question had no visual being. Only the mountain remained, and then it did not, and then did. Old Master tapped upon my shoulder and asked my answer. "Old Master," I rattled from parched throat, "I have no answer." He smiled. "There is a man before me, then there is no man, and then there is." My training had begun.

There was no answer, of course, and there never will be. However, contemplating it opens the mind, to clear it of all thought and leave only the truth of void. The sword does not think, and does nothing but what it is done with it. Once I learned to open my mind and clear away all I knew, it was then I learned. I studied under Master Xeb'beth for centuries, knowing only his tutelage and the commands of the Empire.

Sadly, my mother never truly understood the life of a Brother of the Twilight Fist. For the first few years, she attempted to show her pride of my accomplishments by



rewarding me material gifts and offers to live again in her House, which I politely declined. She was confused, and perhaps a little saddened that I was no longer the son she knew, and that she seemed no longer my mother, as my past life was behind me. In time, she accepted this.

Time is something revered by The Brotherhood, as it is the most powerful agent of change, and I have seen its puissance. Time saw the death of the Old Master, passed away in the peaceful repose of his morning meditation, and saw the installation of my fellow pupil Monrek as the new Master. Time also saw the death of the woman I once called mother.

A short time thereafter, the Empress' veraliak kept us very busy, and ordered us often to slay this noble and capture this heretic. As thousands of our own people died at the Brotherhood's hands, I had the first thoughts of individuality I had had in years. Was the hand that wielded us doing the right thing? After all, the Empress Setimeka II was the hand and the heart of the Empire, but how long could such things live if they continually hack at their own body? At the rate we were going, this was not the removal of gangrenous flesh - this was a slow suicide. I pondered the correct course of action, but there was no answer. The Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist was a weapon, and weapons only go where they are struck.

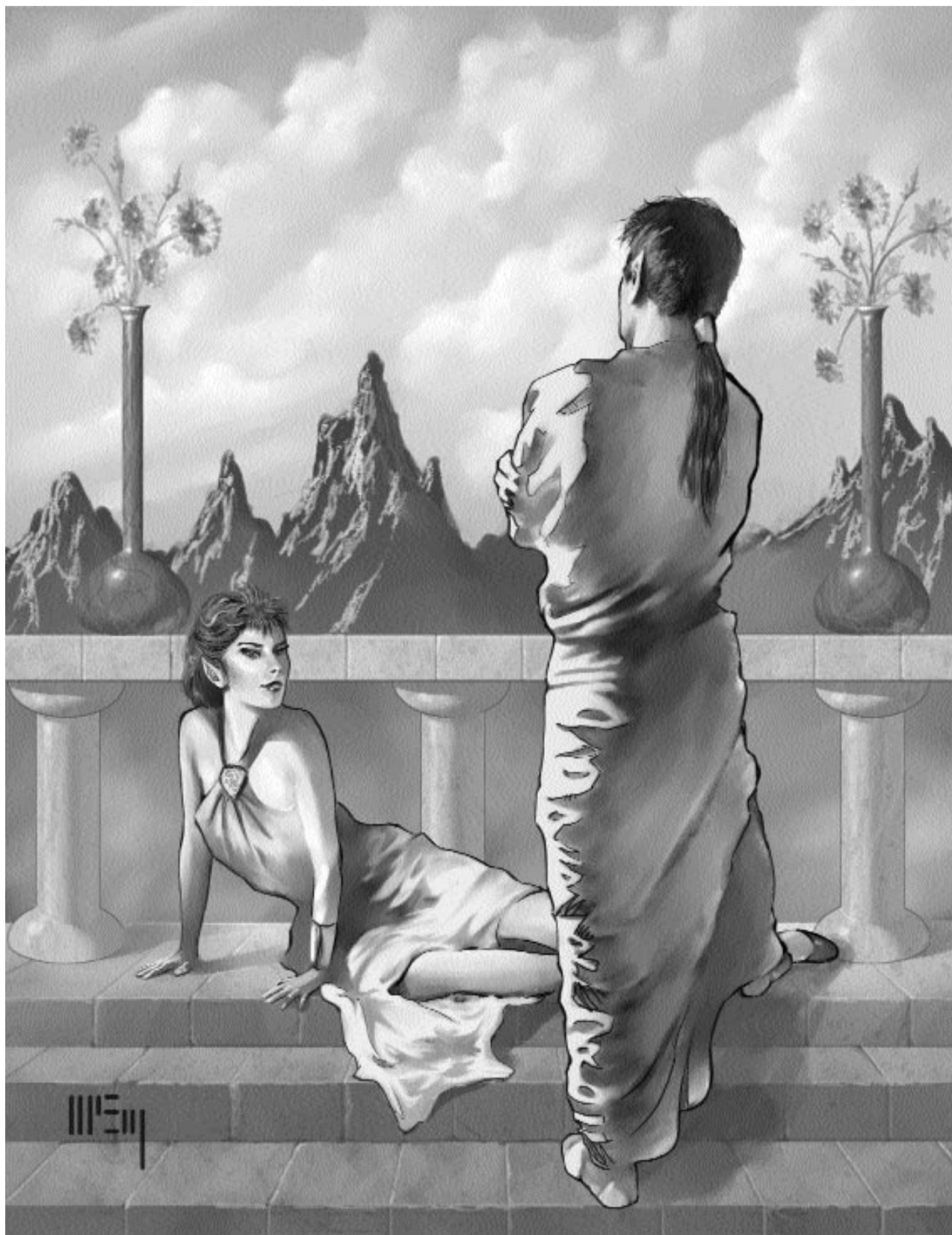
The Empress was now the intervening figure in the play. She provided my order the answer when she foolishly branded her brother Monrek as a heretic and ordered his destruction. In moments, he had a sister who was Empress, and by his order I killed her and made his sister Empress. Culexi had only met me once, but somehow she knew I was her ally - and her brother's. When we left the Empire, she did not oppose us.


A bell is a cup until struck, but a sword not yet wielded can be many things. It can be an iron bar, unbending in its duty to uphold a larger structure. It can be a tool for the creating of many a splendid creation, and it can be a symbol for change. However, without the hand to guide it, it remains as nothing. We traveled north for many days in silence, stopping only to seek shelter from the unforgiving sun. We crossed over the hills, through forest and marsh, and finally looked out over the Straits. It was then I had known that our fate we would discuss. I turned to my Master and asked, "And what should become of us now?"

One of my fellow pupils suggested that we could kill for money. "But," the Master pointed out, "we have no need for such things, so why allow ourselves to become slaves to material possessions and those who hold them?" Another suggested that we kill for power. "Yet," the Master said, "power is an ephemeral thing - it leaves the soul when the body is abandoned, and robs the inner peace that we embrace." Yet another suggested that we return to the Elenons. "Ah," the Master said, "good and evil are only two sides of a coin, and we could very well find ourselves in the same situation eventually." We made camp in the salt marsh, and I continued to meditate on the problem at hand. I pondered the question as I did the riddle Master Xeb'beth had given me on the first day of my training, and my mind began to wander alone amongst the void. What if no hand was worthy enough to wield us? What if the sword had to choose the owner? Perhaps our search was only beginning.

We wandered west until we came upon a small fishing village. The humans there had never seen the likes of us before, but the Master assured the village elders that we meant no harm, but were only interested in doing business. Using what material wealth we had, we commissioned the construction of seafaring craft and gathering of provisions. When asked of our destination, the Master spoke that we would go wherever the winds take us. If our former teachers could forge order from chaos, then surely we would find the path amongst the wilderness. Our ships finally landed upon the edge of the Elos Desert, and from there we headed north, as we did before. We students were uncertain. Were we returning to the old homeland beneath the mountains? Not even I was sure of our final destination, but only of the path.

After many days crossing the endless dunes, we finally





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Chapter 3: Journey Into Twilight

WHEREIN THE NARRATOR VISITS THE TWILIGHT ELVES

The next day, I sought passage to the fastest ship I could find heading to Ospolen. During the voyage, my thoughts were consumed with the calculation of the fastest route over the Elenons to my destination. Although I am normally a patient man, I often found myself cursing the limitations of ocean travel, until finally we finally landed in Ospolen.

There, I set out to contact my patron. I spent several days in her mansion as I gave her a summary of my findings, and of the sources. I then explained my next destination. Fortunately, she shared in my enthusiasm of this myriad of discoveries, and was more than willing to aid in the next leg of my journey. I left my recorded pages with her for safekeeping. Her name I will not write, as I know she prefers to remain anonymous, and I do not wish to endanger her any further than necessary.

Feeling rejuvenated by my stay in my native land, I took the next step in my journey - to Eldor. I booked passage on yet another ship, this one heading for Dalen. My brilliantly forged travel papers fooled the port authority into thinking I was of Eldoran stock, thus saving me both time and grief. I convinced a riverboat captain on his route to Premolen to allow me passage in exchange for my services as both healer and storyteller. In my mind, the journey up the Brolador River seemed to take longer than both my ocean voyages combined, and the constant retelling of Eldoran war stories (both true and false) was quite tedious. Eventually, we arrived at Premolen, where my travel papers allowed me free movement. I quickly purchased a horse and headed southeast towards Lendelwood.

FROM LATHLANIAN TO FOPASIDO

I am no stranger to the elves of those woods, and remembered the hand signs that would announce to the archers that I am their friend. My horse I abandoned as I marched

through the forest to the elven city of Lathlanian, where a reunion of old acquaintances took place. Shamefully, I admit I may have been somewhat brusque with my hosts, for I was impatient to hurry to my final destination. Using up all the favors owed me there, I arranged a mounted flight across the Legasa Peaks during one of the elves' routine hippogriff patrols. To say that the ride was discomforting would be an understatement, for the experience severely jolted my stomach and my equilibrium. The rider to whose waist I clutched, having ridden on hundreds of such flights, remained aloof, though I fancy I heard him groan once or twice when my grip became too tight.

I landed two miles north of Fopasido, the next to last point of my expedition. I waved farewell to my rider, and began to walk south despite the soreness of my legs and confusion of my stomach. I rented a room in the first inn I encountered and quickly fell asleep. The next morning, I went down to the common area for breakfast. The town was abuzz with news of a mercenary band that encountered a dark elf war party being assembled underneath the Legasa Peaks. Unlike most of the town's inhabitants, this was almost a relief for me. I had to bite my tongue almost constantly while in Lendelwood, as the questions raised in my mind through Mithelizek's rhetoric tempted me into many a vulgar request of taboo information. Now, the subject of dark elves was a welcome topic. Wasting little time, I hired a guide, half a dozen mercenaries and two porters to take with me to the mining tunnel where the dark elf war party was supposedly seen. I was quite generous with my coin, and few frivolous questions were asked. Once we reached the spot, I sent away my hirelings. At first, they protested for my safety, but I would hear nothing of it. They soon gave up on their attempts of bringing me to reason and finally turned back to the city. Armed only with my lantern, a few flasks of oil, my holy symbols and a backpack full of provisions and equipment, I sallied forth into the

memory, however, was their eyes - cold, sad spheres like dams holding back a flood of burdens. Volumes I read of their ancient struggles and hardships from their eyes alone. My guide was the first twilight elf I spoke to when I finally awoke. Veria, as she introduced herself, knew to look for a human cleric during her patrols of the far tunnels as per her orders. The instructions stated to bring him back and guarantee his safe journey. When I asked how they knew to expect me, she replied only with a weak smile and offered to escort me to someone who could answer my questions.

As I crossed through the streets of this ancient city, I did see more of the twilight elves, and even a shadow elf, but they hardly played the parts of the ordinary scenes of a city population. Every adult I saw carried a weapon on his or her person, and most wore armor of differing sorts. The children were the only ones who seemed relatively normal, although their play seemed muted, for they were very quiet and almost docile. In fact, the whole city hummed with an eerily low volume of sound, like an ordinary stroll through the merchant district by a man whose hearing was all but completely lost. It felt like the quietest military state I had ever seen, and was very unlike the image I had of their community. I soon began to doubt my wisdom in coming here, as it was very possible that their culture had degraded after centuries of self-imposed isolation, not unlike their brethren in the Krimppatus.

Eventually, my guide led to what had to have been the old Imperial House of Scorn - although in outward appearance only. The place radiated a calm, warm light about my being, eroding away all the fears and worries that enveloped my mind. Small lanterns adorned the main gate as they do at many a temple in cities above ground. The main chamber of worship, on the other hand, was nothing like I had seen before. It was breathtaking, with stonework of the highest caliber covered with incredibly minute carvings throughout the inner chamber. The massive room had only one occupant; a single dwarf woman carefully polishing the gold inlays on the pulpit. She smiled upon seeing us, and cordially informed us that our host was waiting on the second floor. She wistfully went back to her labor, whistling an eerie tune. My guide thanked the genial dwarf and led me to our destination.

Once outside the door, Veria stopped and gestured for me to go inside. Doing so, I saw that the room itself was very dull in comparison to the rest of temple - nothing more than a simple office with a slate desk and a few chairs. My host, however, was more glorious than anything else in this wondrous ruin. She was very easily the most angelic creature I had ever laid my eyes upon, and

made all other twilight elves seem plain in contrast. Her alabaster skin glowed dimly about her, giving her countenance a soft, golden hue. Copper hair seemed to burn like the sun upon her brow, giving her an overall celestial appearance. She wore armor of the finest artisanship I had ever seen, apparently mithril inlaid with gold and diamonds both white and yellow. The sight of her rendered me awestruck, and I fear that I dropped down into one of the chairs with bulging eyes and wide-open mouth. She smiled at me and with a chorister's voice greeted me. "Branlel the Younger, I presume? I have been expecting you for some time."

NARRATOR'S INTERLUDE

It seems that, through secretive contacts with the elves of Lendelwood, she knew about my traveling over the Legasa Peaks. Her people debated as to how to handle this situation, but they finally decided to guide me back to their city and allow me the lore that I sought. She explained that I could have easily died if not for the night watch patrol, as the underground was extremely dangerous to explore without a proper guide.

They gave me the information that I sought, but there was - of course - a price. I must use what influence that my patron and myself have to discourage any outsiders



from exploring their tunnel systems, as their duty to guard the Old Empire may be compromised by any interfering explorers. They originally hoped to maintain their secretive isolationism as they had done for centuries, but feared that the dark elves' interest in reclaiming the old lands was drawing too much attention to the area for it to be possible. Their secrets would be sooner or later be uncovered, so it was felt best that they reveal themselves while they still had the opportunity to voice their side of the story.

Seeing this as a much more reasonable price than the one promised to Mithelizek, I stated that I saw the wisdom in such a request and heartily agreed. The following is her dialogue, and I can assure you that it was much more pleasant to hear than the arrogant ranting of Mithelizek.

THE WORDS OF THE FORGOTTEN ONES

"My name is Felonia, and I am a descendant of Princess Persephaine, also called the Pale Golden Daughter, also called the first champion of Lady Love, whom I call ancestor. I am her servant, and the leader of my people, as was my mother and her mother before her. As you know, we are the twilight elves - the lonely sentinels of this once evil place, those who guard it from the dark that would come home and claim what was once its own. We are the Eternal Parish of Love, and our hearts shine throughout all the places that the sun cannot touch.

We have known you for a long time, as we still have contacts with the other elven kingdoms. We are also aware that you have been in the presence of Mithelizek Once-of-Halibeth, who is far removed by distance but close by blood. We know of his practices and interests, and I pray to Lady Love that you survive whatever price he may have extracted from you. His allegiances may no longer be to his Empire, but that only makes him all the more dangerous. I assume that you know as much of our history as Mithelizek would explain, so I shall fill in the gaps left by his ignorance or misdirection.

I suppose that I shall start at the War of Elves, the civil war that isolated our people from our cousins and inevitably set up the First Exodus. The horrid beast Joleriel, my ancestor, used lies to turn her people against the very gods that had blessed and loved us in millennia before the Despiser's scheming. Mithelizek may have no doubt exaggerated the number of elves who listened to Joleriel's fabrications, but the persecution the established temples suffered at the hands of their own parishioners was terrible. Some stayed until the end, hoping to turn the tide of evil by brining the people back to their senses and removing Joleriel from the throne, but in time, they either met destruction or converted out of hopelessness. The rest of us, both the clerics and their loyal followers, fled from the Empire and sought asylum with our lowland relatives. They were naturally suspicious

at first, as trust was a virtue quickly decaying from our race. Once our intentions proved benevolent, we did everything we could to save the loved ones and neighbors we had no choice but to leave behind.

Allying ourselves with the other elven kingdoms, we warred against our brothers until the great day of victory. It was a proud day for us, as we marched into the peaks of the Elenons, ready to bring the Empress and her minions to justice while we liberated the remainder of our people. Yet, when we arrived, all we found was an abandoned empire of empty streets and razed buildings. Very little remained of our ancient civilization, and a great emptiness entered our hearts. The threat had disappeared, but all of a sudden, we were an orphaned branch of the family tree. Our kingdoms blew away like dust in the wind, and with it our families and possessions. Seeing this, many of our kindly cousins offered us permanent refuge, but we politely declined them all, accepting only their offer of a small piece of their lands in which to live. Despite their obvious altruism, they had an underlying intent - the hope that we would intermarry with them and erase our own bloodline within in a few generations, thus removing all record of the horrors seen in this dark chapter of the world. Yet, we suspected the black truth that our cousins wished to ignore - that our people did not disappear from the world, but must still be quite close.

Some short time later - about 400 to 500 years - word from dwarven traders told of attacks by strange, dark-skinned beings not unlike elves. They also cried of the corruption of one of their clans at the hands of these dark creatures, and requested the assistance of the elves. However, this time, our cousins took a stance of cold indifference. They had no desire to dredge up painful memories of treachery and brutal war, and they definitely were not interested in traveling into the cramped, sunless places that all elves feared. Simply put, it was not their problem. Although our temporary hosts maintained a deaf ear to the pleas of the exasperated dwarves, we listened with great interest. Yes, we had little doubt that these were our lost brothers and sisters, albeit under the final corruption of the Despiser.

We arranged meetings with dwarven dignitaries, and finally struck a pact. All the refugees again packed up their few possessions and journeyed to the mountains one last time. If our now dark-skinned relatives had truly taken refuge in the vast underground world beneath the Elenons, then certainly living on the Legasa Peaks would be dangerous, as they no doubt still surveyed that area in the event of our return. In order to bring our families back from the brink of eternal damnation, we chose to follow them beneath the ground.

TWILIGHT IN DARKNESS

The transition was anything but easy, and only the resolve in our mission and the kindness of our dwarven

hosts kept us from fraying in spirit. The latter was especially important, as you may know that elves and dwarves are almost as different as night and day. Cultural differences and misunderstandings were commonplace in those early, difficult years, but a desire to see our daunting task come to fruition kept such disagreements no worse than stern verbal confrontations. As time went by, we soon began to fit into dwarven society, and both races began to see one another as comrades almost on the same level as kin. After all, they too had lost friends and family to the corruption of the Despiser, and wanted to see their salvation either by reason or destruction.

Please do not mistake me - although we always harbored hope for bringing our people back to the light, we never had any delusion that the number of those saved would be great. Their corruption ran deep in the soul, and many were too far-gone to bring back. For centuries, we settled for military solutions, with only a weak trickle of individuals quietly slipping by the ever-vigilant Purgers (clerics of the House of Scorn) and back into the fold of redeemed. However, the martial assaults launched by the dwarven militia had limited success, as the dark elf armies proved craftier and more resourceful than expected. Of course, we had spies within the Empire, but this gave no advantage in warding off attacks against the dwarven halls.

A SIGN APPEARS

Then, one night, Lady Love appeared to one of my male ancestors - also one of her faithful acolytes - in a dream. She told him that a twilight elf would be born from the womb of the Despiser's daughter, and High Cleric-Empress Meluria of House Halibeth. The child would be sheltered in the Imperial House, but the goddess assured him that no corruption would stain the girl's soul. She would grow to be the Pure One's champion and lead her people back to the light of love. Excited by this vision, he quickly gathered the rest of the priests and elders to tell them of this divine message. Through our spies, we confirmed that the Empress was indeed pregnant, and that she expected to deliver very soon. Three days later, she gave birth to twins, something that Lady Love would later explain in another dream. While one princess was to be the savior of the twilight elves, her fraternal twin was an evil to rival the Despiser himself. My ancestor patiently waited for this champion to find him, as Lady Love would guide her to her destiny.

My ancestor was posing as a bard of the House of the Unwritten Page, in the city of Halibeth-Joleriel, when the sign finally came. You see, he would hollowly sing the songs of propaganda to passersby on the Market Square while listening for any word concerning dissidents or other important information to our cause. That day, he decided to take a break and tune his instrument when a young maiden - she who was called Persephaine - strolled up to him.

Although it was sometimes practice for merchants to tip a bard some coin in order for him to ignore their plots, it was definitely unusual for such a young lady to have business with any agent of the Unwritten Page. She did nothing more than simply smile and hand him a paper lantern. He graciously accepted the gift and returned her smile. It was the sign for which he waited, and a contact system was soon established to inform her of the twilight elves and their activities.

PERSEPHAINE'S PLANS

As Persephaine blossomed into a woman, she took a more active interest in the efforts of the twilight elf resistance. With her black-hearted sister groomed for the regency, the fairer daughter expressed an interest in arcane magic, even naming the wizard she would serve as apprentice. Her master, an illusionist, was one of our oldest converts, operating out of a remote underground tower that doubled as one of our information outposts. Here, she trained in the rudimentary functions of magic, but the majority of her schooling was as a faithful tool of Lady Love, including the teachings of the goddess and the ways of martial combat. Persephaine proved a quick study in both, showing a flair for both magic and swordsmanship. It was for the latter expertise that our greatest and most secret ally, matron of House Broken Axe and the head of the Artificers' Guild, forged her greatest masterpiece - the blade called Dawnfire. We never allowed it to leave the grounds of the tower, of course, as her dreaded half-god mother would no doubt sense the holy aura of the sword entering the Temple. In fact, we believe it was the godly blood in Persephaine's own veins and the intervention of Lady Love that prevented Meluria from sensing the purity of her daughter's spirit.

As Pale Golden Daughter trained diligently, we watched her twin with the greatest apprehension. She was, as promised, the very antithesis of her sister, and her depravations were appalling even for the Empress' daughter. We had no doubts that her actions would dictate the time to strike, and that these actions would follow the Imperial crown adorning her brow.

Sure enough, our theories proved correct. Our spies reported that Meluria had somehow fallen gravely ill, and that Drow'deltha would ascend to Empress-Regent while her mother recovered. Although her subjects seemed content to believe this, we knew better. Meluria was half-divine, and with such blood in her veins, she was hardly prone to sickness. Even if this had been the case, there was little chance of Drow'deltha hesitating to take advantage of the situation. Although she knew that her mother was the corrupt vessel of the Despiser, Persephaine grew saddened upon hearing of the alleged demise of her mother. Though the Empress distrusted her light-skinned daughter, Persephaine still sensed a sliver of love and

compassion from her, and always held a small, secret hope of her salvation. This would never happen, of course, and it caused grief to Pale Golden Daughter. Despite the protests of her trainers, she quickly packed what she could and set out with her retinue of guards, who posed as the keel'thaile originally assigned to her - now long since dispatched.

The party ran into an ambush of loyalist shadow elves along one of the secluded trade routes, and a battle commenced. Even without Dawnfire, Persephaine fought valiantly alongside her guards. All but two perished, one the son of Klass Broken Axe and the other Pale Golden Daughter's new husband, Frelus, he who first contacted her so many years ago.

The rest you probably know from Mithelizek - Persephaine and her remaining sentinels reached the Imperial Temple, but Drow'deltha barred her sister from seeing their mother, confirming in her mind that her mother was truly dead. She departed, managing to evade her sister's assassins. Reaching a safe house in the lower slums, she sent messengers to the other outposts, calling back home many of our spies and informants. She chose to stay behind, but had a courier retrieve Dawnfire for her.

While Pale Golden Daughter and the rest of our remaining agents did what they could to help the those caught in the bloody civil war, others returned to the dwarven halls and attempted to coax the dwarven thanes into sending military help. The thanes did not object to sending in their armies, but desired to wait for the shadow elves and hobgoblins to decimate their own numbers first, to reduce the risk to their dwarven ranks. Our people pleaded for the dwarves to intervene now, to reduce unnecessary casualties, but in the end they could not deny the logic in the thanes' words. Until the appropriate time came, we were alone in our quest.

There were troubles on the front as well, for in addition to dodging Drow'deltha's assassins, Persephaine also found troubles with the noble rebels. House Cavavres, in particular, was bent on destroying all members of the Imperial Family to further their own personal goals for power. There had been many narrow escapes made by Pale Golden Daughter and her new husband Frelus. Our cells kept on the move constantly - no small feat for a secret organization stationed in an underground Empire during a civil war.

Finally, Lady Love appeared - this time in her avatar form - before Pale Golden Daughter and her followers. She told us that we must ally with the struggling rebel houses for a last desperate assault upon Halibeth-Joleriel and the Imperial Temple itself. Although many in our ranks were skeptical at such an idea, even spoken from a goddess' lips, Persephaine had no doubts as to her next actions. Klass Broken Axe, remaining undercover among the rebel houses to watch their troop movements, met with Verlius Cavavres, matron of House Cavavres and general of the rebel houses'

army. Somehow, she succeeded in securing this alliance, and all differences were - at least temporarily - put aside. Grudgingly, the mountain dwarf thanes sent troops to bolster the dwindling twilight elf numbers.

WAR OF THE SISTERS

The Battle of Halibeth-Joleriel was not only the most brutal and destructive battle in the War of the Sisters, but also the largest, nearly rivaling the War of Elves. The caverns filled with carnage, and the blood ran ankle deep towards the end. The conflict raged for what seemed an eternity, and did not see its end until the confrontation of the twins.

Persephaine, along with several elite troops, including her husband, reached the palace by exploiting a gap in the enemy's flank. There, they battled her sister's own cadre of keel'thaile. Soon, she reached her sister's chambers, both her personal retinue and the Imperial Elite both slain. They were alone in their battle. No one heard words spoken or footsteps falling when their eyes first locked, and immediately they began to cast spells of defensive and then offensive rites. The ceiling of the cavern structure became alight with magic, and the fierce fighting below came to a pause, with all combatants looking upwards to see who would be the final victor of this war.

When both exhausted their store of spells, weapons were drawn. In Pale Golden Daughter's hands was Dawnfire. In her sister's were the gaz'zirad and the jelyenesh of her mother, the latter tainted with negative energy by the ritual that gave her the power to do away with her demigoddess mother. The sounds of their clashing blades filled the cavern with thunder, and the sparks illuminated the halls like lightning. After some time the roars and the light stopped, and a triumphant Persephaine presented the wicked one's head to the throngs below.

THE SECOND EXODUS

As you know, it was at this time that the Despiser and Lady Love appeared and offered the shadow elves and their allies a choice - stay and repent, or remain loyal to the Despiser's plans and depart. A fortnight they gave for the decision, as it would take time for word to spread in order to carefully weigh their decision. Those who wished to leave were to congregate at specified locations within the tunnels where old planar gates were said to exist, whereupon a black void would open and take them to a new home. During the waiting time, an uneasy peace came to the Empire in which elves of twilight and shadow, and the mountain dwarves and their estranged Moss Beard cousins, coexisted without conflict. Some twilight elves pleaded with their lost families to stay behind, while the dwarves ignored each other with stoic silence.

Finally, the day of decision came, and those who wished to remain loyal to the dark took their leave. It was only after

this that the Pure One made her final proclamation. She asked the newly reunited twilight elf kingdom, and those of shadow who stayed behind, to remain here as a guard over this lost Empire. The shadow elves were gone, but they left behind many artifacts and books of lore that could reap great evil should they fall into the wrong hands. Also, who was to say that the exiles would not someday find a way to return through the planar gates and reclaim their lands. The crowds she addressed cried joyously in mostly unanimous agreement... but Persephaine was not among them.

PERSEPHAINE'S CHOICE

Pale Golden Daughter already knew she would stay, and spent her fortnight's time in a different capacity. She found her old room in the Imperial Temple, and wept. She grieved for her lost husband, she grieved for her mother, and she grieved for the sister who had been destined to die at her hands. In her mourning, she lost track of time and did not realize the date. It was then that Lady Love appeared before her.

The goddess knew that her favored child's gentle soul cried out, her pain bottled up inside her. "Your beloved is at the right side of my throne, my lovely child, and he waits patiently for you to join him," said the goddess. "He wants you to weep no longer, for he died in glory and for his people. He wishes you to dry your eyes, as your sister was the source of her own undoing. Also, do not weep for your mother, for she is still among the living. Save your tears, child, for you must remain strong for your own daughter." Lady Love then placed her divine hand upon the stomach of Pale Golden Daughter, who smiled and wept tears of comforted joy.

After Lady Love departed, Persephaine walked to the throne room where she had slain her twin. The blood had been scrubbed away long since, and the gaz'zirad of her mother given to her last surviving niece soon after the battle. The walls were charred black by the energies expelled during their battle, and little effort had been done to change that. However, upon the floor remained the jelyenesh, twisted by the foulest of diabolic magic, exerting a black aura that corrupted the very air around it. Persephaine stared at it for the longest time, its mental pleas and cajoling brushing against her mind and soul. It taunted her as she stared, quietly contemplating her next move.

She finally decided on a course of action, summoning the mithral golem held in her family's possession since before the War of Elves. She gave the golem one last mission - to retrieve the sword, go deep beneath the mountain, and guard it for the rest of eternity. Once the blighted sword departed, my ancestor set about the task of rebuilding her newly conquered realm, a task she performed well until her death several centuries later.

STRANGE NEW LAND

The converted shadow elves kept their ebon countenances as a reminder of their past transgressions, as did their descendants, some of those you passed in the streets on the way here. We chose to remain a theocracy with my line serving as high priest and monarch, but without the oppressive dogmatic tyranny espoused by the shadow elves. You see, we consider the price of our freedom as a debt never paid in full, and we wish for the freedom we gained to never again be taken. We cast aside the chaotic free spiritedness that we once in enjoyed to fulfill our pact. Our lives revolve around the guardianship of this place, instead of the other way around.

The corrupted mountain dwarves, on the other hand, did not have such an easy choice. They were as stubborn as the stoic earth itself, so there was no question that they would receive the forgiveness of their stern kin and return home. Nor had they ever worshipped Lady Love, so the warmth we enjoyed offered little comfort to them. Instead, most left through the portals with the shadow elves, while the mountain clans who aided us returned to their own kingdom. Less than one dozen Moss Beard clan members - one being the converted Klass Broken Axe of the Moss Beard clan - remained behind. Klass was unable to convince her immediate family to stay, and she faked her own death so that her family members could still enjoy prestige when they established their new Empire in their new land.

FELONIA'S INTERLUDE: KCLASS AND THE ORDER OF THE PENITENT

Klass was a fascinating woman. Founder of the Artificers' Guild and creator of some of the greatest devices and artifacts of the Old Empire, she was both a master crafts-woman and a powerful spellcaster. She spent a good deal of time being obsessed with her art and her family's coffers, with little care for anything else. This left her with a secret void in her heart, as she realized that there was something more than what the Empire had to offer her. Lady Love sensed this, and came to her one night in a dream while Pale Golden Daughter was nothing more than an infant. The goddess told Klass that she was chosen for a great purpose, one where only her immense talents would suffice. Awestruck by the sight of the Pure One, Klass quickly swore fealty to her, deciding that the task she had always felt undone the Pure One now gave her. Through the goddess' directions, she made contact with the twilight elf underground, and proved valuable as both a spy and crafter of weapons. She forged the mighty Dawnfire with the purest metals, and Lady Love personally blessed the weapon. The blade was the finest and most beautiful work ever forged, and Klass personally delivered it to Pale Golden Daughter

while kneeling before her reverence. Klass Broken Axe was a fine woman and a great power to our cause.

After the Second Exodus of the shadow elves, however, she felt directionless and without purpose. The dwarves discussed their future, and eventually spilt into two camps. The first camp, favored by Klass and her son Kerak, decided to join the kingdom of the twilight elves directly and enjoy the full citizenship and equal rights we offered. This camp held the majority, but the other camp still felt that guardianship of the realm was not enough to condone their past sins. They were disgusted with the bloodshed and treachery that consumed them, and wished to cast off all things brought by this. They would serve our kingdom, but never again would they associate with the material things that brought decadence and shame upon their clan.

This sect, now called the Order of the Penitent, shuns the use and ownership of all things that could breed either violence or avarice. They live in self-imposed poverty, only keeping enough of their earnings to get by, and donating the rest to charity or their patron Church, the House of Solace. They have nothing to do with bloodshed



- any found in the military serve only as healers or other non-combatative duties. Their smiths never forge weapons, although they do allow the creation of armor and shields. They dress in simple black clothing to show their shame, and the males shave their beards. They spend their few non-working hours spending time with their families or engaging in meditative prayer to the Peacemaker."

NARRATOR'S INTERLUDE

Seeing that Felonia's discourse had passed from historical to the present, I thought this the best moment to inquire upon certain aspects of her people and society, as I had done with Mithelizek in his tower. Though she had less to say upon the subject than my former host, I feel sure that the reader will still find it useful. I have taken the liberty of wording her replies in such a manner that they may more easily be compared with my notes on the dark elf, an alteration that I hope she will forgive me for.

PHYSIOLOGY

"As we were in ancient days, similar still the twilight elves appear today. Pale skin, hair of brilliant gold and copper, and eyes of green or gold are common traits of my people. These eyes have adapted well to the dark conditions beneath the Elenons, but we keep our homes well lit with both magic and glowing fungi, so our vision is not as keen in darkness as are the eyes of our dark-skinned brothers. Should we venture into the outside world, we would not doubt be mistaken for high elves of a particularly beautiful – and I say that blushing – kind. In fact, we speak the same language as our high elf kin – High Elven among ourselves, and Low Elven when speaking to those of another race.

We are quite tall, even moreso than the gray elves, for our males average about 5 1/2 to 6 feet in height. In the ancient days, we were nearly 7 feet tall, but it is quite rare for one of such size to be born today. The male twilight elf weighs approximately 150 pounds, with females standing only about two inches shorter and 10 to 20 pounds lighter. Twilight elf females are occasionally as muscular as males, but most are not, and neither grow any facial hair.

Like most elves, a twilight elf becomes an adult at about 110 years, and passes to the other realm between 600 and 700 years of age, if we are fortunate enough to avoid accidents, disease or the savage creatures that roam these mountains. On occasion, a twilight elf may live to be nearly 800 years old, though there are none so old among my people now. Oh, and as I am sure Mithelizek told you, we elves do not require sleep, but instead meditate for 4 hours every day.

Our dwarven inhabitants appear identical to those you know as mountain dwarves, save for the penitent rules of their order, and our shadow elf friends have the same traits as the dark elves you know of already.

PSYCHOLOGY

We are just as refined as our elven brethren of the sun, but whereas they protect others' freedom only when evil rears its head, for us guardianship holds a hallowed place. As such, we are a very pragmatic people. If one twilight elf is better than another at a particular task, then we relin-

quish that task to them. The pride of the individual matters much less than the strength of the group, with strength and superiority granting rank, not the other way around.

However, there is a dark side to our constant guardianship. When Persephaine died, much of her greatness and our will to remain here left as well. The period that immediately followed her death is known as the *unoiana aladroi*, or “golden twilight,” and my people have only somewhat emerged from this state. We are aware that we are no longer the great elves that we were in the Dawn of Time, and each twilight elf feels a twinge of shame for this deep down in her soul. We also realize that we cannot reclaim our former greatness while simultaneously maintaining our guardianship, and in that sense we are torn. We strive each day to become better, but inside every twilight elf is the knowledge that our former glory may be unreachable until the dark elves are no more.

As such, a few of my people explore the ancient tunnels, seeking the portals to the dark elf lands. Though some believe that such dark gates no longer exist, and were merely temporary portals created by the Despiser, they continue to search. Should such gates be found, we will have a means to bring true war to the dark elves. I fear that such an event would be the Last War of the Elves, and neither side happy with the result.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Holding the highest position among us is the *selatha*, or Queen Protectorate. I am the current *selatha*, and so I am responsible for everything that goes on within our lands, and ensuring that my people have enough food and other goods to meet more than their needs. Since the coming of the humans and other younger races, the *selatha* is also the representative of the twilight elves. My position is not hereditary, and any twilight elf may hold it, providing she can prove herself superior in both warfare and in the hearts of the people. To do so, she must first challenge my position publicly. Within a fortnight of this challenge, the twelve eldest members of our society must approach me and ask me to remove myself from office in favor of the challenger. Should all twelve do so, the challenger and *selatha* then engage in public, non-lethal ritual combat. If the challenger wins, she must also gain the crowd's support by a majority show of upheld swords, at which point she becomes the new *selatha* and the new bearer of the people's burdens.

Though the *selatha* is responsible for her people, they do not expect me to manage it all. Instead, I am assisted by a council of varying number, represented by the high cleric of each church, the commander of the military and the most prominent merchants and artisans.

TWILIGHT ELF RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Constitution, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom. Twilight elves are more beautiful and less frail than other elves, but those of greater minds easily mislead them.

Medium: As Medium creatures, twilight elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Twilight elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to magic sleep spells and effects, and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells or effects.

Darkvision: Twilight elves can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and twilight elves function just fine with no light at all.

Low-light vision: A twilight elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight and similar conditions of poor illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Weapon Proficiency: Twilight elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the longsword, *gaz'zirad*, shortsword, longbow and shortbow (including composite versions of each) as bonus feats. Twilight elves esteem the art of combat, so all twilight elves are familiar with these weapons.

+2 racial bonus on Listen, Search and Spot checks. A twilight elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for it. A twilight elf's senses are so keen that she practically has a sixth sense about hidden portals.

Automatic Languages: High Elven and Low Elven. Bonus Languages: Celestial, Draconic, Drow, Dwarven, Hobgoblin, Merchant's Tongue, Sylvan and Terran.

Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass twilight elf's fighter class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 60 of the D&D Player's Handbook). Twilight elf culture

CLASSES

Twilight elves accept many roles in life, depending on what part Lady Love guides them to play. Of course, some are more common than others are. You will find no barbarians or shamans among my people, and the Basiran art of dancing we know little of. Likewise, we do not fight each other in gladiatorial sports, or use other races for that purpose.

Adept

Adepts can be found among all our churches, though few remain at this level for long. Most strive to become full clerics of their chosen deity, or at least to rise in the temple ranks if their administrative ability outweighs their desire to wield powerful divine magicks. Occasionally, an adept serves with our military as a confidant, messenger and occasional mystical defender.

Aristocrat

I suppose you might call me and the members of my council aristocrats, though I hardly think the term is quite accurate. You see, all twilight elves are equally educated, and wealth is of little consequence to us, unless it helps us fortify our land and our troops.

Bard

Yes, there are quite a few bards among my people. Of course, though we prize their artistic merit, their true value comes from their ability to raise morale and inspire troops in battle. Most bard songs are of ballads of conflicts between elves, inspiring songs of heroes against monsters, or famous legends.

Brigand

There are few brigands among us. I suppose this is mainly because they favor the aspects of chaos over law, and because our role as guardians does not particularly suit the wandering life.

Cleric

Clerics play a very important role in our society. They are administrators, teachers and healers, as well as members of military units providing both combat support and medical aid. We tolerate no evil religions, and any attempting to establish congregations of such gods are immediately executed.

Commoner

As with aristocrats, commoner is not a fitting term for most of my people. We have no peasant caste, and almost all members of our society have something to contribute. There is no prejudice for not being as useful to society as a member of a specialized class is. For, as I have said, the needs of society outweigh the needs of the individual.

Druid

Though not very common among the twilight elves, we do value the talents of such individuals. Among us, they act as guides, scouts and hunters, with about half of them also serving as fighters, rangers, warriors or even infiltrators. Of course, they see fewer creatures of nature here than does

a druid of the surface, but my people know that animals and vermin are not evil, and keep companions of the type commonly found below ground. I suppose you have already learned of the underground druid's special talents? Good – then I shall proceed.

Expert

Many of the twilight elves are considered experts in one field or another, for most of us must fill many roles, and few of us choose to restrict our talents to only expertise in a certain field. Twilight elves usually learn such skills from their father or mother.

Fighter

All twilight elves receive informal (though strict) military training from their parents, after which they usually receive formal training in the military school. Some are simply naturally better at fighting, more able to accomplish special feats and complete complex maneuvers, and so receive even more training. We call these *belareda*, or fighters. The military consists of both fighters and warriors (*celedada*), and while *belareda* tend to rise more quickly and to higher ranks, no restriction prevents *celedada* from holding rank.

Infiltrator

Though there are few infiltrators among us, we value these few members highly for their unique skills. The infiltrator makes an ideal scout, guide and hunter, but also is a decent combatant. Most twilight elf infiltrators also serve as rangers or soldier, and were first apprenticed to a respected elder infiltrator to learn their skills.

Monk

Monks are common among the twilight elves, as order and strength are cherished virtues. A handful of monasteries are scattered throughout our Elenon lands, and on occasion, a twilight elf journeys to another monastery elsewhere in the Sovereign Lands. The Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist is the most prominent among these. Monks are among the small number of twilight elves that do not necessarily undergo the formal military training. Most monks test their skills in mock military battles or against the creatures of the deep mountain, with only a few remaining in their monasteries their entire lives.

Paladin

Even moreso than most twilight elves, the priesthood strives to pursue good, uphold law and defeat evil. Few are strong and devout enough for such a task, but those who are become greatly respected. Paladins are not military officers; they are often lone servants of the priesthood, though they may fight side-by-side on occasion. Furthermore, twilight elf paladins trance one half-hour less than other elves, as

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their weapons training is accompanied by intense religious training to inspire them.

Ranger

Twilight elf rangers are excellent fighters and scouts. Because the military values them highly, very few rangers are not part of the military, where they lead and coordinate raids, scout enemy positions, and guide small units through dangerous areas. Those few that are independent live deeper in the Elenons, away from Halibeth-Joriel.

Rogue

Like their ranger brethren, rogues make excellent scouts and guides. However, as they tend to be weaker and less able in combat, most are not members of the military. Instead, they find work as spies and diplomats keeping an eye on forces outside the Elenons. The military does employ some rogues for trap detection and construction, but these rogues also serve as warrior, ranger or infiltrator.

Sorcerer

Oddly, most twilight elves simply do not manifest the abilities of the true sorcerer. In fact, the percentage of twilight elves exhibiting such arcane powers is much smaller than among other elves. Those that do exist are usually part of the military, where their skills are cultivated and employed.

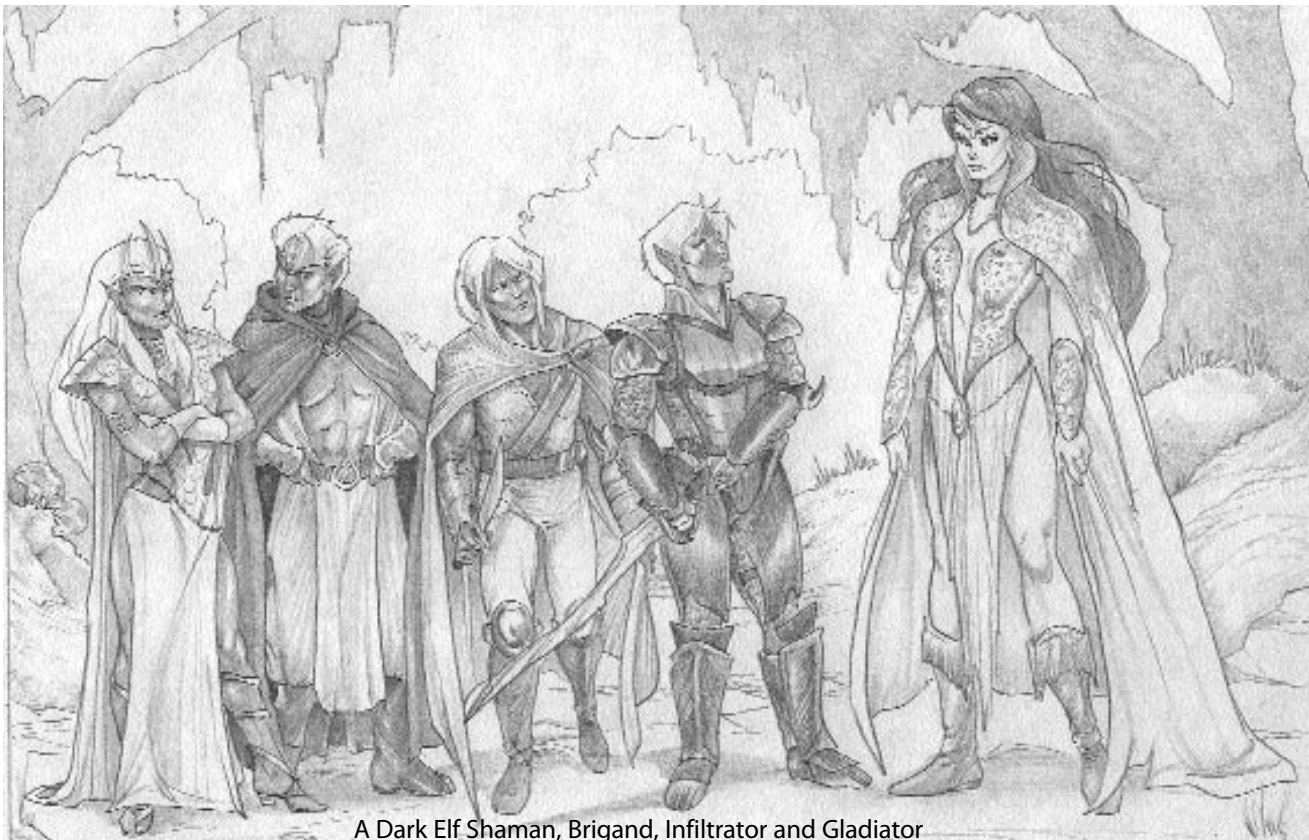
A handful of sorcerers live outside of the military, but they find it much harder to practice their craft.

Spellsinger

However, spellsingers are more common among us, and we seem to have a natural affinity for such magic. Those who show a talent for spellsinging must first receive the advanced military training of all warriors, but then are mostly left to their own devices, allowed to research spells and practice their craft with their own kind. In times of need, spellsingers practicing magic outside the confines of the military are required to serve.

Warrior

As I stated, every twilight elf undergoes one to two rounds of military training: informal training from the parents and formal training in a school. Unless they have an overwhelming desire to pursue another occupation, few refuse the formal training, for only after completing it does a twilight elf have the right to call herself a warrior, or celelada. Some may later take roles as clerics, rangers or fighters, but develop these significant combat abilities first. Many do not seek other roles in society, and so warriors are very common among us.



A Dark Elf Shaman, Brigand, Infiltrator and Gladiator stare in disbelief at the Twilight Elf SpellSinger

Wizard

Wizards are just as uncommon as sorcerers among the twilight elves, for most of our wizardly tomes were stolen by the shadow elves as they departed for the Second Exodus. Those that do exist work with the military to develop their skills, and serve primarily as advisors to those of higher rank. Most of the wizards among us learned their art elsewhere in the Sovereign Lands, with less than 10% learning from a wizard in Halibeth-Joriel.

CYCLE OF LIFE

Our emotions of love are no different than those of you humans, though perhaps we focus more on purity of spirit than appearance. Our females also experience childbirth as do yours, with usually one child at each birth. The parents both educate and train their children in military matters, until the age of 30 when the child chooses his or her role in society. The vast majority enters the military for the requisite formal training, after which they decide whether to continue in the military or to choose another path. As I have mentioned, most choose to serve the military as warriors or fighters, though others seek informal training from independents as bards, infiltrators, rangers, rogues and so on. After this independent training, which can take months or years, they return to serve the military in their specialized capacity. Others choose to follow the dictates of their faith as a cleric or monk, save for those rare few with arcane talents.

Twilight elves are considered adults shortly after they pass their first century, when they have developed fully and serve as full-fledged members of society. From this

FIGHTER AND WARRIOR CLASSES

In roleplaying terms, PC twilight elves may treat their first level of fighter as equivalent to two rounds of twilight elf military training. Players interested in starting a new twilight elf character in another class should first discuss with their DM why this training was never taken.

Except in unusual circumstances also determined by the DM, every twilight elf NPC should have one to two levels of warrior, in addition to any levels provided by other classes.

point, our new adults serve in their chosen profession for the remainder of their lives, with few choosing to follow a different path later. No, most simply marry and raise children of their own, teaching them to follow the path of their parents and continue our guardianship of this land.

HALF-ELVES AMONG THE TWILIGHT

As we do not mingle with humans, the surface beings you call half-elves are unfamiliar to us. There is no restriction on relationships between twilight elves and shadow

elves, but these pairings are quite rare. I myself have seen only two, and both offspring seemed to take the traits of the twilight elf, with only slightly darker skin than is usual for my people.

HALF-TWILIGHT ELVES

Half-twilight elves are identical to the standard half-elves found in the D&D Player's Handbook, with the following addition:

- Darkvision: Half-twilight elves can see in the dark up to 30 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and half-twilight elves function just fine with no light at all.

HABITAT

As you are a visitor to our city, there is little I can tell you that you have not seen for yourself. All our buildings are crafted of stone, though we prefer the lighter colors to the dark, and often stain or paint our architecture with more vibrant colors. Our buildings are tall, and well decorated with designs and carvings that have lasted these many centuries, though we have of course destroyed all sculptures and structures that glorify evil. Like the dwarves and, very likely, the dark elves, we make great use of height, though with our population so reduced we have little need of the uppermost floors.

I, as all selatha, live and work within the old palace. The council uses its halls for meetings and other activities involving many people, though they make their homes in the area immediately surrounding this central complex. The military school also lies within our city, and it is both here and in supplemental training camps outside the city, that our warriors undergo their training.

The life of the soldier is simple; they spend their time on patrol, on duty as law-enforcement, or in mental and physical training to do those things. What is left of their day is spent eating, sleeping or attending religious services. They live in military barracks, which are usually large caves with beds and spare furnishings. All their necessities are provided through the military.

Naturally, we maintain watchposts and citadels, along with various pits and traps designed to catch intruders, in more distant caverns. The larger posts are constantly manned, while the traps are checked daily by routine patrols, removing any captured creatures and resetting sprung or broken traps. If the patrol notices a pattern in their captures, such as the same trap being sprung each week, they increase both traps and patrols in that area.

RECREATION

We have several forms of recreation, and take time to relax just as other races do. Unlike most other races, however, such activities are mostly designed to increase our skills, abilities or morale, and few do not serve this purpose.

Athletics are an ideal form of recreation for us, as they are both physical and competitive, and so we compete in all forms of sport, from sprinting, wrestling and boxing to swordsmanship and archery. Our favorite sport, however is vertical racing, which serves to increase our climbing and rope-using skills, a natural asset in our underground lives. I suppose you humans know it best as a relay race, though ours takes place over cliffs rather than flatlands.

DIET

Due to our underground lifestyle, we cannot depend on regular supplies of meats, fruits or vegetables to be a

consistent part of our diet. Fortunately, our dwarven neighbors trade with us as best they can, and creatures killed in both above and underground hunting parties provide good sustenance. However, when times are especially rough, we eat insects, berries, roots, herbs and small animals like mice and rats. We import much of our wine and ale through the dwarves, but we do distill some alcohol of our own.

We eat three sizable meals each day, with frequent snacks of mushrooms to keep up our strength as we train or patrol. The morning meal, known as remadaida, typically includes tea, bread and vegetables, while celmehaian (the midday meal) consists of tea or cut ale, joaraoar (a special black meat broth) and steamed vegetables. Our last meal, maile-aida, usually includes cooked, finely minced beef mixed with salt and chopped onions or garlic, vegetables or roots, and tea or cut wine.

However, some military officers take to a rather more strict diet for themselves and their men. They say that though the food allowed them is meager, through coping with want by their own initiative, they are compelled to be more self-controlled and more frugal by living a very considerable time at small expense. Also, they say, the scantiest and plainest diet makes a warrior's body more healthy, and such a warrior may consume anything that comes to hand. Lastly, it causes the bodies, repressed in any

ON THE ROAD

Heroes who manage to locate Halibeth-Joriel may find themselves in need of temporary food and lodging. Unlike the dark elves, the twilight elves offer food and lodging freely, though they require some small service in return. This usually involves little more than simple chores. Alternatively, the DM may use the standard meal and lodging costs listed in the D&D Player's Handbook.

impulse towards thickness and breadth, to grow tall, and makes them handsome.

CLOTHING

The twilight elves ensure that all the members of our society have appropriate clothing, and none go without. While little of it is high quality, it is durable, tough and warm, meant to endure the chill climate. We place little importance on the appearance of clothing, judging it solely based on utility, and most dress among us is purely practical.

All of us carry a weapon at all times, though only soldiers routinely wear armor – usually of elven chain. They always do so when on duty, and often when they are off-duty as well. Clerics wear the typical raiment of their church at most times, or at least incorporate their church's colors into their everyday dress. An Initiate of the Pure One, for example, may wear a green tunic or vest instead of green robes.

Though our soldiers wear markings to indicate rank, we do not mar our bodies. To deliberately alter our image by permanently altering our bodies with tattoos, markings and piercings is prideful, and a mark of disrespect to the gods we serve.

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

We strive to heal all that are injured or diseased, through ancient remedies of meditation, herbs or divine magic. After all, such efforts are essential to survival. On the other hand, we do not admit such weakness lightly, and often try to expunge any sickness ourselves, through fasting or meditation, before admitting to a healer or cleric that we are not as strong as we should be.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

We keep a self-imposed exile from the outside world, although for different reasons than the past inhabitants of this place, and we see few sun dwellers. In fact, other than the dark elves, I know of only two other races aware of our presence. Our old allies the mountain dwarves are good trading partners, and keep our economy from becoming stagnant, as well as proving adept at keeping our position a secret to the outside world. The elves of Lendelwood also keep in contact with us, although this is clandestine, and quite rare, for only a select number of royalty and sages even choose to acknowledge us. This is how we knew to expect you, as it seems that we share some of the same friends. I do so hope that you do not mention that to them, however, as it is a secret they fiercely guard from even their most trusted companions. They believe firmly that as long as we are successful in our watch, then the horrible memories of the dark elves shall remain buried under these mountains.

As for other races, even the gnomes of the deep are extremely rare, and the halflings never journey to see us. The Krangi hobgoblins know little, if anything, of their ancestors' roles in this place, and it is unlikely they wish to return. Humanity was still primitive when we journeyed beneath the mountains, and know nothing of our presence here, which I suppose will no longer be the case when you publish your works. I do so hope you can convince them of the seriousness of our duties here, and communicate the extreme dangers of meddling in our affairs against our reviled sisters.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

We attempt to remain as self-sufficient as possible, though we rely heavily on much of our trade with our dwarven neighbors. Fortunately, we know of some very rich veins of silver, iron and copper, and the dwarves are quite happy to mine them in exchange for foodstuffs. We also secretly import other goods in small quantities, such as

corn and leather from Brandobia, dried fish and cloth from

Lathlanian, and wines and spices from around the world, in

exchange for our finely crafted weapons. Fortunately, we

need pay tribute to no one.

LANGUAGE

We speak the ancient language of the elves, High Elven, amongst ourselves, resorting to Low, or Common, Elven for visitors. We also know several other languages, and speak them for esteemed visitors such as yourself, or to other enemies and allies. Of course, we also introduced several new words and phrases that those who live in the sunlight have little use for, and outside speakers of High Elven might find they have trouble fully understanding our speech.

RELIGION

As I have said, we do not tolerate evil, and any citizen or visitor who attempts to establish worship of an evil faith is immediately executed. Instead, we bow to the Gods of Good, with those of law generally preferred over chaos. Our most worshipped deity is the Adrabrintariel the Pure One, or Lady Love. We greatly revere Berereldar the Swift Sword and Javaeclya the Eternal Lantern, particularly among our standing military. Others favor Calamassi the Irreproachable One or Eleria the True, with the other gods having smaller followings. Our spellsingers, for example, favor Halobrendar the Riftmaster, and our bards the Raconteur, whom we call Banadar. The Despiser is openly cursed, for his ancient corruption and



MILITARY TERMS

Warrior = Celelade
Fighter = Belaereda
Squad leader = Lanmeli Belaereda
Sergeant = Turamarel
Lieutenant = Hanamarel
Commander = Zyressian
Queen-Protectorate = Selatha
Squad = Lanomeli
Elite squad = Zyressiada
Platoon = Jelessale

the splitting of the Old Empire, and the other gods of evil are ignored.

WARFARE

As I said, we are a militant state. All our children begin training in some combative art at the age of 5, regardless of their eventual profession. Shopkeepers, stable hands, earth tillers and poets; all of at possess at least the basic skills of warfare. All adults must travel with the Dark Guard at least a handful of times each year, as a familiarity with the tunnels

is something that we all may need in an emergency. The

majority of the patrols we handle with our soldiers and clergy, who often travel in small patrol groups, with at least two clerics. This is not unlike the Dark Watch practiced by the Assembly of Light as a whole. However, since it is always dark here, the patrols are scheduled in both night and day, which are meaningless here. There are still other dangers beside those we have driven

away, as we often encounter aberrations and beasts in daily excursions. Many of these are unique to these tunnels, and I believe they were created by the Despiser to harry us; something not discussed in his contract with Lady Love. I shall speak more on these dangers in a moment.

Hierarchy

The basic unit in the twilight elf military is the squad, or lanomeli. Each squad consists of nine individuals, seven of whom are warriors (celelada), and two of whom are fighters, or belaereda. The best fighter is known as the squad leader, or lanomeli belaereda. Each squad lives together, trains together and fights together. A lanomeli belaereda reports directly to a turamarel, or sergeant, and takes orders from her. Each turamarel has one to six lanomeli under her command, depending upon her leadership ability.

Most military operations are performed by a jelessale, or platoon, a unit containing all the lanomeli under the command of a hanamarel, or lieutenant. Platoon size, of course, varies from hanamarel to hanamarel. All hanamarel

train with their jelessale extensively. Such jelessale are well equipped and have high morale, resulting in very effective soldiers.

In his military capacity, the hanamarel must execute the orders of his zyressian, or commander, and follow any strategies that he may dictate. However, the hanamarel can also act on his own, provided he does not violate any command of his zyressian or attack another hanamarel, he may take any military action that he deems appropriate.

For large battles, the zyressian assembles the entire army, which consists of all the hanamarel and their jelessale. In addition, the zyressian has his own elite squad to lead, known as a zyressiada. This command squad contains the zyressian, six belaedera, and two clerics of differing but compatible faiths, of the zyressian's choice. Most zyressian are smart enough to know that their military success depends upon training their army as a whole. Thus, they spend one or two days each month performing military exercises with the entire army. Otherwise, the entire army is rarely mobilized together, save on dire occasions by command of the selatha.

Advancement through the ranks comes from the decision of the turamarel, hanamarel, zyressian or selatha, respectively. Officers are chosen based on their skills and talents just as we choose those in other occupations. One who is not chosen remains cheerful and smiling, traditionally remarking that he is glad if our people possess another who is better than himself.

Arms and Armor

The Elenons are rich in metal ores, and we learned to fashion many types of metal weapons and armor long ago. We also receive a few weapons from the dwarves of Draska, but we prefer to fashion our own armors. The average soldier wears elven chainmail and carries a longsword, short sword and large shield. though many substitute the more traditional gaz'zirad for the short sword. Most carry at least one other weapon, such as a dagger or mace. The hanamarel and zyressian usually wear half-plate or full plate, and carry similar weapons.

Because our patrols mostly operate in tunnels, we have little use for ranged combat, but most turamarel have at least one lanomeli armed with shortbows or slings. These soldiers carry melee weapons as well, usually a longsword and a short sword, and only fire a small number of volleys before closing to melee.

Tactics and Strategy

Because of the nature of our underground home, and its limiting capabilities for ranged attacks, we are most vulnerable to fast moving enemies and flanking actions. To counter this, we try to contain the fight to one area – usually by surrounding the enemy before attacking. Of course,

again due to the nature of caves and tunnels, this can be quite easy or quite difficult, depending upon the location.

To counter this, our patrols try to learn all they can about the many caverns and tunnels. In that way, we identify advantageous places to corner or surround any attackers, as well as possible ways they can be flanked or surrounded. If they can find ways to skirt the enemy lines, they will use them to surround the enemy forces. If no such routes exist, the standard practice is to fire several volleys at the enemy before charging into melee. Once the first warriors have reached the enemy, the missile fire ceases, and the artillery units join the fray. Any spellcasters and bards tend to remain in the background so as to use their special talents from a safer position.

Unlike our sunlight-dwelling kin, we generally offer no chance for surrender. We respect our opponents' valor, but we will survive by any means necessary, and accordingly we use any advantage we can get in combat. We will only surrender if commanded; of course, this has not happened yet.

Dangers

No major occurrences have happened on our centuries-old watch, although dangers do occasionally present themselves. The hobgoblins have some underground holdings on the eastern slopes of the Elenons, and they sometimes attempt to explore deeper north. We also keep constant vigil for the undead, for shadows, ghouls, wights and other sun-hating dead roam these tunnels, and we hunt and destroy these profane beasts. Monsters of nature we search only for food, until they prove to be a danger. Of course, there are some exceptions. The immensely puissant aboleths plagued the Old Empire of the shadow elves for ages, and there are still a few attempting to subvert my people. Since our underground rivers and lakes are invaluable to society, we have sometimes had to war with these aquatic abominations – a dangerous task indeed.

The Despiser, ever the cunning schemer, agreed only that his shadow elf children would leave this place; but those were not his only creations. Maleficent horrors molded by the dark god's own hands come to harass us, and every few years we encounter the newest creation of hell's workshop. The tainted fey are one of the greatest dangers to be faced by any travelers risking passage among the Legasa Peaks. However, they are the least of the damned legion's soldiers. Powerful undead and various other mockeries of life have been known to devour entire patrol squads before they knew that they were under attack; all these creatures bore the sign of the Despiser....except one.

THE ENEMY STILL WALKS

What I tell you now is something that not even my people know, although I shall tell them soon, for the preservation

of this secret has gone on for far too long. It is something that my grandmother only acknowledged in the back of her mind, and that her daughter learned for fact, and has been a burden upon my soul since I was a small child. Three generations of Queen Protectorate held this secret to spare my people further sorrow, for they gave away all chance of the happiness elves live for, in exchange for a never-ending war against the Despiser, the dark elves, the hobgoblins and an endless stream of nightmares forged by his bile. Nevertheless, there is one more enemy never added to our lists of war; one that we, still being the elves of old in at least one sense, choose to ignore and wish to disappear along with faded memory. I tell you now that Dark Empress Meluria still stalks these halls.

Pale Golden Daughter suspected it while she surveyed the scene of her final battle, feeling it as a faint whisper within her own mind, with a voice that could belong to no one other than her mother. It was weak and soft, and the words were too meek to carry any meaning, but Pale Golden Daughter could only shudder with fear. As powerful as Drow'deltha became through her hellish ritual, was it truly enough to slay the daughter of a god? No true body was discovered, and no evidence of successful murder ever found. How did she dispose of one so powerful? Pale Golden Daughter sent out search parties to reveal the truth, but this endeavor proved fruitless and, after a few months, she dismissed the idea from her mind and focused on her kingdom. It was not until my mother's leadership that the old fears rekindled.

Something was attacking the patrols in the northern depths near the Legasa Peaks, killing most and maiming severely the few survivors. Reports told of only a single aggressor: a giant with skin like fine mithril and a quickness not fitting to its size. Upon its back was a sword of darkest pitch. My mother, Clelene, suspected that this was none other than the great mithril golem of the Imperial family, following the final orders of her mother. She was surprised, for she expected that the golem would have gone well beyond the borders. However, she assumed that the golem reached a dead end at some point, and took up its eternal vigilance of the blade at that spot, attacking any nearby patrol unit under the assumption that they sought the accursed artifact. Since the golem should recognize anyone of the Imperial bloodline, and obey their orders without question, she gathered a party of her finest warriors and journeyed to the area where the construct was purported to dwell.

The carnage of the last doomed patrol allowed them to track the whereabouts of the golem, finally sighting it in a dead ended tunnel, as she suspected. The machine appeared coldly beautiful and impervious to ravages of moisture and time. It turned its head towards the party but moved no further than that, seeing that one of its masters

were among the warriors. The reaction of the sword was quiet different, however, mentally blasting foul obscenities into the minds of those who beheld it. Mother's touch of divine blood shielded her somewhat, but her companions had no such defense. Many doubled over in intense agony, blood streaming from their eyes, noses and mouths, their hands futilely clutching their ears to block out the hateful noise. Two of the warriors, enthralled by the unholy siren song, rushed to grasp the blade, but both seized nothing more than swift and brutal death from the unyielding fists of the golem. Seeing the danger, my mother quickly ordered the remaining elves to flee. Despite the normally disciplined will of the soldiers, they were quick to comply. Now, the only occupants of the narrow tunnel's end were my mother and two incredibly powerful objects.

Clelene surmised that the pull of the blade caused the previous victims to attack the golem, resulting in the slaughter of the patrols. What she could not understand, however, was why the golem stopped at this place. The blockage was nothing more than an old cave-in, and should not have impeded the golem's journey. "Journey through the debris, golem, and do as Persephaine ordered you - go from this place and never stop." The golem nodded its head in compliance, but did nothing. Mother repeated the command, but the response was the same.

"You are bound to me by blood, blood that has commanded you throughout the ages! Do not disobey me, golem! Now, do as you are told!" My mother was now screaming, but the golem was still listless, seemingly confused. The enchantments used to create and bind the golem were powerful even by ancient standards, and it was highly unlikely they could have worn away or been broken by an outside force. Perplexed, my mother gave her voice rest and sat down upon a nearby rock. If the binding enchantments were gone, then surely she could not have safely approached the construct this closely. In fact, she would not have even garnered the confused response from the golem. Fear clutched her heart when the answer finally came to her. The only way that the golem would not follow one of her direct orders was if that order contradicts another member of the Imperial Family.

"Answer my questions, golem. Answer by nodding 'yes' or shaking your head 'no'. Do you understand this?" spoke my mother. The golem nodded yes. "Very well, golem, I am glad you understand. Does my command for you to go past the debris and keep traveling contradict the Empress' wishes?" Slowly, its massive head nodded in agreement. A cold wave washed across my mother's spine. "Do you follow the order of Empress Drow'deltha?" It waited a moment, and then shook 'no'. Slight relief crept in my mother's heart, as she gladdened to hear that the evil Empress did not haunt the tunnels of her watch. She gathered her will and asked, "Do you follow the orders of Empress

Meluria?" The golem quickly nodded 'yes'. Panic now kicked in the door of mother's mind, and she sat back down upon the cold rock. "This proves nothing," Mother thought. "It could be following an old order given well before her death." However, mother was not completely sure of this. As rational as that seemed, as comforting as it was, she could not be so certain. "Golem, has your mistress ordered you to keep her whereabouts secret to her family?" A negative shaking of its head was the answer. "Then, golem, lead me to her."

My mother remembers little after that. Following the golem, she eventually found herself at a large cavern not shown upon our maps. This place, my mother told me with a broken voice, was... twisted. Nothing was right about it; the air, the stone, even the darkness was not right with this world. The broken reality of her lair was too much for even my mother's mental resolution. Disorientation set upon her almost immediately, her last vivid memory being falling unconscious at the feet of something that could have once been the Empress. Perhaps the dizzying aspect of the unnatural place affected her senses, but she sensed that Meluria's new shape conformed to no laws of this world - an original blasphemy of the natural state that is unexplainable by the sane. This place, the golem, and Meluria were never sighted again, save in my mother's nightmares, which she had for the rest of her days.

However, lately I myself have heard faint alien whispers in my mind. Like Pale Golden Daughter, I cannot perceive words in these whispers. Nevertheless, I know that they grow slightly louder and stronger each time I hear them, and soon I fear that once-Empress Meluria will make her presence known to the world. I do not know if we can ever prepare for her homecoming.

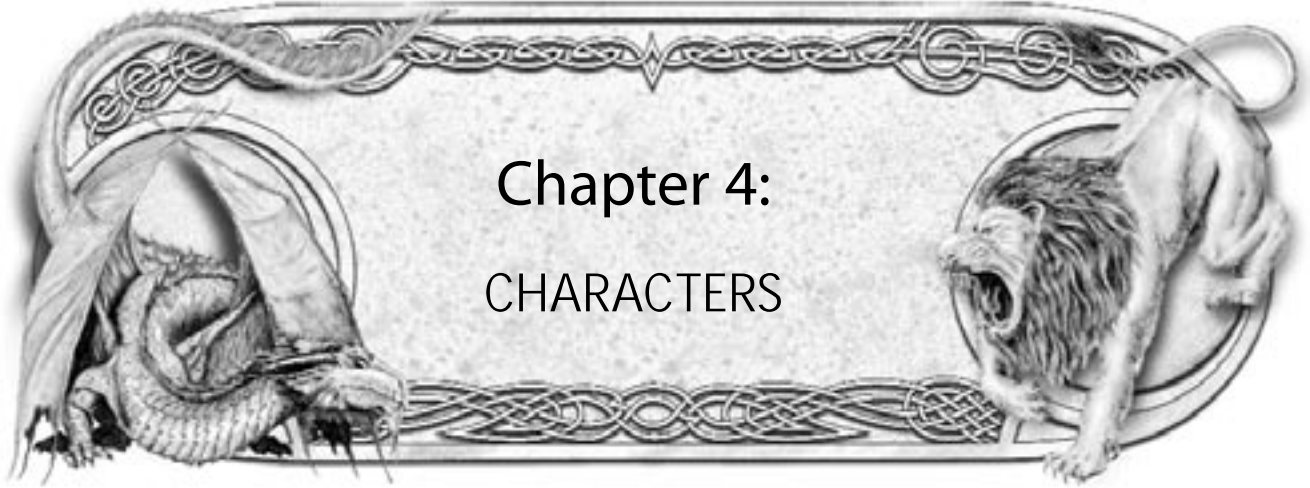
In addition, yes, we do remember Mithelizek's visit to us. You can imagine our surprise to see a strange dark elf here, and the welcome we gave him was quite appropriate. We quickly dispatched his gang of ruffians, and nearly took the wizard's life had he not vanished before our blades sunk into his chest. In hindsight, I wish we had tried to capture him alive, to interrogate him and discover what plans he had in delving into our secret home. Still, we have not encountered any opposition that can be traced back to him, so we can only wait and see the threat he makes of himself.

However, we will know many things soon enough. I am considering going out and meeting the world on its own terms, with some of the strongest and most talented as ambassadors. Yet, I fear we would find little help against the dark elf menace, and at best a promise of non-interference from the humans. Let your people know of our intentions through your book, scholar, and I pray that you find your way safely once we escort you back to your people. Making a deal with the likes of Mithelizek has no doubt made your life much more dangerous than you know. Even if you pay

his price, you shall likely never be out of his debt. We shall aid you as we can, but our duties - and possible return into the light - will limit the amount of help we can provide you. May the Pure One guide you to peace."



Chapter 4: CHARACTERS



darkness of the mining tunnel. Here, surely I would find a connection to the ancient tunnels of Halibeth-Joleriel.

THE TUNNELS

I traveled for hours, with only my own trail markings to assure me that I was not wandering in circles. As fortune would have it, I eventually stumbled upon some ruins that I believe were several miles into the maze. The damage of the ruins was not the fault of time alone, as there were several telltale signs of purposeful razing. I set up camp in one of the better-preserved stonework hovels, and settled down to a cold supper and even colder sleep.

My slumber was fitful and disturbed by strange nightmares dominated with visions of darkness and a seductive voice goading me into sacrilegious deeds. I awoke drenched in a cold sweat, and thought it prudent to continue my journey without further delay.

As I walked, I recalled lectures from my fellow colleagues concerning the dangers of the underground ecology. Both the flora and fauna tend to favor aggressive predator states, and even the most harmless seeming creatures could prove to be one's downfall. The caverns themselves might be equally fatal, as cave-ins and floor collapses are common disasters in cave exploration. I seem to remember a particular colleague who warned against any climbing straight down within a natural cave, as even the seemingly safest and shallow slope could hide unseen danger.

Finally, my journey paid off, albeit in a most abrupt manner. While walking up a slight incline, I noticed that the light from my lantern was fading, signaling the need to refuel. Using the remaining light, I laid the light down to my side and rummaged through my pack for another oil flask. Completely distracted by my search, I was startled greatly when an arrow landed with a loud crack only sparse inches from my left foot. A lyrical voice floated down from the cavern, "I do not miss." The next sound I heard was the creak of a bowstring drawing back, and I knew I had only

a few precious seconds to speak my case. Crying out with an embarrassing stutter, I babbled out a string of words in Drow, in hope that any of them would find interest in the unseen archer's sense of reasoning. My mind was in the grasp of fear, so I am not clear on everything that I said, but I heard the relaxation of the bow when I uttered the word "cleric." With a cold voice, the archer commanded me to dim the light and follow her. I followed intently, and found a slender hand taking me by the wrist and leading me further upwards. We took many turns and double backs, no doubt to eliminate any chance of my memorizing the way to our destination. After some time, we finally made camp in a guardhouse, although I only know this by word of my guide, as I still had not the permission to re-light my lantern. My sleep was unmolested by the nightmares of before, although I am not certain how long slept, before I awoke to find myself in the city of the twilight elves.

HALIBETH-JORIEL

There was no mistaking this for being anything other than the original city of Halibeth-Joleriel, but was also no doubt the home of the twilight elves. Tall buildings and towers rose several stories tall, but any sign of the Despiser's presence the elves must have cleansed, as evident from several statues and bas-relief carvings lying in crumbled heaps. A soft glow, perhaps from millions of luminescent fungi, lit the city well, but exposed the cracks and blemishes of these ancient buildings. This gave the city a pale gray look, the signs of corruption slowly fading away over the eons.

Moreover, of the twilight elves themselves, any description given by Mithelizek did no justice to the unearthly beauty of these creatures. Their countenances flowed like liquid moonlight, with the grace and litheness that made even a high elf seem like a clumsy ogre. Their hair shimmers like the scales of a metallic dragon, almost gleaming even in the soft light. The most distinct feature that burns in my

NARRATOR'S EPILOGUE

Thus, the interview was over. I stayed a few days more, cataloging various things I had seen, making use of the libraries and speaking with different citizens of the city. I traveled back to Lendelwood in a much safer fashion than I arrived, with an armed escort and experienced guides, and was especially grateful for not having to travel by griffon over the mountains. My meeting with the leaders of Lathlanian was one of wonderment and awe. While many of the younger elves were excited and curious at these long-lost cousins, I sensed a definite tension from the elders, who seemed to fear an embarrassing secret creeping out from under the rug.

One of the greatest moments a historian can witness is a major change in the world, whether it be for better or worse. Which this shall be, I can only wait and observe."

ADDENDUM

Written on the back flyleaf of an early copy of Branlel the Younger's "Histories Unknown"

"I would very much like to live long enough to see the fruits of my labor, for my passion has netted me an accumulation of long hours in forgotten libraries, secret meetings with individuals of questionable character, and a sundry of turmoil and unfathomable risks. However, as a diehard pragmatist, I must accept that it is unlikely. How I yearn to be the one who records the first communications of diplomats between my native Brandobia and a forgotten race of elves! I feel a childish whimsy as I imagine what ideas would be exchanged, how the cultures would react to each other, and how seriously we humans would take the requests of this mysterious race. All those things are what a scribe and scholar secretly yearns for the most, but I fear that my luck has run out.

I should not have much time left after the messenger takes the book to my Brothers in Logic for copying and distribution. I suspect the time I have had so far is because Mithelizek actually wishes for the book to see the light of day; perhaps out of pride, or to see how it might serve his own diabolic ends. The last few weeks I spent receiving very unsubtle hints concerning his displeasure with me - my lack of cooperation in upholding my end of our bargain.

Once I neared the objective, I knew that death was preferable to clearing my debt, for to do so would be the death of us all. The history that I have recorded in my life would come to naught, for his plans include the demise of the gods themselves. I was very close to obtaining a copy of a certain scroll for the dark elf, and it was only when the man I spoke to, a dealer in forbidden arcana, mentioned some of the text from the scroll that I realized the truth. The text matched the Ritual of Descent I saw in the power hungry wizard's tower. My worst fears confirmed, I purchased the

scroll immediately, then burned it before the dealer's very eyes.

Mithelizek has been toying with me -the hired killers, the traps set in the beds and doors of the inns and homes I have stayed in, the notes left upon my pillow when I awoke every morning. I have little time left, but I have faith in the enlightener, and I look forward to conversing with him on many a topic in the very near future.

I leave all my material wealth and possessions behind to the Fraternal Order, to do with as they see fit. I extend my sincerest thanks and gratitude to my friends and colleagues who helped me throughout the years, and apologies to any who had wrongfully been caught up in the quicksand I seem to be mired in. I especially wish to thank Felonia and her people for all the knowledge and assistance she gave me in the last few months. I sincerely hope that she and her people choose to join the outside world and rid her underground kingdom of the horrors it hides. However, mostly, I pray that her sword finds a place deep within the heart of that miserable, conniving wizard Mithelizek.

Goodbye and May We Meet Again,

Branlel the Younger

Year of the King 1044

"Ameth looked down at his fallen victim and shook his head. Being good, like learning to survive the searing sun, would take some time."

- from the Story of Bone-dagger

PLAYING A DARK ELF

There is a very good chance that, after reading this book, you will choose to play a dark elf in the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting. After all, almost everyone gets an urge to play a villain eventually. The lure is intoxicating – doing or saying what you want, and never having to worry about the moral dilemmas when trying to achieve your goals. Alternately, you may be interested in the exception

Barbarian Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Climb	4	Str	-1
Survival	4	Wis	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Jump	4	Str	-1
Spot (cc)	2	Wis	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-
Intimidate	2	Cha	-

to the rule - the rare dark elf that turns his back on evil and strives to follow the path of good. Some do this to emulate certain characters from novels or movies, or because they want something unique.

Although such a character is not impossible, good (or simply non-evil) dark elves are extremely rare. Non-evil dark elves, while they exist at certain periods of history, are incredibly rare. Dark elf society combines the worst aspects of totalitarianism, fundamentalism, and fascism all rolled into one. Their families are a loveless, cutthroat institution that firmly implant the concepts of bigotry, avarice and aggression into a dark elf's head from the earliest age. The young only have role models and immortality tales that encourage them to be malignant and ruthless - what could possibly teach them the virtues of light and honor? It is for these same reasons that one can usually be safe in assuming that an orc, kobold or other such creature is no exception. Cruel environments breed dangerous individuals.

Of course, just as a child born to good parents can turn out evil for no obvious reason, there is the occasional dark elf child who mysteriously wishes to be good. Again, however, society serves as a deterrent. The child's desire to do the right thing marks it as weak - a clear embarrassment to the family. Such outcasts often find themselves subject to frequent "accidents," as the family tries to rid themselves of their unwanted offspring in the least conspicuous manner possible. If the hardships of such an existence do not turn the young elf to evil or an early grave, other problems occur.

The life of a good and moral person in such a prominently degenerate society is incredibly maddening. Without the support of family or friends, the drow finds he cannot make ends meet. Employment and business success depends on political maneuvering and dominance, which the character may not have the connections to employ. Many eventually run away, becoming hermits or seeking out the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist. Neither of these are easy decisions, for the Empire considers defection equivalent to treason, and those caught suffer insanely cruel punishments.

However, a few non-evil dark elves still reside within the Empire. These lucky few have found each other, and make up the revolutionary underground of the dark elf lands. Although most of these tend towards neutral alignments, they may still strive to achieve goals in the name of good.

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind. First, evil does not equal insanity. Using an evil alignment as an excuse to steal from your party or convert the other party members into experience points is both wasteful and little fun for your friends. Even the most simple-minded orc knows that garnering the trust of his allies keeps the group together, and an organized number of people can accomplish greater

Bard Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Perform (percussion)	4	Cha	-
Spellcraft	4	Int	-
Gather Information	4	Cha	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Knowledge (local)	4	Int	-
Decipher Script	4	Int	-
Use Magic Device	4	Cha	-
Diplomacy	4	Cha	-
Climb	4	Str	-1
Spot (cc)	2	Wis	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

goals. Second, dark elves are a highly intelligent people, given to subtlety and long term planning. Simply bashing in someone's head because they stared at you is both distasteful and bland, and in drow society serves as a metaphorical pool of blood in a tank full of sharks. You may be evil, but you are not the only evil one in the Empire. Taking actions that draw the wrong kind of attention to you are akin to a death sentence. Dark elves are paranoid, subtle and mysterious; traits that should be role-played to the hilt

PLAYING A SHADOW OR TWILIGHT ELF

Though both dark elves and shadow elves are physically identical, this book uses the term "shadow elf" to describe the remaining dark-skinned inhabitants of the Old Empire deep under the Elenons. As Chapter Three: Journey Into

Twilight details, the elves who hold guardianship of the Old Empire are far more militaristic than almost all other known elves, save the drow, and more spartan than any.

Of course, while players might find it easier to relate to the good-aligned shadow elves, the surface races still offer them the same suspicion and persecution as their dark brethren of the Krimppatus. Twilight elves fit much easier into surface society, as those who see them believe them to be high elves, albeit taller and more beautiful. However, their unusual ways, pragmatism and militaristic manner often confuse and disorient those who expect a high elf to be refined and gentle. But since, as players have much more

important traits. Dominance, in both political and personal power, equals strength. Moreover, obedience and a fervent sense of nationalism is a sign of strong character. All these things are what define what many outsiders would consider an oxymoron - the dark elf hero.

In the broad view of things, the dark elf hero is not much different from the classical definition of a hero in the sunlit lands. The hero saves the city, rescues the princess and slays the dragon, while the dark elf hero saves the city, rescues the princess and slays the dragon. Of course, the dark elf hero only bothers to save his own people, and only rescues a dark elf princess where a reward is obvious or where it will prove his dominance. Likewise, he slays the dragon on his own terms (regardless of it being a chromatic or metallic dragon, and by any means necessary to get the job done – fair fight be damned). Hearing a drow character justify his actions through his viewpoint can often be a window to good role-playing, and should be encouraged.

Playing an evil race also gives the players options that they usually would not have in the standard gaming session. On the surface, encountering a beholder means fleeing the scene or a difficult fight, but a dark elf character might open up a conversation with the beast, perhaps striking a deal that is mutually beneficial. Of course, this could mean treachery by either party later, but it is another avenue to roleplay.

Heroism, or at least what the drow consider heroism, is often rewarded by the Empire. Those who show bravery and tenaciousness in the face of the enemy receive rewards of both monetary and social prestige. Drow children seek to emulate such champions, and one finds that

Basiran Dancer Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Perform (dance)	4	Cha	-
Balance	4	Dex	-
Tumble	4	Dex	-
Concentration	4	Con	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Gather Information	4	Cha	-
Knowledge (local) (cc)	4	Int	-
Speak Language	4	Int	-
Pantomime	4	Wis	-
Diplomacy	4	Cha	-
Climb	4	Str	-
Spot (cc)	2	Wis	-
Use Magic Device	4	Cha	-
Use Rope	4	Dex	-
Appraise (cc)	2	Int	-
Forgery (cc)	2	Int	-

experience with good-aligned characters, let us return to a discussion of the more evil race – the drow.

EVIL IS AS EVIL DOES

No society, no matter what its depredations, considers itself evil. No side of a war considers themselves the evil army, and all sides of an intense argument consider themselves on the side of right. In a fantasy setting, with evil gods and black magic, morals may be a little more straightforward, but the basic concept remains that no side considers what they are doing to be wrong. The dark elves, steeped in evil as they may be, do not see their own actions as the incorrect path. As they see it, they are the wronged party in a feud that began at the Dawn of Time. Their values and actions are a means to an end - they mercifully cull the weak so that the society as a whole may survive and achieve its goals. Therefore, like any society, they have their virtues, although these differ widely from what most would consider virtuous. The dark elves are a highly intelligent people, so cleverness and cunning are

Brigand Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Intimidate	4	Int	-
Bluff	4	Cha	-
Climb	4	Str	-1
Jump	4	Str	-1
Listen (cc)	2	Wis	-
Search	4	Wis	-
Spot	4	Wis	-
Diplomacy	4	Cha	-
Gather Information	4	Cha	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-
Knowledge (any) (cc)	2	Wis	-
Survival	4	Wis	-

these champions have more friends in high places than they previously thought. Of course, some clergy construe bravery and tenaciousness as foolishness and thick-headedness, so the more renown a person gains, the more likely he or she is to find themselves a disposable pawn in the vicious power struggles of the upper class.

CLASSES AND STARTING PACKAGES

Character class is one of the most definitive elements of any Dungeons & Dragons character, and a dark or twilight elf's character class is no exception. Each class fills its own unique role in an Underdark campaign, with some more suitable than others. This section presents an overview of each of the core classes (and the six variant core classes from the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide) and discusses their various roles in the Underdark. You can also find more specific information in Chapter Two (for drow) and Chapter Three (for twilight elves).

This section farther discusses character creation options and variant rules (where applicable) before finishing with suggestions for appropriate skills, feats, and spells. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are new rules presented elsewhere in this book. Note that some spells (those marked with a double asterisk (**)) have been renamed to their Tellenian counterparts. For example, in the D&D Player's Handbook, Alaki's spells are known as Evard's spells; Emmuk's are known as Otiluke's; and Shasseril's are known as Rary's.

Skills, spells or feats that are not defined in this book or the core D&D books are usually taken from another source such as the Kalamar Player's Guide. This is often abbreviated as KPG throughout the text. The pantomime skill, for example, is described in the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

BARBARIAN

When creating a dark elf barbarian, players should know how to deal as much damage (to as many foes) as possible.

Cleric Skills			
Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Spellcraft	4	Int	-
Concentration	4	Con	-
Heal	4	Wis	-
Knowledge (religion)	4	Int	-
Diplomacy	4	Cha	-
Gather Information (cc)	2	Cha	-
Climb (cc)	2	Str	-2
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

A good Strength and Constitution score is strongly recommended. Also, in order to drop their opponents quickly and efficiently, drow barbarians tend to favor weapons that deal more damage, such as greataxes or greatswords. In addition, remember that the Underdark is rarely flat. The Climb skill is beneficial in this regard, and a good Dexterity score is helpful both in and out of combat.

Most drow prefer light armor that does not greatly hinder their movement or ability to climb. Barbarian characters have even more incentive to wear lighter

armors, however, as their Fast Movement ability does not work while wearing heavy armor.

Dark Elf Barbarian Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty -1, speed 40 ft., 20 lb.).

Weapons: Greataxe (1d12, crit x3, 12 lb., two-handed, slashing)

Dagger (1d4, crit 19-20/x2, range inc. 10 ft., 1 lb., light, piercing).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Bonus Feat: Power Attack.

Gear: Clothes, personal items.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Critical, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Improved Sunder, Toughness and Weapon Focus.

BARD

Bards are common in both dark and twilight elf societies, either for their use as spies or boosters of morale. Players interested in creating such bardic elves should focus on as many skills as possible, particularly those that will enhance the abilities of others. To be prepared for combat, bardic elves should strongly consider weapons and tactics that take advantage of high Dexterity scores.

When making spell selections, bards need spells that improve mobility in battle, their ability to discern the value of treasure, and improve the combat abilities of their comrades. Summoning spells can suddenly make small scouting parties more formidable or provide unexpected reinforcements should a fight go badly, while mind-affecting spells may capture enemies without bloodshed.

Dark Elf Bard Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty -1, arcane spell failure chance n/a, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

Druid Skills			
Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Spellcraft	4	Int	-
Concentration	4	Con	-
Survival	4	Wis	-
Climb (cc)	2	Str	-1
Knowledge (nature)	4	Int	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Spot	4	Wis	-
Handle Animal	4	Cha	-
Heal	4	Wis	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

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Weapons: Longsword (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, 4 lb., one-handed, slashing)

Light crossbow (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, range inc. 80 ft., 4 lb., piercing).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 6 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: If Dexterity is 13 or higher, Dodge; if Dexterity is 12 or lower, Improved Initiative instead.

Bonus Feat: Combat Casting.

Spells Known: 0-level-know direction, mending, prestidigitation, resistance

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Case with 10 crossbow bolts. Drum (common to followers of Ill-luck); or lyre (common to shadow elf followers of Lady Love). Spell component pouch.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Empower Spell, Combat Expertise, Extend Spell, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Leadership, Mobility, Spring Attack and Weapon Finesse.

Recommended Spells: 0-level – dancing lights, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, know direction, light, mending, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance; 1st-level – alarm, bluelight*, comprehend languages, erase, identify; 2nd-level – cat's grace, delay poison, detect thoughts, tongues, whispering wind; 3rd-level – confusion, fear, deep slumber, invisibility sphere, secret page; 4th-level – detect scrying, legend lore, major image, repel vermin, zone of silence; 5th-level – cure light wounds (mass), dispel magic (greater), heroism (greater), shadow walk, song of discord, summon monster V; 6th-level – analyze dweomer, cat's grace (mass), find the path, project image, sympathetic vibration.

BASIRAN DANCER

Basiran dancers are unknown among both dark and twilight elf societies. However, a clever DM or player may find a way to introduce this special talent. Basiran dancers should focus on skills and feats that maximize their usefulness in the military of either elven race. Perform is obviously necessary, as are Balance and Tumble. Basiran dancers should also not overlook skills like Diplomacy if they wish to deal well with superiors or talk to captured prisoners. Players should select feats that emphasize speed and mobility, allowing the character to move about efficiently in combat, while in open caverns or cramped tunnels.

Twilight Elf Basiran Dancer Starting Package

Armor: Leather (+2 AC, arcane spell failure chance 10%, speed 30 ft., 15 lb.).

Fighter Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Climb	4	Str	-1
Jump	4	Str	-1
Intimidate	4	Cha	-
Listen (cc)	2	Wis	-
Spot (cc)	2	Wis	-
Search (cc)	2	Int	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-
Tumble (cc)	2	Dex	-1

Weapons: Rapier (1d6, crit 18-20/x2, 2 lb., one-handed, piercing)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 6 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Weapon Finesse.

Bonus Feat: Dodge.

Spells Known: 0-level-dancing lights, flare, prestidigitation, resistance

Gear: Dancer's outfit, personal items. Quiver with 20 bolts. Spell component pouch.

Gold: 3d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Empower Spell, Combat Expertise (Improved Disarm, Improved Trip), Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Leadership, and Weapon Finesse.

Recommended Spells: 0-level-dancing lights, flare, ghost sound, light, prestidigitation, resistance; 1st-level-daydream (KPG), daze, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, message; 2nd-level-bull's strength, cat's grace, daylight, eagle's splendor, enthrall; 3rd-level-blazing star (KPG), dispel magic, good hope, major image, sculpt sound; 4th-level-blinding beauty (KPG), break enchantment, legend lore, moon blade, rainbow pattern; 5th-level-dream, false vision, mind fog, mislead, persistent image; 6th-level-mass suggestion, project image, veil, wave of destruction (KPG)

BRIGAND

It is difficult to create a brigand character that is not already well suited for a campaign in the Underdark. The brigand class is designed specifically for the methodical ruthless dominance that is the hallmark of the dark

Gladiator Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Balance	4	Dex	-3
Bluff	4	Cha	-
Knowledge (fighting styles)	4	Int	-
Tumble	4	Dex	-3
Intimidate	4	Cha	-
Climb	4	Str	-3
Jump	4	Str	-3
Spot	4	Wis	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

elves, and can be useful serving as an enforcer for the twilight elves. Naturally, leadership skills are necessary for brigands seeking to rise in the ranks, and survival skills are required for underground life. Since brigands have slightly more combat ability than rogues, players should consider selecting feats like Combat Expertise or Power Attack that let characters take advantage of the faster base attack bonus progression of the brigand class.

Much of the advice given for rogues later in this section applies equally well to brigands, but since brigands have half the number of skill points of the rogue, players are encouraged to specialize. It is better to be exceptionally good at a few tasks than to be average or poor at a large number.

Dark Elf Brigand Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty -1, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

Weapons: Bastard sword (1d10, crit 19-20/x2, 6 lb., one-handed, slashing)

Shortbow (1d6, crit x3, 60 ft., 2 lb., medium, piercing)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: If Intelligence or Strength is 13 or higher, Combat Expertise or Power Attack respectively; if Strength or Intelligence is 12 or lower, Exotic Weapon Proficiency or Toughness instead, respectively.

Bonus Feat (Brigand): Weapon Focus.

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Quiver with 18 arrows.

Gold: 2d8 gp.

Recommended Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Fast Healer (KPG), Fearless (KPG), Hardiness (KPG), Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, and Weapon Focus.

CLERIC

Though they favor worship of different gods, dark elves can be quite pious, and twilight elves even more so. Both good and evil clerics have a number of abilities that make them highly sought after in the military or civilian life, for they can cure or kill, stave off hunger and diseases, and

gain guidance from the gods above. Players interested in playing a cleric of the Underdark need to decide first on the character's personality. Is he a mighty battle-cleric who serves the military with his sword arm? Is she a cunning sneak who calls upon the favor of her god to twist fate in her favor? On the other hand, is he simply a depraved servant of his god's bloodlust who enjoys killing for its own merits?

For clerics with a more martial bent, much of the advice given for barbarians applies equally well. Focus on dealing damage as quickly and brutally as possible while remaining alive amidst a large group of foes. Spell selection in this role is essential -emphasize spells that enhance abilities as well as spells that hinder enemies in battle. For a less straightforward approach, focus less on combat and more on spells that trick and confound opponents. To make allies amongst the military, choose spells that give allies bonuses in combat.

Dark or Twilight Elf Cleric Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty -1, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

Light wooden shield (+1 AC, armor check penalty -1, 5 lb.)

Weapons: Dire flail (1d8/1d8, crit x2, 10 lb., two-handed, bludgeoning)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 3 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Exotic Weapon Proficiency

Bonus Feat: Combat Casting.

Deity/Domains: the Creator of Strife/Chaos and Evil, for dark elves; the Pure One/Good and Luck, for twilight elves.

Gear: Clothes, personal items, holy symbol.

Gold: 1d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Blind Fight, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Enlarge Spell, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Martial Weapon Proficiency and Power Attack.

Recommended Spells: 0-level-cure minor wounds, detect poison, light, mending, purify food and drink, resistance, virtue; 1st-level-cure light wounds, endure elements, entropic shield, magic weapon, message, obscuring mist; 2nd-level-aid, bear's endurance, bull's strength, cure

Infiltrator Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Climb	4	Str	-
Open Locks	4	Wis	-
Disable Device	4	Int	-
Survival	4	Wis	-
Jump	4	Str	-
Balance	4	Dex	-
Hide	4	Dex	-
Escape Artist	4	Dex	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Use Rope	4	Dex	-

Monk Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Climb	4	Str	-
Tumble	4	Dex	-
Jump	4	Str	-
Balance	4	Dex	-
Spot	4	Wis	-
Escape Artist	4	Dex	-
Hide	4	Dex	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Search (Int) (cc)	2	Int	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

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moderate wounds, eagle's splendor, make whole; 3rd-level-contagion, create food and water, cure serious wounds, meld into stone, prayer, stone shape, wind wall; 4th-level-cure critical wounds, discern lies, divination, giant vermin, repel vermin, tongues; 5th-level-break enchantment, cure light wounds (mass), flame strike, inflict light wounds (mass), insect plague, raise dead, slay living, wall of stone; 6th-level-bear's endurance (mass), bull's strength (mass), cure moderate wounds (mass), find the path, heroes' feast, inflict moderate wounds (mass); 7th-level-cure serious wounds (mass), inflict serious wounds (mass), regenerate, resurrection, word of chaos; 8th-level-antimagic field, cure critical wounds (mass), fire storm, inflict critical wounds (mass), summon monster VIII; 9th-level-gate, heal (mass), miracle, summon monster IX, true resurrection

DRUID

Stalwart protectors of nature and denizens of the forest, the common druid is of little use in an Underdark campaign. Many of their class abilities are geared toward survival in forests, jungles and other green and verdant environs. For players and DMs who wish to incorporate druids into their Underdark campaigns, however, a variant (the Earth druid) is presented in Chapter Two.

Dark Elf Earth Druid Starting Package

Armor: Leather (+2 AC, armor check penalty n/a, arcane spell failure chance n/a, speed 30 ft., 15 lb.).

Light wooden shield (+1 AC, armor check penalty -1, 5 lb.)

Weapons: Club (bone): (1d6, crit x2, 10 ft., 3 lb., one-handed, bludgeoning).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Enlarge spell.

Gear: Clothes, personal items.

Animal Companion: Bat.

Gold: 1d6 gp.

Recommended Feats: Brew Potion, Craft Staff, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell and Scribe Scroll.

Recommended Spells: 0-level-cure minor wounds, detect magic, know direction, mending, purify food and drink, read magic; 1st-level-calm animals, charm animals, cure light wounds, detect snares and pits, longstrider, obscuring mist, shillelagh, summon nature's ally I; 2nd-level-bear's endurance, bull's strength, cat's grace, delay poison, flaming sphere, fog cloud, soften earth and stone, spider climb,

Ranger Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Survival	4	Wis	-
Hide	4	Dex	-1
Climb	4	Str	-1
Move Silently	4	Dex	-1
Spot	4	Wis	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Knowledge (nature)	4	Int	-
Gather Information (cc)	2	Cha	-
Search	4	Int	-
Use Rope	4	Dex	-

PALADIN MOUNTS

One of the paladin's biggest advantages, a special mount, is largely useless in the Underdark. The standard underground mount for a Small paladin is a Medium bat, and the standard underground mount for a Medium paladin is a Large bat (a bat advanced to 6 HD). Twilight elves do not see bats as "evil" creatures simply because some evil religions favor them. Of course, as this is a flying creature, players should be sure to get DM approval.

At the DM's discretion, a paladin might be allowed to take a surface animal mount, provided it fits the campaign (for example, the standard heavy warhorse for a twilight elf that spends her time as an emissary to the surface

Paladin Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Heal	4	Wis	-
Climb (cc)	2	Str	-5
Ride	4	Dex	-
Diplomacy	4	Cha	-
Spot (cc)	2	Wis	-
Listen (cc)	2	Wis	-
Search (cc)	2	Int	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

summon swarm; 3rd-level-call lightning, contagion, cure moderate wounds, meld into stone, poison, protection from energy, stone shape, summon nature's ally III; 4th-level-bat's blessing*, cure serious wounds, flame strike, giant vermin, reincarnate, scrying, spike stones, summon nature's ally IV; 5th-level-atonement, cure critical wounds, stonewall, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud; 6th-level-bull's strength (mass), find the path, ironwood, move earth, stone tell, wall of stone; 7th-level-bonesteel*, creeping doom, cure moderate wounds (mass), fire storm, true seeing; 8th-level-cure serious wounds (mass), earthquake, finger of death, summon nature's ally VIII; 9th-level-antipathy, cure critical wounds (mass), elemental swarm, foresight, regenerate, summon nature's ally IX, sympathy.

FIGHTER

Druids, clerics, and wizards may be able to command terrifying forces, bards may be able to enthrall entire squads, and rogues may be able to circumvent the strongest protections placed on captured treasures, but the dark and twilight elves hold a great respect for sheer martial prowess.

As the absolute epitome of fighting ability, fighters are naturally very common to both races, and can be found at all levels, from lowly soldiers to the most powerful and influential Empress.

Both Strength and Constitution are important for damage potential and the ability to absorb punishment. Of course, Dexterity is also important for speed and the ability to traverse uneven terrain.

Twilight Elf Fighter Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty -1, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

Weapons: Short sword x2 (1d6, crit 19-20/x2, 2 lb., light, piercing).

Note: When striking with both swords, this fighter takes a -4 penalty with the first (primary) short sword and a -8 penalty with the second (off hand) short sword unless he or she has the Two-Weapon Fighting feat. If he or she has a Strength bonus, add only one-half of it to the damage roll with the off hand short sword, but add the full Strength bonus to the damage roll with the primary short sword.

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 2 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Combat Expertise.

Bonus Feat (Fighter): If Dexterity is 15 or higher, Two-Weapon Fighting; if Dexterity is 14 or lower, Dodge instead.

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Case with 10 crossbow bolts.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Greater Weapon Specialization, Improved Critical, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Whirlwind Attack.

GLADIATOR

Though the majority of gladiators are slaves of the drow, a dark elf may occasionally be forced into this occupation as punishment for a crime. When creating a gladiator drow, the same advice given to fighters and barbarians applies. Gladiators in an Underdark campaign should focus on mobility and speed as much as heavy armor and weapons. The gladiator's arena veteran ability makes his attacks of opportunity a force to be reckoned with, thus a weapon such as a spiked chain is a good idea. As gladiators receive a free Exotic Weapon Proficiency at first level, the player does not have to spend a precious feat to be able to use it effectively.

The gladiator's critical focus and legendary style abilities also give a powerful boost in single combat, so players might also consider carrying a second weapon. Gladiators of 13th level or higher often begin every battle with their notorious style ability - especially against low-level warriors, as they will be more likely to be frightened or panicked.

Dark Elf Gladiator Starting Package

Armor: Brigandine (+4 AC, armor check penalty -3, speed 20 ft., 30 lb.).

Weapons: Spiked chain (2d4, crit x2, 10 lb., two-handed, piercing).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 2 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Power Attack.

Gear: Clothes, personal items.

Shaman Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Spellcraft	4	Int	-
Concentration	4	Con	-
Climb (cc)	2	Str	-1
Heal	4	Wis	-
Knowledge (nature)	4	Int	-
Handle Animal	4	Cha	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

Rogue Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Spot	4	Wis	-
Listen	4	Wis	-
Search	4	Int	-
Move Silently	4	Dex	-
Climb	4	Str	-
Hide	4	Dex	-
Disable Device	4	Int	-
Open Lock	4	Dex	-
Use Magic Device	4	Cha	-
Sleight of Hand	4	Dex	-
Decipher Script	4	Int	-
Bluff	4	Cha	-
Intimidate	4	Cha	-
Use Rope	4	Dex	-

Gold: 6d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Whirlwind Attack.

INFILTRATOR

Among the dark elves, infiltrators are ample in number and always in demand. They often work for the Empress, the Council of Three, the Shadow Army, the Arcane College,

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and in the payroll of many a noble and merchant house. Their sneak attack is both useful and deadly, their ability to divine true north is invaluable in the twisting tunnels of the Underdark, and the increased movement speed is useful in and out of combat.

Dark Elf Infiltrator Starting Package

Armor: Leather (+2 AC, speed 30 ft., 15 lb.).

Weapons: Rapier (1d6, crit 18-20/x2, 2 lb., one-handed, piercing).

Shortbow (1d6, crit x3, range inc. 60 ft., 2 lb., piercing)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: If Dexterity is 13 or higher, Dodge; if Dexterity is 12 or lower, Combat Reflexes instead.

Gear: Clothes, personal items, three tindertwigs, caltrops.

Quiver with 18 arrows.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Investigator, Sprint (KPG), Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, and Weapon Focus.

Sai (1d4, crit x2, 1 lb., range inc. 10 ft., light, bludgeoning)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 5 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: If Dexterity is 13 or higher, Dodge; if Dexterity is 12 or lower, Improved Initiative instead.

Bonus Feat: If Dexterity is 13 or higher, Dodge; if Dexterity is 12 or lower, Combat Reflexes instead.

Gear: Clothes, personal items.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

MONK

As you have seen, monks can be found among both dark and twilight elves, and are respected as masters of deadly combat. When creating a dark elf monk, in particular, players should study the monk prestige classes, to determine if they want to follow that path later. For starting characters, focus on building up Dexterity and Strength-related skills and abilities. Because they have so many built-in class abilities, however, monks can afford to be very flexible with their feats. The basic skills a monk needs often use most of her skill points, but if the character has a high Intelligence, players should consider investing in a rank or two of Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (history).

Dark Elf Monk Starting Package

Armor: None (speed 30 ft.).

Weapons: Quarterstaff (1d6/1d6, crit x2, 4 lb., two-handed, bludgeoning).

Wizard Skills			
Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Spellcraft	4	Int	-
Concentration	4	Con	-
Knowledge (arcana)	4	Int	-
Knowledge (nature)*	4*	Int	-
Climb (cc)	2	Str	-
Spot (cc)	2	Wis	-
Search (cc)	2	Int	-
Hide (cc)	2	Dex	-
Move Silently (cc)	2	Dex	-
Use Rope (cc)	2	Dex	-

PALADIN

As paragons of order and virtue, the very idea of a dark elf paladin seems contradictory – and it is. In fact, paladins are found only among the twilight elves, serving both church and military as holy warriors. When creating a twilight elf paladin, many of the suggestions that apply to both fighters and clerics apply just as well. Paladins do not have the bonus feats of the fighter, so players must choose feats a bit more carefully, but with the added advantage of divine spells and powers as backup. Because most paladins are very charismatic, such a character might consider taking spells and feats to attract and augment allies.

Twilight Elf Paladin Starting Package

Armor: Elven chainmail (+5 AC, armor check penalty –4, speed 20 ft., 35 lb.).

Light steel shield (+1 AC, armor check penalty –1, 6 lb.)

Weapons: Longsword (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, 4 lb., one-handed, slashing).

Shortbow (1d6, crit x3, range inc. 60 ft., 2 lb., piercing).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 3 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Weapon Focus (longsword).

Bonus Feat: Improved Initiative.

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Golden holy symbol (eye on a blue/white diamond pattern, of The Swift Sword, god of chivalry and valor).

Gold: 2d4 gp.



Recommended Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise (Improved Trip, Improved Disarm), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mounted Combat (Mounted Archery, Trample, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge), and Weapon Focus.

Recommended Spells: 1st-level-bless, bless water, cure light wounds; 2nd-level-bull's strength, delay poison, resist energy; 3rd-level-cure moderate wounds, heal mount, prayer; 4th-level-cure serious wounds, dispel evil, mark of justice.

RANGER

Peerless hunters and trackers, rangers hunt the most dangerous quarries - other sentient beings. Whether they be dark or twilight elf, the ranger's keen eyes and natural cunning serve him well in the Underdark. Rangers are often used as scouts or sentinels.

Occasionally, however, a ranger joins the military or an adventuring party. A ranger in the Underdark should focus on detection and tracking, and take full use of their knack for fighting with two weapons – a very useful ability for the player of such a character.

Dark Elf Ranger Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty –1, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

Weapons: Longsword (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, 4 lb., one-handed, slashing).

Short sword, off hand (1d6, crit 19-20/x2, 2 lb., light, piercing).

Note: When striking with both swords, this ranger takes a –4 penalty with the longsword and a –8 penalty with the short sword unless he or she has the Two-Weapon Fighting feat. If he or she has a Strength bonus, add only one-half of it to the damage roll with the short sword, but add the full Strength bonus to the damage roll with the longsword.

Longbow (1d8, crit x3, range inc. 100 ft., 3 lb., piercing).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 6 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Power Attack.

Favored Enemy: Undead.

Gear: Clothes, personal items.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative and Skill Focus (Listen, Search, Spot).

Recommended Spells: 1st-level-delay poison, detect poison, read magic, summon nature's ally I; 2nd-level-cure light wounds, protection from energy, wind wall; 3rd-level-

Table 4-1: Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist

Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Tempered mind +1, Monk Abilities Posion Use
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Tracing the patterns
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Tempered mind +2
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Tempered mind +3
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Strike Anarchy
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Tempered mind +4
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Longevity
9th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Tempered mind +5
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Laws of the Blade

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cure moderate wounds, neutralize poison, repel vermin; 4th-level-commune with nature, cure serious wounds, nondetection, summon nature's ally IV.

ROGUE

Not surprisingly, rogues fit in quite well in the Underdark, at least among dark elves. Their larcenous nature, natural cunning and devotion to stealth and trickery can help a rogue rise to great heights of power in the Empire. Less charismatic rogues (or those who are unable to grasp dominance) often serve as appraisers, safecrackers, and general troubleshooters for more influential drow.

Versatility is the rogue's stock in trade, and the character should reflect that. Rogues can, and should, do a little bit of everything. Unless this character plans on entering combat frequently, players should consider taking feats that will improve skills or give the rogue new skill-based abilities. For the fighting rogue, mobility and speed are more important than heavy armor and massive damage. When it comes time to pick special abilities, consider abilities like opportunist, skill mastery and slippery mind. Extra feats are also useful.

Dark Elf Rogue Starting Package

Armor: Leather (+2 AC, speed 30 ft., 15 lb.).

Weapons: Short sword (1d6, crit 19-20/x2, 2 lb., light, piercing).

Light crossbow (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, range inc. 80 ft., 4 lb., piercing).

Dagger (1d4, crit 19-20/x2, range inc. 10 ft., 1 lb., light, piercing)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 8 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

Bonus Feat: Combat Reflexes.

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Thieves' tools. Case with 10 crossbow bolts.

Gold: 4d4 gp.

Recommended Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting and Weapon Focus.

SHAMAN

Like druids, shamans are very rare among drow or twilight elves. Those who might exist tend to linger nearer the surface, where they have more access to roots and wooden materials. Regardless of their origins, however, many shamans treat their comrades as a surrogate tribe,

and their blessings and rituals to appease earth spirits often make warriors feel a bit more at ease. The shaman of the Underdark should focus more on combat and less on divination magicks. Metamagic feats (and wild feats as described in Masters of the Wild) are often good choices for the shaman, as are general-purpose spellcasting feats like Spell Focus and Spell Penetration. Shamans have a decent skill point selection, and thus should consider putting

Table 4-2: Divine Chorister

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Hypnotizing voice	+1 of existing divine spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Divine Protection +1	+1 of existing divine spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Holy Hymm	+1 of existing divine spellcasting class
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Divine Protection +2	+1 of existing divine spellcasting class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Song of Discard +1	+1 of existing divine spellcasting class

ranks in skills related to alertness and survival. As noted in Chapter Two, shamans of the Underdark also have access to new totems.

Dark Elf Shaman Starting Package

Armor: Studded leather (+3 AC, speed 30 ft., armor check penalty -1, 20 lb.).



Weapons: Quarterstaff (1d6/1d6, crit x2, 4 lb., two-handed, bludgeoning).

Sling (1d4, crit x2, range inc. 50 ft., 0 lb., bludgeoning).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 5 + Int modifier. The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

Bonus Feat: Extend Spell.

Animal Companion: Spider.

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Small wooden animal totem (spider).

Gold: 1d6 gp.

Recommended Feats: Brew Potion, Craft Staff, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell and Scribe Scroll.

Recommended Spells: 0-level-flare, guidance, know direction, light, mending, purify food and drink; 1st-level-calm animals, charm animals, endure elements, faerie fire, goodberry, obscuring mist, produce flame, summon nature's ally I; 2nd-level- bull's strength, cat's grace, delay poison, flaming sphere, owl's wisdom, soften earth and stone, spider climb, summon swarm, wild sense (KPG); 3rd-level-call lightning, cure moderate wounds, meld into stone, neutralize poison, poison, spike growth, stone shape, wind wall; 4th-level-air walk, dispel magic, giant vermin, reincarnate, repel vermin, rusting grasp, spike stones, summon nature's ally IV; 5th-level-animal growth, commune with nature, control winds, stonewall, wall of fire; 6th-level-cat's grace (mass), find the path, ironwood, move earth, owl's wisdom (mass), spellstaff, stone tell; 7th-level-control weather, creeping doom, cure moderate wounds (mass), fire storm, heal, summon nature's ally VII; 8th-level-cure serious wounds (mass), finger of death, repel metal or stone, reverse gravity, summon nature's ally VIII; 9th-level-antipathy, cure critical wounds (mass), elemental swarm, foresight, regenerate, shapechange, sympathy.

SPELLSINGER, SORCERER AND WIZARD

Though arcane magic is less common among the twilight elves than among the dark elves, both races prize its use in certain situations. When creating a sorcerer, spellsinger or wizard of the Underdark, spell selection is obviously the most important decision. Spells that manipulate earth are necessary, and the ability to take any Knowledge skill as a class skill is a powerful advantage. Metamagic feats are strongly recommended, particularly feats such as Extend Spell and Enlarge Spell. Recommended familiars are the bat, rat or snake.

Dark Elf Wizard Starting Package

Armor: None (speed 30 ft.).

Weapons: Quarterstaff (1d6/1d6, crit x2, 4 lb., two-handed, bludgeoning).



Light crossbow (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, range inc. 80 ft., 4 lb., piercing)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 2 + Int modifier (or 3 + Int modifier for sorcerers only). The skill table presents the skills in order of probable importance to the character.

Feat: Toughness.

Bonus Feat: Combat Casting.

Gear: Clothes, personal items. Case with 10 crossbow bolts. Spell component pouch (sorcerer and wizard only).

Gold: 3d4 gp (sorcerer); 6d4 gp (spellsinger); 3d6 gp (wizard).

Recommended Feats: Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Selective Spell and Toughness.

Recommended Spells: 0-level-arcane mark, daze, detect magic, flare, light, mending, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st-level- color spray, detect poison, disintegrate (KPG), magic missile, shield, unseen servant; 2nd-level-arcane lock, bull's strength, cat's grace, icy hands (KPG), imaginary chains (KPG), locate object, protection from arrows, scare; 3rd-level-clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, flame arrow, fly, ochre cloud (KPG), protection from energy, stinking cloud; 4th-level-Alaki's black tentacles**, bat's blessing*, charm monster, hallucinatory terrain, scrying, Shathy's pestilence (KPG), shout, stone shape; 5th-level-cloudsleep (KPG), cone

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of cold, fabricate, night fighter (KPG), Shasseril's telepathic bond**, shock wave (KPG); 6th-level-bull's strength (mass), circle of death, legend lore, Mithelizek's entrapping horror*, shadow walk, suggestion (mass); 7th-level-finger of death, hold person (mass), limited wish, shadow conjuration (greater), summon monster VII, teleport (greater); 8th-level-discern location, incendiary cloud, polar ray, power word stun, shadow evocation (greater), summon monster VIII; 9th-level-foresight, power word kill, shades, summon monster IV, teleportation circle, weird.

to journey into the world may do so. It is felt that even the wandering brothers and sisters can use their own judgment to forge law from chaos in the far away lands, and in turn still perform a service to the Brotherhood's vision. Unlike most monks, the Brotherhood does not require a vow of celibacy, and male and female monks have been known to take mates from within their own ranks.

NPC Twilight Fists spotted out in the world are usually encountered in the middle or at the end of a mission. They seem very calm and serene at first, but open into a blur of violence once they sight their target.

Hit Die: d8

PRESTIGE CLASSES

The prestige classes in this book are generally available only for drow or twilight elves, for they keep their secrets among themselves. Any exceptions to this rule are noted in the requirements for the class.

BROTHERHOOD OF THE TWILIGHT FIST

Once Nal'loreian's greatest weapon and savior, the Brotherhood has long since struck out on its own, choosing whom they serve and when they kill. They are fatalistic by nature, believing they are only capable of achieving goals through combat and strife, but also cautiously optimistic that they can one day make a difference and atone for the sins of the past.

Most of the Brotherhood's current members are either

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to join the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any lawful.

Skills: Craft (any) 5 ranks, Craft (poisonmaking) 7 ranks, Heal 3 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 4 ranks, Sense Motive 2 ranks, Survival 2 ranks

Base Will Save Bonus: +5

Special: You must find a secret ashram of the Brotherhood by your own means and formally ask the Master for an invitation.

CLASS SKILLS

The Twilight Fist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disguise (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Profession (Wis), Speak Language (none), Survival (Wis) and Tumble (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Table 4-3: Guild Artificer

Base						
Class	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Scrutinize	
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Item Creation Feat	
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Improved Craft	
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Item Creation Feat	
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Maximize Item	

a few young students who defected from the Empire, descendants of the original Brotherhood, or outsiders who made the difficult trek to the hidden ashram deep in the Elos desert. Because of the rarity of attaining new students, the dark elves here long ago cast away the bigotry of their kin and will accept any student willing to learn and possessing the willpower to understand.

Although many students remain behind in the ashram, some for meditation and solitude and some to carry out the contracts handled by the Brotherhood, those who wish

Table 4-4: Demonbound

Base							
Class	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spells per Day	
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Aura of Evil	+1 of existing arcane	
					Resistance to energy 5	spellcasting class	
					Smite good 1/day		
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus Metamagic feat	+1 of existing arcane	
						spellcasting class	
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Resistance to energy 10	+1 of existing arcane	
					Smite good 2/day	spellcasting class	
						spellcasting class	
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Metamagic feat	+1 of existing arcane	

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Twilight Fists gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor or shield. Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Tempered Mind (Ex): The first discipline taught to a new student is how to temper the mind itself into armor against the intrusive attacks of the Brotherhood's most hated enemy - the mind flayer. The mind must first be purged of all chaotic noise, and then hammered into a singular purpose. The Brother gains +1 bonus on saving throws against mental-based attacks, including magical enchantments and any psionic mind-affecting abilities or powers. This bonus stacks with both the Still Mind feature and any racial save bonuses.

Monk Abilities (Ex): A member of the Brotherhood has the unarmed damage, AC bonus, and unarmored speed bonus of a monk whose level is equal to his Brother of the Twilight Fist level (see Table 3-10: the Monk on page 40 of the D&D Player's Handbook). If he also has monk levels, his levels in the two classes stack for the purpose of determining these levels.

Poison Use: Twilight Fists are trained in the dark elf tradition of poison use and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Tracing the Patterns (Su): At 2nd level, a Twilight Fist may detect alignment three times per day. This works as detect chaos and detect law (caster level equals Twilight Fist level), and detects neutrality. However, the Twilight Fist uses different terminology, such as refined (lawful), raw (chaotic), or malleable (neutral).

Strike Anarchy (Su): At 6th level, a Twilight Fist gains the ability to strike anarchy. Once per day, the monk may attempt to strike a chaotic opponent with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per Twilight Fist level. For example, an 8th-level Twilight Fist using a quarterstaff would deal 1d6+8 points of damage, plus any additional bonuses for high Strength or magical effects that would normally apply. If the monk strikes a creature that is not chaotic, the strike has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Longevity (Ex): By 8th level, a Twilight Fist's body has become extremely cleansed and fit. This ability doubles the age at which the character would normally become venerable. A Twilight Fist is now not considered venerable until he reaches his 700th year. His maximum age (barring

some unknown magical or divine intervention) is likewise extended to 700 + 4d100 years.

If the Twilight Fist is already over 350 years old by the

Table 4-5: Demonbound Abyssal Traits

Demon	Abyssal Trait
Babau	darkness (Sp); 3/day, as caster level 12th
Balor	true seeing (Sp); at will, as caster level 20th
Bebilith	plane shift (Sp); 1/day; as caster level 12th
Dretch	Telepathy (Su); with Abyssal-speaking creatures within 50 ft.
Glabrezu	Damage reduction (Su); 1/good
Hezrou	Improved grab (Ex); as hezrou, with unarmed attack
Marilith	No penalties for two-weapon fighting (Ex)
Nalfeshnee	Additional smite good +1/day (Su)
Quasit	Alternate form (Su); as quasit, 1/day
Retriever	Eye Ray (Su); as retriever, 1/day, fire only, half damage
Succubus	tongues (Sp); at will, as caster level 12th

time he reaches 8th level, his maximum age is extended as noted above, but he continues to suffer the normal aging effects of being venerable. For more information on elven aging, see Appendix E: Vital Statistics.

Laws of the Blade (Ex): At 10th level, a Twilight Fist gains a greater understanding of the universe, becoming attuned with the synchronicity of both order and its place in combat. Each swing of the sword and plucking of a bowstring is like a gear in a clockwork machine - precise and predictable. This ability gives the monk a +4 insight bonus to AC as long as he is conscious. Any time the Twilight Fist is denied his dodge bonus he is denied this bonus as well.

DIVINE CHORISTER

The worshippers of the gods express their faith in many ways - poetry, recitation of holy script, self-flagellation, sacrifice, and many other numerous methods. However, the most common form of devotion to the deities is praise through song, and almost every religion on Tellene has its own collection of hymns extolling the virtues and glories of the deity which it serves. While the clergy and the common parishioner know at least a few of these hymnals by heart, the divine chorister devotes her life to pursuing a closer connection to her deity through the language of song.

Combining the rigid devotion of a cleric with the artistic passion of a bard, the divine chorister spreads the glories of her god in her travels with the gift of music. Of course, each is different. A Chorister singing the praises of the Harvester bellows out macabre dirges, while a follower of the Pure One favors ballads about the power of love.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a divine chorister, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Table 4-6: Keel'thaile

Class	Base	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0		Combat Knowledge Detect Good	+1 of existing
divine						Poison Use	spellcaster class
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0		Divine Favor	+1 of existing
divine						Eyes of Fury	spellcaster class
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1		Underground Mastery	+1 +1 of existing
divine							spellcaster class
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1		Analyze portal	+1 of existing
divine							spellcaster class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1		Underground Mastery	+2 +1 of existing
divine							spellcaster class
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2			+1 of existing
divine							spellcaster class
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2		Underground Mastery	+3 +1 of existing
divine							

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks, Perform (song) 5 ranks

Spells: Able to cast 4th-level divine spells.

Patron Deity: A divine chorister must have a patron deity, and it must be the one he serves as a divine chorister.

Special: Character must receive teaching in this prestige class from a twilight or shadow elf from Halibeth-Joriel.

CLASS SKILLS

The divine chorister's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Survival (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the divine chorister prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Divine Choristers gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor or shield. Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal

armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: When a new divine chorister level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he also gained a level in whatever divine spellcasting class granted him access to 4th-level divine spells before he added the prestige class level. He does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of turning or rebuking undead, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. Essentially, this means that he adds the level of divine chorister to the level of whatever other divine spellcasting class granted him access to 4th-level divine spells, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

Hypnotizing Voice (Ex): At 1st level, the divine chorister may use hypnotism once per day (caster level equals divine chorister level).

Divine Protection (Ex): At 2nd level, the divine chorister gains a +1 bonus on saving throws against arcane spells, as well as the spell-like and supernatural abilities of outsiders. When he reaches 4th level, the bonus increases to +2.

Holy Hymn (Su): Thanks to his frequent vocal stylings and study of music, as well as direct intervention from his deity, a 3rd-level divine chorister gains the ability to sing a hymn protecting against magical effects that depend on sound. This ability functions like the bard's supernatural counter-song ability.

Song of Discord (Sp): Once per day, a 5th-level divine chorister may sing a rousing song boasting of his god's power. This ability functions like the spell of the same name, except that the save DC is 10 + divine chorister level

Table 4-7: Divine Favor Abilities

Church	Ability Name	Effect Summary
Courts of Inequity	Shackles of Injustice	Binds target
House of Shackles	Imprisonment	Targets cannot move
Church of Endless Night	Blanket of Darkness	Dims light
Order of Agony	Kiss of the Lash	Pain
Congregation of the Dead	Shroud's Embrace	Targets suffer negative level
House of Hunger	Six Days of Death	Targets suffer effects of hunger
House of Scorn	Rejection	-2 morale penalty to attacks
House of Knives	The Scorpion's Sting	Poison damage
Conventicle of Affliction	Plague	Targets become diseased
Confuser of Ways	A Thousand Doubts	Indecision, initiative penalty
Temple of Sleepless Nights	Pursuit of Terror	Opponents shaken
Temple of Strife	Misfortune	-1 luck penalty to all checks
House of Vice	Lure of Lust	Targets cannot resist compulsion

+ the divine chorister's Cha modifier. Caster level equals divine chorister level.

GUILD ARTIFICER

Magic items, weapons, armor or other wondrous devices powered by arcane enchantment are rare in the world of Tellene. Time, equipment and the costs of both money and experience limit even the most industrious of wizards. Although the profits and advantages of being able to construct such items is highly encouraging, focusing one's mystical career only on handicrafts alone is much too tedious a thought for most magic users, as the paths of higher knowledge, adventure and power are much more seductive.

However, the Artificers' Guild is an exception to the rule. Within the dark elf and twilight elf kingdoms (and rumored in some dwarven kingdoms) is the Artificers' Guild, a group of wizards and artisans dedicated to crafting the finest magical equipment while studying to reduce the monetary and stressful costs. The guild is one part arcane college, one part mercantile and two parts laboratory. The artificers teach a combination of meditative techniques and arcane "short-cuts" to their students, but are always attempting quicker and more efficient ways of practicing their art.

Many adventuring artificers are the first to test new items and report any findings concerning their equipment or the results of a new item during a field test. Dark elf artificers make new contacts for trade and act as representatives of the guild, although the reclusive twilight elves shun such an idea, as the dwarves rely on their established merchants for such matters.

Wizards and sorcerers are the most common classes to become Guild Artificers, although they usually pick up a level of bard or rogue in order to have the proper skills to satisfy the guild. Likewise, some professional rogues and bards occasionally decide to part ways with their respective guilds or ministries to join the world of legitimate business. Most other classes harbor no interest in the guild, although the occasional dwarf warrior studies magic for the chance to construct his own weapons and armor to his personal specifications.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a guild artificer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Craft (alchemy, armorsmithing, gemcutting, metalworking, stonecarving or weaponsmithing) 8 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks

Feats: Artificer (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide), plus three different item creation feats.

Spells: Able to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Special: Character must join the Artificer's Guild in the Old Empire of Halibeth-Joleriel, the dark elf capital of Nal'loreian or the hidden dwarven city of Draska.

CLASS SKILLS

The guild artificer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Profession (Wis), Search (Wis), Spellcraft and Use Magic Device. See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the guild artificer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Guild artificers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, but not with any armor or shields.

Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Scrutinize (Ex): At 1st level, the guild artificer gains the ability to determine all magic properties of an item he or she holds (excluding artifacts). However, the

artificer cannot determine whether an item is cursed.

Improved Craft (Ex): At 3rd level, the guild artificer begins to truly understand the techniques embraced by the guild, and it shows in his own work. He now requires less time, money and experience points to craft magic items. To brew a potion, forge a ring, scribe a scroll or enhance a weapon, suit of armor or shield, he need spend only 1/10 of its features' total price in XP. Furthermore, he only uses up raw materials costing one-fourth of this total price. Any additional costs are unchanged, and the artificer still must meet all other requirements for item creation.

Item Creation Feat: At 2nd level and again at 4th level, the guild artificer may select any item creation feat he does not already have as a bonus feat. He must meet any prerequisites for a feat in order to select it.

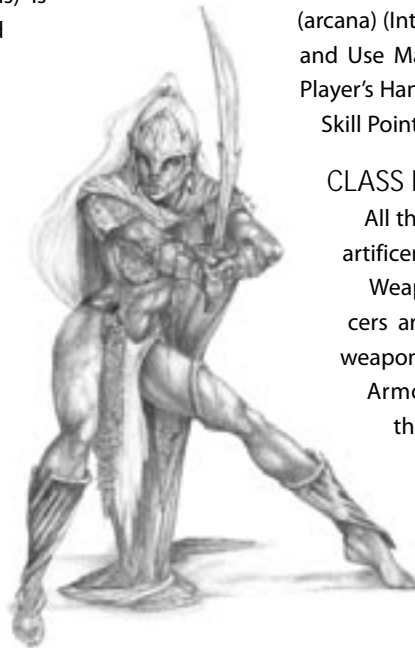


Table 4-8: Sisterhood of the Obsidian Gaz'zirad

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Diplomatic immunity monk abilities obsidian gaz'zirad poison use
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Willing weapon
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Sneak attack +1d6 Speed of darkness
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Improved Critical feat
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Sneak attack +2d6
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Axiomatic gaz'zirad
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Sneak attack +3d6
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Touch of destruction
9th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Sneak attack +4d6
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Foekiller

Maximize Item (Ex): At 5th level, a guild artificer can create items whose effects are maximized, as if by the Maximize Spell feat, without altering the level of the spell used to create the item. Maximizing an item adds 10 to the DC of the Craft check required to create it.

DEMONBOUND

Many dark elf wizards secretly draw their power from hideous rituals in which they swear blood oaths to demons from the Abyss in exchange for power. By binding themselves to these creatures, they have a much greater chance to gain power and riches, but in doing so relinquish their immortal soul.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a demonbound, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Any non-outsider.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 4 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks.

Languages: Abyssal

Spells: Able to cast 3th-level arcane spells.

Special: The player chooses a demon variety when taking the first level in this prestige class, subject to the DM's approval. The character must first contact this demon, either with a summon spell or binding circle; see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Villain Design Handbook for information on binding circles. Next, the character must offer her soul in exchange for power, and participate in a short ceremony where she drinks a mouthful of the demon's blood.

CLASS SKILLS

The demonbound's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Knowledge (Int), Profession (Wis) and Spellcraft (Int). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the demonbound prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Demonbound characters gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor or shield. Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: When a new demonbound level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she also gained a level in whatever arcane spellcasting class granted her access to 3rd-level arcane spells before she added the prestige class level. She does

not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained, except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. Essentially, this means that she adds the level of demonbound to the level of whatever other arcane spellcasting class granted her access to 3rd-level arcane spells, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

Aura of Evil (Ex): The power of a demonbound's aura of evil (see the detect evil spell) is equal to her demonbound level, just like the aura of a cleric of an evil deity.

Resistance to Energy (Ex): At 1st and 3rd level, a demonbound character gains resistance against acid, cold and fire.

Smite Good (Su): The demonbound may attempt to strike a good opponent with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per demonbound level. For example, a 5th-level demonbound using a dagger would deal 1d4+5 points of damage, plus any additional bonuses for high Strength or magical effects that would normally apply. If the demonbound smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

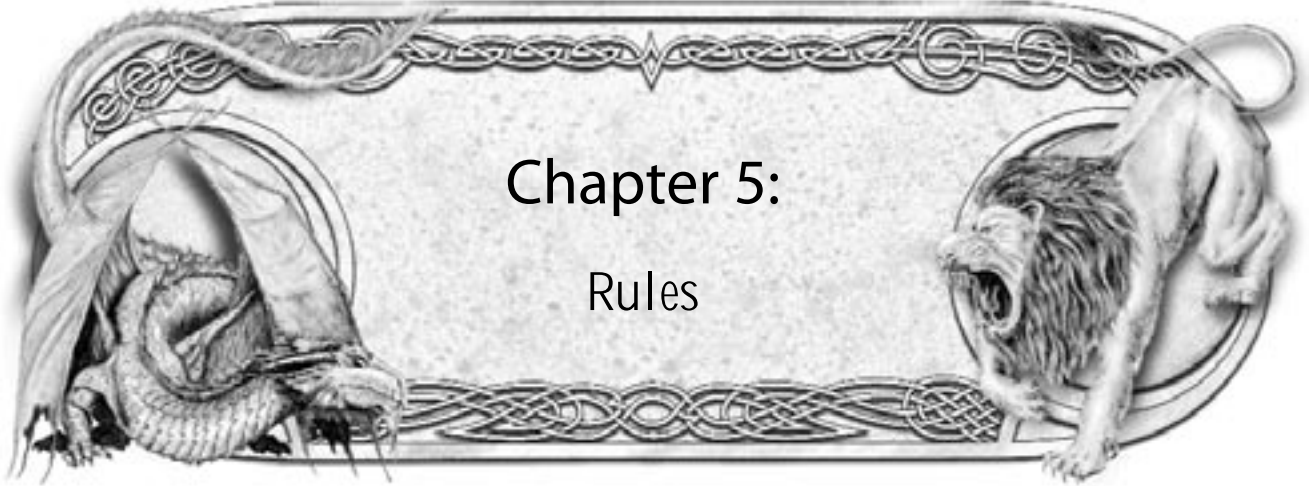
Bonus Metamagic Feats: At 2nd and 4th level, the demonbound gains a bonus metamagic feat. These feats apply to all spells cast by a demonbound character – she cannot choose whether to use the feat.

Abyssal Trait: At 5th level, the demonbound gains a certain trait of the demon she is bound to. See Table 4-5.

Loophole: Each use of a demonbound special ability (including traits and each use of metamagic spell feats!) drains 1 year from the character's maximum age. The DM should roll the character's maximum age secretly, based on the character's vital statistics (see page 109 of the Player's Handbook, or page 30 of the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's

Chapter 5:

Rules



Guide). While dark elves are less worried about losing a few years of their lives, a member of a shorter-lived race might barely have time to appreciate their power before they pass on.

Keel'thaile

Dark elf soldiers learn both basic literacy and combat skills, and the chance for advancement entails both monetary and societal rewards. Those who show the greatest potential are often recruited by a church to become "keel'thaile," or holy warriors of church and Empress - the highest honor a male can achieve. The keel'thaile enjoy great rank and privilege, and can actually give orders to most females. However, these soldiers are "dead" to their families once they join, so that no family may enjoy status due the actions of a male. The only exceptions are the male's in-laws, of whose House he is now a member. Unmarried keel'thaile must take a vow of celibacy, although he may break this rule behind closed doors without loss of his status unless caught. Female warriors may also become keel'thaile, but this is less common.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to join the keel'thaile, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Dark elf

Alignment: Any evil. Note that dark elves rarely worship the Confuser of Ways whom they despise, or the Emperor of Scorn whom they feel abandoned them.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks, Knowledge ([art of war; or any military]) 5 ranks

Spells: Able to cast 2nd-level divine spells.

Special: Must have attended eight years of advanced schooling and served at least two years in the drow military. After this time, the dark elf must be chosen and inducted as a keel'thaile by a dark elf cleric of an evil church.

CLASS SKILLS

The keel'thaile's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (art of war*) (Int), Knowledge (any military*) (Int) and Profession (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions. *See the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the keel'thaile prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: keel'thaile are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all types of armors and shields (including Tower shields). Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: When a new keel'thaile level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he also gained a level in whatever divine spellcasting class granted him access to 2nd-level divine spells before he added the prestige class level. He does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of rebuking undead, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. Essentially, this means that he adds the level of keel'thaile to the level of whatever other divine spellcasting class granted him access to 2nd-level divine spells, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

Combat Knowledge (Ex): Beginning at 1st level, a keel'thaile gains a bonus equal to his keel'thaile level on all Knowledge (art of war) or any Knowledge (military) checks.

Blood & Shadows: The Dark Elves of Tellene

Detect Good (Sp): At 1st level, a keel'thaile may use detect good at will (caster level equals keel'thaile's divine caster level).

Poison Use: keel'thaile are trained in the dark elf tradition of poison use and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Divine Favor (Su): Your deity approves your entry into the keel'thaile. Once per day, a keel'thaile of 2nd level and higher can now make a special attack using negative energy. This ability varies depending upon your church. (See the accompanying sidebar, as well as Chapter 10: Magic in the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide for more information.) If a keel'thaile already gets this ability from another source (such as a cleric's ability to channel negative energy), the keel'thaile may use this ability twice per day.

Eyes of Fury Feat: At 2nd level, the keel'thaile gains this feat (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide). He need not meet any prerequisites for this feat in order to use it.

Underground Mastery (Ex): At 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th level, a keel'thaile gains a +1 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls against underground creatures, as well as a +1 insight bonus to Climb, Hide, Spot and Survival checks when underground.

Analyze Portal (Sp): One of the secret objectives of the keel'thaile is to locate the ancient portals that brought their ancestors to the Krimppatus. Should they find them, the

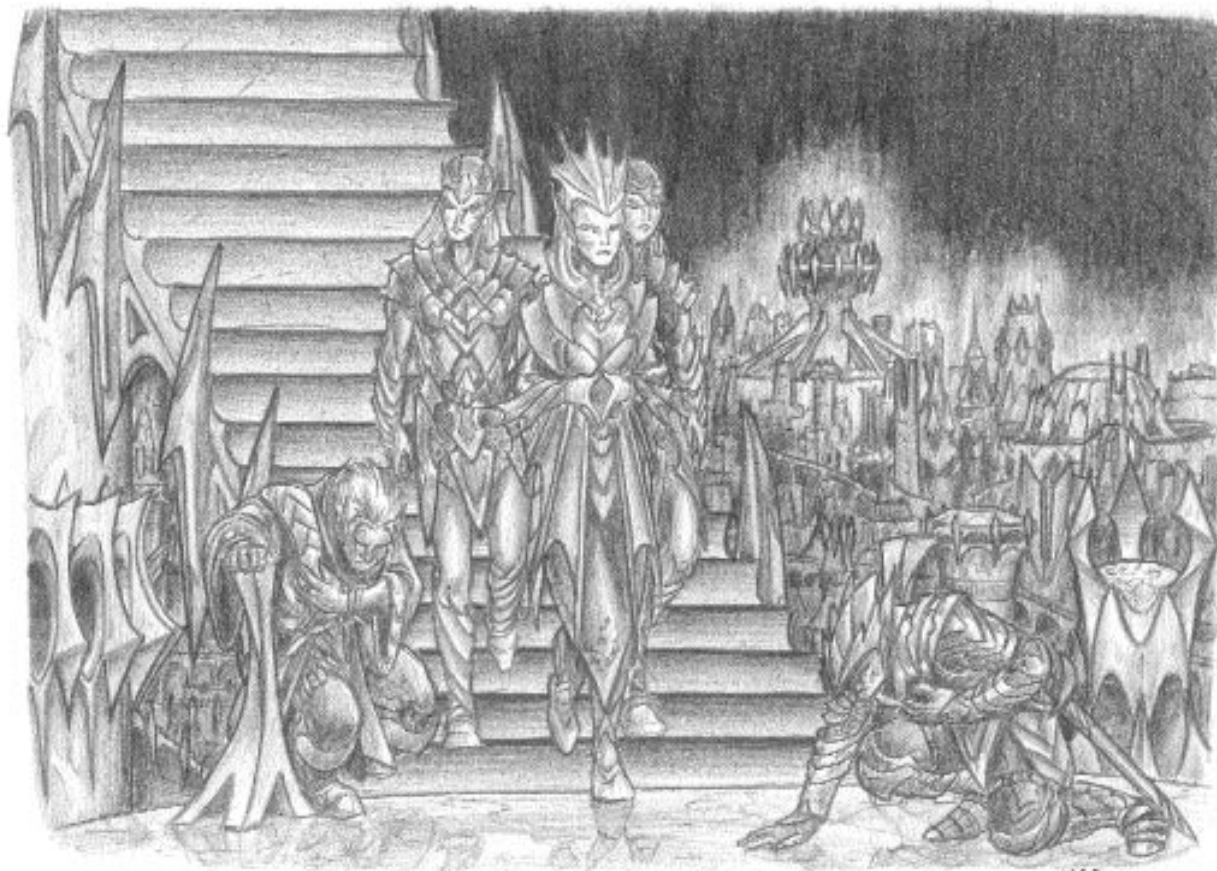
dark elves will surely use them to war against the twilight elves of Halibeth-Joriel. At 4th level, a keel'thaile may use analyze portal once per day (caster level equals keel'thaile's divine caster level). See the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide for more information on this spell.

Shadow Jump (Su): This ability is exactly like the shadowdancer ability of the same name (shadowdancer level equals keel'thaile level) but with a maximum range of 40 feet. See page 195 of the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide for more information.

Aura of Absolute Evil (Su): Upon attaining 10th level, a keel'thaile has proven himself such a dark creature that good cannot stand against him. He is surrounded by a constant dispel good effect at all times. Driving a good outsider back to its home plane or dispelling a good enchantment spell temporarily discharges and ends this effect, but the keel'thaile may reactivate it as a free action on his next turn.

SISTERHOOD OF THE OBSIDIAN GAZ'ZIRAD

Once the Brotherhood of the Twilight Fist defected from the Empire, a vacuum of power formed, as the throne and the church still needed a weapon to inspire fear in their subjects. The female monks, instructed by their master to stay behind and guard his little sister's newly inherited Empire, held a grand conclave to decide how best to reorga-



nize. Choosing a new leader was easy, for the one known as Perleixus was the greatest and most feared female monk of her age.

Perleixus, a devout follower of the Flaymaster, decreed that the new sisterhood would no longer accept members of the royal houses, as politics obviously interfered with their duties. Males would no longer be admitted and, most importantly, the head of the new Sisterhood would answer only to the Empress, and all those below her would do likewise. To symbolize this renewed loyalty, Perleixus developed a new style of martial art - one that incorporated the royal symbol of office - the obsidian gaz'zirad.

The Sisters are as feared as the Twilight Fists of past ages, if not more so. Like the Brotherhood, they follow the "life as a weapon" philosophy, but with a more fanatical reverence of evil and the zealotry that accompanies such love. Because they answer to the Empress and the Empress alone, even the most aloof and arrogant drow give them a wide berth, as no law can protect them should they find themselves in disfavor of the Empress' living weapons. This is somewhat of an exaggeration, for the Sisters do little

Skills: Craft (poisonmaking) 4 ranks, Intimidate 2 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 2 ranks, Move Silently 2 ranks.

Feats: Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Base Will Save Bonus: +5.

Special: The applicant must seek sponsorship with a current member of the Sisters of the Obsidian gaz'zirad, and be inducted into their ranks via a secret ceremony.

CLASS SKILLS

The Sister's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Listen (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis) and Tumble (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the Sisterhood of the Obsidian gaz'zirad prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Sisterhood members gain no proficiency with any armor or shield, but do gain proficiency with the obsidian gaz'zirad as a special monk weapon. Armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble, and double the normal armor check penalty applies to Swim checks.

Diplomatic Immunity: A 1st level Sister of the Obsidian gaz'zirad gains diplomatic immunity. In dark elf society, she is only answerable to her Mistress (her sensei), who in turn is answerable only to the Empress. Furthermore, the DC of any Bluff or Intimidate checks against her increase by an amount equal to her Sister level.

Monk Abilities (Ex): A member of the Sisterhood has the unarmed damage, AC bonus, and unarmored speed bonus of a monk whose level is equal to her Sister level (see Table 3-10: the Monk on page 40 of the D&D Player's Handbook).

Circumstance	Sense Dominance DC
Target has the Improved Birthright feat	-2
Target has the Birthright feat	-1
Target is not a dark elf	+1
Each level of Size category difference	+2

without first consulting the Empress, although caution is a virtue in the cutthroat world of the dark elves.

Seeing a NPC Sister usually means that she is either preparing for, or already embarking on, a mission for the Empress. This is usually an assassination of one found guilty of a crime in absentia, or who has been branded a heretic. Search and destroy missions carried out in the confines of the Empire are rarely subtle, for they do not need to be. Therefore, simply seeing a Sister enter a room and all its occupants suddenly get up and leave is of no significance.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to join the Sisterhood of the Obsidian gaz'zirad, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Dark elf.

Gender: Female.

Region: The dark elf Empire of the Krimppatu Mountains.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
General Feats		
Birthright	Raised in Dark Elf Empire	Masterwork family heirloom, +1 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate and
Sense		
Improved Birthright	Raised in Dark Elf Empire, Birthright	Two masterwork family heirlooms or one magic item +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy,
Intimidate		
Improved Blind-Fight	Blind-Fight Combat Reflexes	and Sense Dominance checks Negate darkness/visibility penalties

Blood & Shadows: The Dark Elves of Tellene

If she also has monk levels, her levels in the two classes stack for determining these levels.

Obsidian gaz'zirad: On the first day of training, the new Sister receives her obsidian gaz'zirad. From this point on, it never leaves the side of the new Sister. It is considered a part of her - a bond between elf and weapon in mind, body and soul. The bond is magical in nature and establishes itself from the moment when the gaz'zirad is first bestowed upon her. All of the gaz'zirad-related abilities, listed below, only apply when using the very same gaz'zirad bestowed upon her from the first day of her training as a Sister; they are lost on any other weapon. If she should ever lose her gaz'zirad for any reason, she cannot advance any further in this prestige class until she regains it. If this is not possible (i.e. the weapon is somehow destroyed) then the Sister must commit ritual suicide in the presence of her Mistress (the sensei) and Empress, and no member of her House may ever again be admitted into the Sisterhood. Failure to do so brands her as treasonous, and the Sisters will not rest until the traitor is dead.

Poison Use: Members of the Sisterhood are trained in the dark elf tradition of poison use and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Willing Weapon (Sp): When a Sister of the Obsidian gaz'zirad reaches 2nd level, her gaz'zirad becomes even more bound to her. As a move action, the Sister can concentrate, stretch out her arm and open her fist, at which point the obsidian gaz'zirad flies (hilt first) towards her waiting hand. In game terms, this otherwise acts as a mage hand spell (caster level equals Sister level). The gaz'zirad never flies fast enough to deal damage as a thrown weapon. If the gaz'zirad is prevented from reaching the Sister, it drops to the ground in the square where it is halted.

Sneak Attack (Ex): The Sisters, being the Empress' personal assassins, seek to strike down their targets as quickly and efficiently as possible, so they often attempt to employ the element of surprise to strike at the vital spots of their target's bodies in hopes of scoring a quick kill. This ability is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name, but

Circumstance	Listen DC
Dead silence	5
Conversational noise	10
Urban ambient noise	15
Skirmish	20
Small raid	25
Full scale siege	30
Opponent is moving silently	varies

the extra damage is dealt only when the Sister uses the obsidian gaz'zirad. This extra damage dealt increases by +1d6 every other level (3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th). If a Sister gets a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels), the bonuses from damage stack.

Speed of Darkness (Ex): The sister can now move her normal movement rate when Moving Silently without penalty.

Improved Critical Feat: At 4th level, the Sister gains this feat for use with her obsidian gaz'zirad. She need not meet any prerequisites for this feat in order to use it.

Axiomatic gaz'zirad (Su): At 6th level, the Sister may imbue her gaz'zirad with the axiomatic special ability as a move action. This ability may be used once per day, and the effect lasts a number of rounds equal to the Sister's Charisma modifier.

Touch of Destruction (Su): The Flaymaster smiles on you. Once per day, an 8th-level Sister may make a touch of destruction attack. This ability functions like the Destruction domain's granted power, with Sister level equal to cleric level. If the Sister also has this ability from another class (such as cleric), levels of that class stack with the Sister levels for the purpose of determining damage bonus.

Foekiller (Su): At 10th level, the Sister meditates for three consecutive days, reflecting upon those she has slain in the blessed name of Empress and deity. She then chooses a type of enemy she has either slain the most of, or has the most contempt for. Her gaz'zirad is now permanently imbued with the chosen bane property.

SUNWALKER

Sunwalkers are specially trained drow who travel to the surface to spy on the surface dwelling elves. See the Stealth and Style variant class guidebook for more information on Sunwalkers.



Spore Armor



Jelymesh



Gazzirad



Mortuary Sword

Table 5-2: Weapons

Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Inc (ft.)	Weight	Type**
Light Melee Weapons							
Gaz'zirad	20 gp	1d3+1	1d4+1	19-20/x2	5 ft.	2 lb.	Piercing
Martial Weapons							
One-Handed Melee Weapons							
Durel'len	25 gp	1d6	2d4	18-20/x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing
Toren	20 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Two-Handed Melee Weapons							
Jelymesh	75 gp	1d8+2	1d12+1	x3	-	16 lb.	Slashing
Mortuary Sword	12 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	-	2 lb.	Slashing and Piercing
Worl	35 gp	1d6	2d4	18-20/x2	-	3 lb.	Slashing and Piercing

Table 5-3: Armor

Type	Cost	Armor Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure %	Speed (30 ft.)	Speed (20 ft.)	Weight
(lbs)								
Light								
Spore backplate1	12 gp	+2	+4	-2	15	30 ft.	20 ft.	5
Spore frontplate2	12 gp	+2	+4	-2	15	30 ft.	20 ft.	5
Spore breastplate	25 g	+2	+3	-3	25	30 ft.	20 ft.	10p
Medium								
Elven chainmail	300 gp	+5	+4	-4	25	20 ft.	15 ft.	35
Dark elven chainmail	450 gp	+6	+1	-5	30	20 ft.	15 ft.	45
Heavy								
Bone	250 gp	+6	+0	-7	35	20 ft.	15 ft.	40

Beneath the ground, as on the surface, a character's skills, feats and equipment can mean the difference between life and death. This section presents a variety of new uses for the standard skills from the Player's Handbook and several new feats, as well as a list of common dark and twilight elf equipment.

SKILLS

This section focuses on some cultural differences that a player should be aware of while running a dark elf character, as well as some new skills, and new uses for old skills.

CRAFT (Int)

Normal: You are trained in a craft, trade or art. Your common materials include leather, metal and wood.

Cultural Use: Dark elves often use bones in their craft - a very revered profession within the drow Empire. Bones are used to decorate the macabre temples of the dark elves, and the bones of the previous Empresses, regarded as holy relics, are often manipulated into grand works of art unto themselves. This skill is useful in creating any item constructed from bone, including bone and ivory inlays, gaming dice, jewelry or weaponry.

Check, Action, Try Again, Synergy: As Craft (any) in the D&D Player's Handbook.

HANDLE ANIMAL (Cha; Trained only)

Normal: You are trained in the teaching and rearing of an animal

New Use: Breeding

The Handle Animal skill can be used to breed certain animals in hopes of producing offspring that exhibit the most positive physical and mental traits of the parents. There are different niches for the breeding of animals, including farmers who wish to produce livestock with a higher yield of meat, horse ranchers who want to produce faster, smarter mounts, and the breeders of hunting and guard animals. Successfully breeding an exemplary specimen of an animal is long, careful process: the prospective breeder must be able to identify the best possible stud, and also guide the two animals along in the courtship process, later caring for the mother during gestation and birth. The time to create a desired trait in an animal varies. Wishing to combine a hybrid that encompasses the traits of two parents may only take one generation; but producing a new breed of animal altogether requires several generations. Fortunately, a dark elf character has the life span to do such a thing: dark elves often breed and train bats as sentinels, and dire bats as mounts.

Task	Handle Animal DC
Breed an animal	15 + HD of animal

INTIMIDATE (Cha)

Normal Use: Causing a potential threat to back down and flee instead of attempting to oppose you. It is also useful for interrogation.

Cultural Use: This is the ply and trade of the veraliak - the process of getting the accused prisoner to admit to heresy or other crime.

Check: Whereas the Bluff skill uses subtle trickery to cause people to damn themselves, Intimidate draws out a false confession (spoken or written) by relying on fear and over-the-top verbal threats.

Action: Varies. Getting a false confession requires a number of minutes equal to the opponent's HD x 10. You cannot intimidate an opponent into a false confession while in combat. The false confession must come from a prisoner who is restrained in some manner, and fully comprehends the direness of their situation.

Try Again, Special, Synergy: As the Intimidate skill in the D&D Player's Handbook.

KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL) (Int; Trained only)

Normal Use: This skill lets you answer questions about local legends, personalities, inhabitants, and so on.)

Cultural Use: This local knowledge often concerns secrets kept by key individuals and families, regarding current scandals, buried history, forbidden lore and other things that people try to keep from becoming common knowledge.

Check, Action, Try Again: As Knowledge (local) in the D&D Player's Handbook.

Stage Blackmail: learn an enemy's weaknesses, or discover the secret location of some blasphemous artifact. However, in order to increase your ranks in this skill, you must spend a majority of your time with the people and/or place you base the skill on, or have an information network of at least a dozen people based there. Remaining in regular contact with the latter allows for advancement of this skill.

Synergy: Having 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (local) grants a +2 synergy bonus to Gather Information and Profession (spy) checks.

KNOWLEDGE (NATURE) (Int; Trained only)

Normal Use: This skill lets you answer questions and perform actions within your field of study.

Cultural Use: This knowledge concerns how the elves of the Underdark properly cultivate fungus for food, as well as its other uses. Whereas many cultures see mushrooms and other edible fungi as something to be foraged, the elves are often dependent on the spores as the staple of their subterranean diet. As such, they developed mycology in order to

Table 5-4: Poisons

Poison	Type	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Cost
Azerlak Spore	Inhaled DC 15	None	2d4 Wis	800 gp
Drow/deltha's Bloom	Contact DC 20	1d6 Con	2d6 Str	3,000 gp
Dwarven Fire	Injury DC 14	1d4 Dex	1d3 Dex	500 gp
Heilzthig's Dance	Injury DC 18	1d6 Dex	1d6 Con	1,000 gp
Illithid Ichor	Contact DC 18	2d4 Int	1d4 Int	1,200 gp
Meskalia's Revenge	Contact DC 12	1d6 Cha	1d4 Cha	900 gp
Purgishow	Injury DC 17	unconsciousness	unconsciousness	850 gp
Redcap Poison	Injury DC 13	1d4 Dex	Blindness	900 gp
Zordecai Moss	Injury DC 16	1d3 Con	1d4 Con	850 gp

increase and control fungus production. This knowledge covers properly identifying types of fungi, their uses, and proper cultivation techniques, such as compost use, sterilization methods (to kill rival spores), and crossbreeding hybrids.

Check, Action, Try Again: As Knowledge (nature) in the D&D Player's Handbook.

Synergy: If you are a subterranean dweller with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (nature), you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks in subterranean environments. You also receive a +2 bonus to the following skills, but only when concerning fungus: Craft (poisonmaking), Profession (farmer) and Profession (herbalist).

PROFESSION (SPY) (Int; Trained only)

Although the actual process of espionage requires skills such as Disguise, Gather Information and Innuendo, Profession (spy) is the process of organizing and directing an information network of spies. Establishing contacts, formulating plans, picking out targets, setting up meeting places, secretly transferring funds are all a part of espionage. The heads and lieutenants of secret organizations and the spymasters of noble courts often possess this skill.

Check: Spying is more lucrative than most professions. You can practice your trade and make a decent living, earning about twice your Profession check in gold pieces per week of dedicated work.

Action, Try Again: As the Profession skill in the D&D Player's Handbook.

SENSE DOMINANCE (Wis)

This skill is similar to the hobgoblin skill Sense Honor (see Strength and Honor: the Hobgoblins of Tellene) and the Sense Motive skill (as defined in the D&D Player's Handbook). It allows a dark elf to judge the dominance (social power) rank of another, quickly determining whether the individual is above his or her own station, about equal, or lower. The skill is best used by dark elves, but can be useful elsewhere. In terms of class and cross-class skills, this skill is identical to Sense Motive.

Check: A successful check lets you determine a creature's dominance. The standard DC is 10, but may be modified. Some potential modifications are listed on the table.

Action: Trying to sense dominance takes 1 minute.

Try Again: No, though you may make a Sense Dominance check for every Bluff or Intimidate check made against you.

Special: If you have the Birthright feat, you get a +2 bonus on Sense Dominance checks.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense Dominance, you receive a +2 bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense

Motive, you receive a +2 bonus on all Sense Honor or Sense Dominance skill checks.

Knowledge (dungeoneering)

Current Use: You are very familiar with caverns and underground life.

New Use: You can also use this skill below ground.

Check, Action, Try Again, Restriction, Special: As the Survival skill in the D&D Player's Handbook.

Synergy: As noted in the D&D Players Handbook, if you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering), you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks in subterranean environments. However, if you are a native of the Underdark, you also receive a +2 bonus to the following skills, but only when concerning fungus: Craft (poisonmaking), Profession (farmer), and Profession (herbalist).

Table 5-5: Increasing Poison Damage

Base Damage	New Damage	Adjust DC to make by
0	1	+1
1	1d2	+1
1d2	1d3	+2
1d3	1d4	+2
1d4	1d6	+3
1d6	1d8	+4
1d8	1d10	+5

Table 5-6: Reducing Poison Damage

Base Damage	New Damage	Adjust DC to make by
1	0	-1
1d2	1	-1
1d3	1d2	-2
1d4	1d3	-2
1d6	1d4	-3
1d8	1d6	-3
1d10	1d8	-4

NEW FEATS

Life underground can be hazardous even for the most experienced subterranean dweller. Fortunately, the dark elves have developed a number of tricks to give them an edge. Many of these are defined in game terms as feats in Table 5-1: Feats. Most of these feats are geared specifically towards residents of the dark elf Empire, but many of them can also be used in an aboveground campaign (albeit with some minor adjustments).

Birthright [General]

You were born into a family occupying the middle tiers of dark elf society. Your family could be wealthy merchants, petty nobles, bureaucrats or church officials. Of course, a character could be born into such a family without this feat, but they would not enjoy the political influence of their family - perhaps due to their parent(s) being a seemingly unimportant male or the youngest daughter. With this feat, your family recognizes you publicly, and lets society know it.

Prerequisite: Raised in the dark elf Empire.

Benefit: In addition to the character's starting equipment, you receive one free masterwork item (per DM approval), as a gift from your family. You also receive a +1 morale bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate and Sense Dominance checks against citizens or slaves of a lower class.

Special: Because you are recognized as a member of a middle class House, your actions and words reflect the personal honor of your family, and you must be careful not to disgrace your matron or relatives in public. You may also shoulder responsibilities handed down by your family (DM's option). Should you lose the favor of your family, the skill bonuses granted by this feat are lost until you can regain your lost honor or gain status through other means.

You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

Improved Birthright [General]

You are a member of a newly recognized upper class family who claim you as a paragon of their House and reward you with favor and social identity.



Prerequisite: Raised in the dark elf Empire, Birthright.

Benefit: You receive either a single masterwork item (in addition to the item given by the Birthright feat) or your choice of a magic item from the Dungeon Master's Guide, with a market cost not exceeding 600 gp (per DM approval), as a gift from your family. You also receive a +2 morale bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate and Sense Dominance checks against citizens or slaves of a lower class. This stacks with the bonus from the birthright feat.

Special: Because you are recognized as a member of an upper class House, your actions and words reflect the personal honor of your family, and you must be careful not to disgrace your matron or relatives in public. You may also shoulder responsibilities handed down by your family (DM's option). Should you lose the favor of your family, the skill bonuses granted by this feat are lost until you can regain your lost honor or gain status through other means.

Table 5-7: New Drugs

Name	Type	Price	Craft (alchemy) DC	Addiction Rating
Fear Killer	Ingested DC 16	100 gp	25	High
Gray Acumen	Ingested DC 18	300 gp	25	High
Mage Bane	Ingested DC 14	75 gp	25	High
Quickflash	Ingested DC 13	60 gp	25	High
Ravenous Mind	Ingested DC 16	125 gp	25	High
Umber Hide	Ingested DC 18	400 gp	25	High

With DM permission, a 1st-level character (without the Birthright prerequisite) may take this feat.

Improved Blind-Fight [General]

Twilight elves train to fight under many different circumstances, particularly total darkness.

Prerequisites: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes

Benefit: As Blind-Fight, plus the following: any time the character finds herself in a situation where the Blind-Fight feat applies, she is allowed a Listen check (DC 10). If successful, all penalties due to darkness and poor visibility negate for that round as if her sight is not hindered. Failure means that she only gets the benefits of the Blind-Fight feat.

Normal: Every time you miss because of concealment, you can reroll your miss chance percentile roll one time to see if you actually hit (see Concealment, on page 152 of the D&D Player's Handbook).

Shape Spell [Metamagic]

You can manipulate your spell to fill an area of space equivalent to any area denied the spell by subterranean walls and obstructions.

Benefit: Due to the narrow passages and tight turns of the tunnels of the Underdark, certain spells that effect sphere and cone-shaped areas are used less - or never at

all - by most spelunking spell casters. Subterranean spell-casters, however, made certain adjustments in their magical styles in order to compensate for their surroundings.

When you cast a spell that inflicts damage via an energy type (fire, cold, lightning, acid, sonic, negative or positive energy), and your spell is physically obstructed from filling its entire area of effect, the caster can redirect the spell to fill adjacent open space. For example, sphere-shaped spells that are denied their full radius can increase the length or height in which they strike, and cone spells that cannot extend their full length may widen their area.

EQUIPMENT

WEAPONS

Gaz'zirad: A long, double-edged dagger with weight and length comparable to a short sword. The gaz'zirad has

long been considered a weapon of pride and nobility since the days of the twilight elves, and is still used by both twilight and shadow elves. It is a common sight to see a gaz'zirad hanging from the girdle of a noblewoman in both day-to-day and social functions. One can use this weapon with the Weapon

Finesse feat.

Durel'len: This drow elf's straight-bladed sword features a padded half basket hilt and spiked pommel. From the midpoint of the blade up to the tip, the durel'len is double-edged, while from the midpoint of the blade down to the hilt, the durel'len is only single-edged. In some instances, the blade of the durel'len will be lightly serrated.

Jelyenesh: Extending a little over 5 feet from pommel to blade tip, this fearsome weapon is a favorite of keel'thaile.

Mortuary Sword: This twilight elf backsword has only one edge; the blade is wedge-shaped like the head of an axe. It gives the user a wide, powerful downward swing.

Toren: This is a dark elf sword with a curved, highly decorated single-edged blade and a padded, half basket hilt. The blade of the toren is double-edged near the tip.

Worl: This dark elf sword features a serrated double-edged blade, padded half basket hilt and spiked pommel, with hilt long enough for two hands. The blade is also wavy, although not extremely so. The tip of the worl is leaf-shaped.

ARMOR

Bone: This armor consists of leather or cloth reinforced with strips of bone or horn. On Tellene, it is most often used in subterranean or desert areas where there is little to no access to wood or metal.

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Dark Elven Chainmail: Like the elven chainmail, dark elven chainmail of Tellene is not automatically made from mithral. This armor uses the same principal as standard chainmail but incorporates a design of tightly woven and slightly heavier overlapping metal rings. It is hard to locate, as the dark elves are the only ones who know how to produce it – and they are certainly not interested in trading it to others. Dark elven chainmail comes with a set of gauntlets.

Elven Chainmail: Unlike the elven chain listed in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide, chainmail crafted by twilight (and most other surface) elves is not automatically made from mithral. In fact, elven chainmail uses a specific, artistic pattern to tiny groups of four interlocked metal rings. These rings form the center of a square of larger rings to hold the design together. The larger rings are then reinforced with a straight bar that bisects the ring. This complex design allows better freedom of movement, spell casting and lighter weight relative to the standard chainmail design. Although some elves may share these suits of armor with certain important human allies, it is not something they typically sell or trade. Elven chainmail comes with a set of gauntlets.

Spore Armor: One of the more unusual inventions of the dark elves is the spore armor. To construct it, the crafter slathers the wearer's body with a thick, mud-like concoction of spores, sterilized compost and catalyzing agent. After a few minutes, the spores begin to grow and form a gray fungus in the areas applied. The result is armor with a tough, leathery skin and a soft, rubbery flesh-like interior, making it very resistant to bludgeoning attacks. The wearer's joints, hips and head do not receive the alchemist's lather, and are usually protected with leather straps and a helmet, respectively.

The armor types for which spore versions are available include backplate, breastplate and frontplate. Game statistics associated with this armor are tabulated in Table 5-3: Armor.

Backplate protects only against attacks made from the rear and rear flank positions.

Frontplate protects only against attacks made from the front and front flank positions.

When running in heavy armor, you move only triple your speed, not quadruple.

POISONS

Dark elves are renowned for their liberal use of poison both on and off the field of battle. Thanks to their constant need for assassins and a relatively apathetic view of murder, poisonmaking is both a legal and lucrative trade. They are also expanding their business to outside markets, thanks to the trade agreements with the Golden Alliance and other outside human interests. However, the costs for these poisons outside the Empire are considerably greater

(between 2x to 10x the cost, depending upon the buyer, seller, region and other factors).

Azerlak Spore: The Azerlak mushroom releases grayish, dust-like spores once a month, which are then collected by farmers. Inhaling the spore dust seems to have no effect at first, but after 1 minute, the user suffers severe hallucinations, becoming slow-witted and easily distracted. This poison is a favorite among assassins wishing to bypass otherwise alert guards. One dose affects a five foot square.

Drow'deltha's Bloom: Even before she made war amongst her own people, Drow'deltha had a reputation as one of the cruelest dark elves in history. It is said that she cultivated the first of these deadly flowers, although how she did so exactly is shrouded in mystery. Drow'deltha's bloom is almost identical to a rose, except for a black fringe along the petals and its tendency to grow and bloom without the aid of sunlight. In fact, sunlight causes the plant to wilt in a matter of seconds. Ingesting small amounts of milk extracted from the stem grants the imbiber immunity to the poison contained in the petals (for 24 hours after consumption).

Drow'deltha was fond of crushing the petals into cosmetics to be applied to her fingers and lips, and then kissing and fondling an unsuspecting victim, taking great glee in watching them die a slow and painful death at her feet. The flower is very rare, demanding a great amount of care in order to bloom, so only the richest of the nobility tend such flowers.

Dwarven Fire: Named after the Moss Beard clan, who first cultivated the mushrooms used to concoct this poison, this is clear, tasteless fungal liquid. The "fire" nickname describes the primary effect - a burning sensation along the neck and the base of the skull. The muscles along the back and neck begin to spasm violently, causing sharp pains and making movement difficult at best. Assassins like to use this to soften up a superior foe, and on the battlefield to slow enemy scouts and messengers.

Heilelzhig's Dance: Legend states this poison, a powerful neurotoxin, was the favorite interrogation tool and evening entertainment of a certain cleric of the Temple of Strife, although church historians cannot seem to agree which one. Nonetheless, it is popular amongst church inquisitors, and is sometimes used by officers in the Shadow Army. A victim shot with this poison enters a violent seizure, convulsing and shaking in a sickly comical manner, hence

Table 5-8: Special Items

Item	Cost	Weight
Ring, poison container	1 gp	-
Steam cauldron	100 gp	75 lb.
Stylus, metal	3 cp	.5 lb.
Writing tablet, slate	6 sp	3 lb.

the "dance." The effect is agonizing, and victims often end up biting off their own tongues - it is hardly entertaining to have this in one's system.

Illithid Ichor: This primary component of this poison is a hard-to-obtain substance - the mucus excreted by mind flayers. Most often used against mages by both soldiers and assassins, this neurotoxin attacks the brain itself, creating an effect most closely compared to dissociative schizophrenia. Thought processes become broken and skewed, and the victim enters a state of confusion and panic.

Spellcasters suffer even more, and must roll 1d6 for each saving throw lost. The result determines the number of memorized spells lost, from the highest level on down, as chosen by the DM. This poison is mercifully rare and difficult to obtain, as making friendly contact with an illithid and successfully convincing it to slobber into a jar is very difficult, even for the most diplomatic dark elf.

Meskalia's Revenge: This poison is named for a noblewoman whose House's standing was ruined thanks to a bard employed by the House of the Unwritten Page. She brewed this caustic substance in secrecy, and used it against the hated bard one night in a tavern. Although she was tried and executed for her act (the bard was a favorite of a certain priestess) legend states that she laughed all the way to the executioner's block.

Splashing this vile-smelling, sickly yellow oil onto a victim's skin causes weeping, red hives to spread all over the entire body. No physical damage occurs, although the hives are very itchy, and their constant oozing makes this irritant very discomforting.

Purgishow: Also known as dark elf poison, this potent infusion is only rarely found outside the subterranean realm of the dark elves. While the initial unconsciousness lasts but a minute, the secondary unconsciousness lasts up to 2d4 hours. This is the most infamous of the poisons used by the dark elves, and is the most common encountered on the field of battle.

Redcap Poison: The name may be a misnomer, as the tainted pixies (see Appendix D: Monsters) are unknown to use any type of poison, and the mushrooms used to brew this substance have a light purple cap. Regardless, this is another favorite of both assassins and soldiers, due to its useful effect. The victim, after being hit with the poison, develops a severe migraine. The pain is very distracting, making any movements requiring grace or subtlety incredibly strenuous. Eventually the migraine worsens, and the victim's vision becomes blurry and unable to distinguish shapes or colors.

Zordecai Moss: This poison's main component is the black slimy lichen found growing on cavern walls in the deepest recesses of the dark elf Empire. Those who harvest it must be careful to wear both gloves and masks, as it can be easily inhaled during the scraping, inflicting the same results as

injury. When the moss immerses in blood, such as through an injury, it immediately replicates and grows, spreading through the victim's bloodstream and causing aggravated infection throughout the body. If the victim manages to survive, his or her skin takes on an unhealthy grayish hue until the moss is thoroughly bled or flushed from their circulatory system, either by means magical or medicinal.

MODIFYING POISON

Famous drow assassins often gain a reputation for using certain types of poison. Expert poison-makers often develop unique applications or specific variations of a poison to either escape detection, increase the effectiveness or create some other effect that suits their particular needs.

Increase detection difficulty: The base DC to detect poison is 20 (see the detect poison spell in the D&D Player's Handbook). Raising the DC by 1 adds 10% to the poison's cost, to a maximum of 5 points for an additional 50% cost.

Increasing the potency: Raising the potency of the poison (increasing the save DC necessary to resist it) by one point increases the DC to make it by 2 points.

Increasing the potency also increases the market price, which in turn causes the cost and time to make the substance to rise as well (see the Craft skill in the D&D Player's Handbook). Each DC increase of 1 point adds 10% to the base cost.

Change delivery method: Changing the delivery method confounds authorities, even those knowledgeable in the use of poison. It might also circumvent defensive measures by the target. The delivery methods are measured in steps, beginning with Ingested, Injected, Contact and Inhaled. Each change in method by one step raises the DC to make the poison by 4 points.

Increasing the damage: Increasing the secondary damage by one step doubles the cost of the poison. Increasing the initial damage triples the poison's cost. Thus, the poison-maker could choose to double the effectiveness of the initial damage, hoping to incapacitate someone quickly. A more subtle approach might be to allow the initial damage to remain the same and lull the victim into thinking he can survive the attack, then inflicting great harm with the secondary damage.

As indicated in table 5-5 the DC adjustment for adding an additional die starts at the "0" base damage level and counts cumulatively upward from there. Thus, adding 1d4 additional damage to a poison that inflicts 1d4 already would begin at a new damage level of one and count upward to 1d4, adding each DC. The total would be +6 (+1+1+2+2). This increase applies to either initial or secondary damage only. If the poison-maker wishes to increase both ranges, figure the DC increases independently.

Reducing the damage: A poisoner might need to craft his weapon quickly, might have little material with which to work, or might even wish to sell a less effective product to allow the victim a chance to kill his attacker instead! In this case, reduce the DC to make. See table 5-6

ALCHEMICAL DRUGS

One of the fields of magical study where the dark elves enjoy the most success is alchemy. While some alchemists are obsessed with the transformation of base elements, or content with the creation of substances to assist in simple problems, the dark elves have blazed previously unimagined paths for alchemical study - namely, the effects of alchemical solutions on living beings.

Many alchemists long since rejected the possibility of mingling alchemy and living creatures, citing that the four bodily humors mix poorly in an alchemical marriage, and result in nothing more than death and delirium. The living body is in constant motion, and thus a cyclic series of alchemical marriages (the process of two substances merging to form a new substance) flows through it for as long the body survives. By studying the nature of these elements and the process of their transformations, drow alchemists devised solutions to alter these changes and enhance the body. The changes are not permanent, since the alchemy of the living organism is always changing, and it eventually reverts to its regular cycle. However, if the right solutions mingle in the right intervals, the subject experiences superhuman enhancements in all aspects.

Unless a player character has ties to the Imperial Military or the Arcane College, she must first discover the exact recipes for creating these alteration solutions if she wishes to brew them herself. The texts can be purchased on the Empire's black market, but the price is often quite steep (about 1/4 the cost of the substance itself). Each text contains one "recipe." The recipe texts are difficult to decipher, however. Instead of words, there are only woodcuts rife with symbolism. In order to decrypt the recipe from the illustrations, the cipher must succeed at an Craft (alchemy) check (DC 25). Failure by 10 or more results in the player character believing she successfully deciphered the formula, which may lead to disastrous results if she attempts to create the solution.

Drugs function similarly to poisons, with saving throws to resist their effects, and spells that affect poisons also affect drugs. Of course, they do not restore hit points, ability damage or other damage caused by the drug. A willing participant in drug use automatically fails both saving throws.

All of these special alchemical drugs have a High addiction rating, as detailed in the D&D supplement, *Unearthed Arcana*. This requires the character to succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) upon ingestion of the drug, or become

addicted. Unless satisfied by additional doses, the character takes ability damage (1d6 Dex, 1d6 Wis, 1d6 Con) per day unless he succeeds on a daily Fortitude save (again, DC 14). Two successful saving throws in a row indicate the character has successfully shaken off his addiction.

For drow alchemists, the idea of alchemical enhancement is still nowhere exact. Only those who prove worthy to have the physical and mental stamina to endure the change in their bodies can shake off the addiction. Therefore, the alchemists of the Empire have only one rational option for seeking out test subjects: the Shadow Army.

Fear Killer

This heavy fungus tea is an appropriate alchemical treatment for those who suffer from nightmares.

Initial Effect: This substance blocks the fear impulses in the brain, making the subject immune to fear effects by supernatural abilities, spells and psionics. His mind cannot process the feeling while the agent is in his system.

Secondary Effect: Not only is the subject immune to fear, he also has no sense of remorse. The subject could accidentally kill his commanding officer, or set a farming village on fire, and be unable to see a problem with it. He suffers a -2 penalty on Leadership, Bluff, Sense Motive and Gather Information checks, though he receives a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks. He cannot lie or deceive in any way; he regrets nothing and fears nothing, and so has no reason to lie.

Side Effect: If the subject's Wisdom score drops below 10 before breaking addiction, he becomes an insufferable coward; -4 penalty on all saves involving fear effects. If his Constitution drops below 10, he suffers a bleeding sore for every evil act performed that his conscience would have otherwise prevented him from doing. These sores do not heal naturally and must be treated twice a day to prevent blood loss or the victim suffers 2 hit points of damage per day.

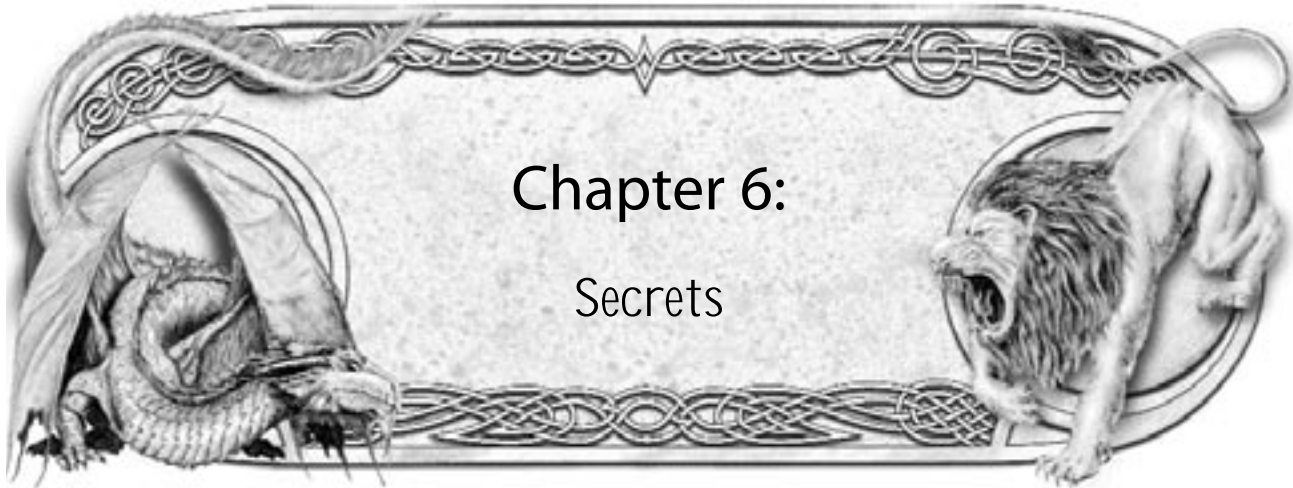
Overdose: n/a.

Grey Acumen

This dried gray powder is ingested by inhalation through the nostrils.

Initial Effect: Both Intelligence and Wisdom scores increase by +6. Subject is immune to illusions and mind-based attacks, and automatically takes 20 on any Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills.

Secondary Effect: Because of the subject's newly expanding intellect, they find dealing with others increasingly frustrating. They view those not possessing Intelligence and Wisdom scores on par with their own to be inferior and useless. The subject suffers a -6 penalty to Charisma-related skill Checks. She tries to remain in solitude, or with those she considers peers, as much as possible without putting herself in danger.



Most Dungeon Masters balk at the idea of running a campaign for evil player characters. More often than not, players tend to run their characters as stereotypical, two-dimensional villains, or assume that a chaotic evil alignment is a license to do whatever they want (often to other players' characters). While this may be fun for a short, one-night adventure, it is anathema to a long, continuing campaign. If necessary, make certain things clear to the players before they embark upon role-playing evil characters.

First, the stereotypical villain not only makes a poor NPC, but an even weaker PC. The reason the villains in stories and game campaigns have fatal personality flaws or make stupid mistakes is purely a literary device; it allows the hero to triumph and the story to end. The player should not avoid the flaws and quirks that make roleplaying fun, only avoid cliché. Real villains (at least, the most effective ones) are ruthless, mechanically logical, and cover their

weaknesses well. While the DM's villains may leave the protagonist to die in an easily escapable death trap and leave under the assumption that it worked, PC antagonists should stay until the task is finished. An evil PC should not play a part - they should play their character.

THE EVIL THAT DROW DO

There are many different concepts defined by the word "evil" within the realm of fantasy literature. Greed, sadism, violence, hatred, tyranny - for every evil in the real world, there is a personification in fantasy fiction. Those who use brute strength to bully and victimize the weaker to get their way can be personified by orcs and ogres, while wizard tyrants and petty lords use guile and deception not unlike the unjust leaders of our own history. Dark elves, however, occupy more than one niche when it comes to evil.

They are the archetype of magic gone too far, leaving behind a dread legacy and using spells and devices for the most nefarious purposes. They are what happens when magical research meets no restrictions, such as moral boundaries. Granted, any stereotypical evil wizard or conquering necromancer is an example of this, but the dark elves are an entire race that push the envelope of what should be possible. Their prolonged disregard for nature and the laws of the gods themselves may lead to a disaster that could destroy the world itself.

The dark elf Empire is also an example of evil of a fundamentalist state. Where most people see religion as a personal, spiritual experience that brings joy and comfort to their lives, the dark elf uses worship as a tool to oppress the masses. Dark elves are also the "fallen" of the elven race. Goblins and trolls are just as evil, but they seem to have always been so, and their primitive and brutal culture perpetuates it. Hags and fiends begin existence as pure evil, so they have no conscious choice concerning their nature. Dark elves were once pure and powerful twilight elf agents of good, but then betrayed and slaughtered their own kin.

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Well, most of them, anyway. After all, you are the DM, and there is always a good bit that must be left to your imagination... and the decisions of your players.

MITHELIZEK

Mithelizek's half-hearted attempts to sound altruistic towards his fellow dark elves, mentioned during his lectures to Branlel, were all a part of his need to consolidate his power base on the surface world. In fact, this is already quite expansive and influential, both within and outside the Empire. His main goal, not surprisingly, is the recovery of both the Ritual of Descent and the Jelyenesh of the Black Hells. A creature with an excessive desire for destruction and vengeance, Mithelizek has been obsessed with both, since stumbling upon the legends during his studies at the Arcane College. Once satisfied he had all the information concerning the cursed artifact and ritual, he decided to journey to the outside world to carry his plans to the next step. He constantly expands the reach of his influence in hopes of finally recovering the location of both the blade and an intact copy of the ritual, the latter being the price asked of Branlel. Branlel has access to certain repositories of restricted information, and there is a very good chance that the Ritual of Descent is within one of these vaults; something Mithelizek knew long before the scholar had even landed on Svimohzia.

Mithelizek is neurotic, a misogynist and a megalomaniac. He developed a severe case of claustrophobia after a cave-in that occurred while playing as a child - an accident that cost the life of his only brother. The debris trapped him in a small air pocket for three days, with only a small pool of brackish water to keep him alive. This catastrophe left him with damaged health, shattered nerves, and only his mother and domineering sister as the other remaining members of his family. His elder brother was the only member he cared about, with whom he could share the burden of being objectified for being born in the wrong gender. Since the accident, he always preferred the larger rooms of his house, seldom journeying into any room smaller than a cottage. This debilitating phobia only gained him further scorn from his sister, who already thought little of him for being born a male. Ever prideful, he swore to himself that things would

one day change, and it would be his arrogant sister bowing before him.

Once he had mastered all the magic he could, and stolen all the ancient documents forbidden to one of his gender and standing, he defected from the Empire. He immediately became enamored with the outside world, with its open skies and varied cultures. Hardly ignorant to the prejudice he would face, he traveled under dark of night and with magical disguise, trying to learn as much as he could about cultural protocol without drawing unwanted attention. Fortunately, he found men from all around the world who could put aside bigotry for ideals with which Mithelizek could identify - wealth and dominance. He also adopted many habits from the new cultures he has encountered, including a sexist view of women. He insists on

manipulating and exploiting any female he comes across and more than a few of his apprentices and servants are under the pretense that they serve out of love or the chance for greater arcane power.

Ultimately, all these matters are trivial in comparison to the dynamic might that will be at his fingertips once he has the Ritual of Descent and Jelyenesh of the Black Hells. He plans on first destroying the Empire that begat him, making his sister a slave at his feet, and her subjects the inhabitants of a grand abattoir. After he has done that, he wishes to bring the gods themselves to ruin.

EMPRESS MELURIA

The Old Empire under the Elenons also hides a number of secrets. In addition to the Black Jelyenesh, there are a number of evil artifacts created during the shadow elves' golden age. The sphere of annihilation, the hand and eye of Ferlash Pang (use statistics for hand and eye of Vecna from the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide), the shadowstaff, and two of the orbs of dragon kind, just to name a few. The twilight elves will take a great gamble if they reveal their position to the world, as no doubt their guardianship will bring out artifact seekers and treasure hunters from great distances wishing to test the security of these rare relics.

However, the most perilous secret below the ancient Elenons is the continuing existence of Empress Meluria, child of the Despiser. She is indeed still alive, and in control



of her family's mithril golem, which eternally guards the Jelyenesh.

Despite the power granted to her by the Ritual of Descent, it was still not within Drow'deltha's capability to slay her half-god mother - at least, not that soon. Instead, she followed the advice of one of her diabolic lovers and bound her mother into one of the far catacombs behind the secret passageways of the Imperial Temple. The binding put the true Empress into a death-like coma, thus neutralizing her from the playing field. The binding lost its some of its enchantment with time, but Meluria was very weak upon awakening and had only enough strength to give out a faint psychic whisper to her daughter, which Pale Golden Daughter dismissed as her imagination. Masking illusions and antipathy spells cast by Drow'deltha to conceal her mother's whereabouts survived her death, and all search parties sent out to find the true Empress were in vain.

The hidden cavern, which was actually the ancient catacombs of the Empire's most honored and noble dead, had become the Empress' prison. Scrounging through the magical items stashed away, she found a crystal ball and attempted to communicate to the outside world, but she never heard any response to her pleas. Hours became days; days became months, and eventually years had passed. Her fear and frustration soon turned to madness and hatred, and it was only then that her father turned his eyes back upon her.

With his voice in her mind, he explained that the deal brokered with the hated Lady Love entailed that he directly affect no inhabitant of the Empire, which restricted him from freeing his daughter. It also seemed that the binding placed upon her was powered by the Jelyenesh of the Black Hells, which seemed to retain a great deal of power even with the passing of its master. Only after the sword was destroyed, could the true Empress be free to wreak her vengeance. To comfort her, the Despiser told his daughter that he would grant her three boons to ease her waiting. The first asked by Meluria was the soul of her daughter, upon whom she wished to vent her torment for the centuries it would take to ensure her freedom. The second was the power to make her prison a tolerable place to live - immortal as she was, she still felt the pains of hunger and thirst, and the desire for warmth and comfort. Her final wish was to continue serving her father as a cleric, to grow in power and wisdom throughout the years that she foresaw imprisonment in the catacombs.

In accordance to the first wish, the Despiser plucked the wretched soul of Drow'deltha from his realm and placed it back within her broken body - with the head still severed from the neck. Meluria's dead daughter was now her most brutalized servant, powerless to her mother's endless punishments and orders of humiliation. For the second wish, Meluria's father bonded the ancient tunnels

of Halibeth-Joriel to the chamber, causing the two places to coexist in the same space. Although this would not allow Meluria to escape, it would allow foolish twilight elves to wander in and then suddenly find themselves underground for the godling to use for her own amusement. The third wish was the most dangerous, as she has spent the last several centuries continuing to advance as a cleric. This has made all the undead of the area her willing subjects, as she leads them in an undead mockery of the Old Empire. Meluria also reanimated the interred shadow elves of the catacombs, who now exist as undead clerics serving in her own House of Scorn.

It was soon after receiving the boons of her unholy father that Meluria noticed something near her domain. A loud pounding noise echoed throughout the halls near the cavern prison. She dispatched one of her undead minions to investigate. Soon, it reported that the family golem had fallen into a pit, and its futile pounding against the slick granite walls was causing the noise. The opening of the pit itself was miles away, but its hammering allowed it to tunnel near her prison. Magically speaking through one of her minions, she commanded the golem to cease its digging and return to the pit mouth where a group of her undead servants recovered it. Once the golem returned to the surface, she ordered it to come to her side. She was certainly surprised to find the object holding her within her eternal prison was strapped to the its back. Through interrogation, she discerned the mission of the golem. She also knew that any order given by her, who was the current Empress as the golem perceived things, would supersede any given by the rest of the Imperial line. Through her scrying, she already knew of the new military government established by her pale daughter and the twilight elves, and decided they would be the most likely targets for the sword's corrupting effect. She dispatched the golem to circle around the fringes of known patrol routes, in hopes of luring a weak-minded elf into corruption by the sword. Unfortunately, she forgot to inform the golem to stop defending the blade itself, which resulted in the deaths of several twilight elves. This inevitably brought the current Queen Protectorate, Felonia, to her prison realm, who almost immediately succumbed to the disorienting effects of the prison's skewed geometry. Not wishing to draw the full attention of the twilight elves, she ordered the golem to return the unconscious elf to the edge of the city. Since that incident, Meluria decided to leave the twilight elves alone, or else risk revealing her hand too soon. However, she has not given up meddling in their affairs.

At her bequest, the Despiser plagues the twilight elves with new, unsettling monsters, in order to tax the sanity of the Queen Protectorate. While her father slowly erodes the nerve of the twilight elves' leader, Meluria haunts her dreams and thoughts at night, even successfully implanting

a suggestion to reveal the presence of the Old Empire and the twilight elves to the outside world. The plan is to draw in races hoping to find treasure or conquest - subjects that would be more suitable to the sword's corruption. The golem is sent out looking for such beings, still holding the order to guard the sword at all cost. Doing so allows Meluria to weed out any who are too weak to successfully search out the Ritual of Descent and become the next Avatar of Evil, which requires the subject to have at least a thin drop of divine blood. A copy of the ritual is conveniently stowed away in a knapsack hanging about the golem's waist; although Meluria has forced her undead slave daughter into scribing more scroll copies than that one.

Meluria's greatest prospect for a potential candidate lies within a certain male dark elf - Mithelizek. Her scrying has given her a wellspring of information concerning her descendant, and she finds the idea of a male of her bloodline harnessing so much power intriguing. Through her manipulations, she has left out markers for him to follow, slowly showing him the path without arousing his suspicions. She also feels a sense of pride in his progress, as it almost seems a shame that he will have to die for her plans to reach fruition.

HOUSE HALIBETH

Why is it that this book constantly refers to Halibeth-Joleriel and Na'loreian as Empires? There are a few reasons. Originally, the kingdoms of the twilight elves of the Elenon Mountains were a loose confederation of kingdoms ruled by a council of aristocratic houses. Nevertheless, when House Halibeth took the reigns of power during the First War, Joleriel declared herself Empress with little in the way of opposition. As such, since her family's dynasty has remained intact since that time, the Theocracy is referred to as an Empire, regardless of the political structure, population or geographical size changes that have taken place throughout history. In addition, the gods grant the Empress the same divine protection that is usually reserved for an Emperor; with the divine showing approval of the Empire, they can reinforce their claims that they are indeed an Empire.

As such, the current reigning Empress enjoys the Divine Protection for Emperor as listed on page 146 in the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide. Other members of the House receive divine protection as kings, with this divine favor typically coming from the various deities they worship. For example, twilight elves descended from House Halibeth would receive their divine protection from Lady Love.

THE SPIDER QUEEN

Several millennia ago, during the time of the Great Divide, a city of dark elves began experimenting in demonology and similar arcane subjects. Eventually, the demon

queen of spiders, whom the dark elves know as "Vilhel," took an interest. She went about whispering lies into the ears of the people, and seducing their leaders with voice and (it is said) body. Within a few years, she successfully managed to abase the souls of the dark elves even further. Unfortunately, it worked too well: they fell from grace too quickly and too easily, and soon grew to be out of control. Drunk on passionate evil, they made reckless military drives against the other dark elf cities. The combined force of the remaining Empire armies waged war on these debased elves for decades, finally driving them even further into the depths below the Krimppatu Mountains. They traveled deeper and deeper into the underground with each passing year, never living in one area more than a few months before treason between the de facto leaders would cause more to flee and still more to die. They were possessed of a mass hysteria; nomadic people plagued with madness and contempt for all living things, including themselves.

With the passing of history, the rebuilt Empire became oblivious to the existence of these other dark elves. The mysterious disappearances of patrols treading through their territory in the past few decades have been blamed on accidents and poor navigation. Only a handful of beings in all of Tellene are aware of their existence. Mithelizek has made contact with them on numerous occasions, although only he knows the nature of these meetings. For ease of reference, Mithelizek refers to these drow as "midnight elves."

Midnight elves crave only two things: complete and total misery of all living things. The dark elf need to turn upon each other is perverted further within the being of the midnight elf, as they vent their frustration and hatred towards outsiders tenfold. They practice magicks considered considerably foul by even the dark elves themselves, and have made advances in necromancy that would make even the most jaded dark wizard awestruck with envy. Vilhel whispers promises of vengeance and eternal darkness into the ears of her cultists, and persuades them to clandestine plots in hopes of gaining the seat of the Emperor of Scorn for herself. Because of the ultra secretive nature of both Vilhel and the midnight elves' schemes, it is difficult to determine when or how exactly she plans to do so. Thanks to Vilhel's and the midnight elves' influence, there are small pocket cults within the Empire now venerating her as a saint, although no one can quite agree when she lived or what she did to deserve it. This heretical sect, who call themselves "Vihellites," is rumored to contain members of the highest echelons of the various churches.

As for Vilhel herself, the midnight elves know her as a powerful succubus, ruler of her own layer of the Abyss and the destined usurper of both the upstart shadow elves and the Emperor of Scorn. The Vihellites venerate her as

a forgotten saint, whose gratitude upon her rightful ascension shall bless them with a new golden age.

They are both completely wrong.

When Worlds Collide

According to the midnight elf historians of the tanar'ri, the succubus known as Vilhel first appeared sometime during the reign of Meluria the First. She entered the 232nd layer of the Abyss and made quick work of its current ruler, a minor noble who put up little resistance against her surprise assault. She declared herself the layer's new despot and renamed the place Darkheim, blanketing the realm in a miasma of darkness and decay. She next established a foothold in the social circles of the Abyss, becoming a lover to other demons. Once word of her spread through the layers, she found herself summoned by the Princess Drow'deltha, who made a hobby of summoning fiends for her own perverse amusement - which was what Vilhel was planning for all along. She had little difficulty in seducing the lustful princess, and soon become her favorite otherworldly lover. Vilhel gave Drow'deltha the Ritual of Descent, and whispered dark grandeur into her power hungry ears. The succubus coaxed the new Empress into believing that she had already had godhood, and the power to destroy all those who would not turn away from her preposterous grandfather. In addition, Vilhel abandoned Drow'deltha at the very moment her twin stormed into the throne room of the Temple-Palace. She knew that Drow'deltha was not powerful enough to achieve her goals, so she left her to die at the hands of Pale Golden Daughter, waiting for one who could wield the power completely.

The gods are seemingly ignorant to her ruse. The Despiser's search for the demon responsible for drawing the Ritual of Descent into Tellene was a short lived one, as Vilhel covered her tracks well, and Lady Love could only dwell in the chaotic abyss so long before her composition began to chafe upon the plane's fabric. Both soon dismissed the entire plot as the machinations of their rival, and gave the ritual and its author no more thought. This was a grave error.

However, the role of Vilhel as known by the midnight elves is nothing more than a façade. Her position as a minor demon ruler of an obscure Abyssal layer was merely a front for the benefit of both the mortal elves and the immortal demon emperors of the Abyss. She is, in fact, the undisputed ruler of the 6th layer of the Abyss. Furthermore throughout countless worlds and planes, she is revered and worshipped as the queen of all dark elves, all except one - Tellene. When she learned that another god was worshipped by a race of dark elves, she burst into a murderous rampage that destroyed a million damned souls within her lands. She considered all dark elves to be her children, and the fact that a god would create his own and

hide them where they would never know her was unthinkable. After she regained composure, she vowed to steal back her children by overthrowing the Emperor of Scorn and having him destroyed by his own replicated creation. She patiently plots to ascend as the undisputed ruler of all dark elves throughout creation, like a web of darkness blacking out the heavens.

In addition to her first two roles, she has lately been manifesting in the Material Plane as Vilhemia, the charismatic lowborn maiden who has been making strides within the dark elf branch of the Vessels (see below). She does not honestly believe that the Vessels will succeed in their dream of removing religion from the Empire. However, she does enjoy walking amongst her lost children in mortal form, and plans to later use the Vessels in her overall plan of becoming matron deity of the drow.

CONSPIRACIES AND SECRET SOCIETIES

Being the treacherous beings they are, dark elves who share the same opinions often group into small cells throughout the Empire, their members striving to further a certain agenda by any means necessary - without exposure or capture by the Empire or a competing society, of course. "Secret" society is termed loosely, for many drow citizens are aware of these organizations, though the exact identities of



the members are rarely confirmed beyond unsubstantiated rumor. In fact, most members are not aware of the identities of other members outside of their own cell - something that makes society meetings a tricky affair at best, and the accidental assassination of ones' comrades frequent. Keep in mind, however, that dark elves are not good team players. Their loyalty only extends as far as necessity deems, and any of them would sell out their allies within the conspiracy to further the goals of the whole society, or gain dominance for themselves, with little effort.

However, joining a conspiracy is no small matter. Membership is no less than a lifetime, and resigning is unheard of. Any member who attempts to leave or countermand the agenda of the society gets a slow and inhumane death. Indeed, the dark elf conspirator may hold no loyalty to anyone, but she has an undying devotion to her cause - or else.

Several societies are listed below. Many common to the surface world (the Blackfoot Society, Brotherhood of the Broken Chain, Disciples of Avryner, Disciples of the Creator, Guardians of the Hidden Flame and the Sentinels of the True Way) have no representation in the Underdark.

The Dead of Night

During the reign of terror called down by Meluria the Third, many shadow elves saw the truth that their greatest enemy was indeed themselves. The mad Empress' inquisitors targeted all classes, races and genders, and among those killed were members of the Sons of Thaumaturgy (see below). Verdius Slehta'kawl was a well-respected and justly feared member of that organization, and known for being deeply philosophical and deathly calm. But seeing the self-destructiveness of his people in its purest form, even more bloody than what he had seen in the Sisters' War, caused a new direction of thought to form within his otherwise iron resolve. He realized that even if a magocracy succeeded, the Empire would be doomed. The infighting between the wizards would cause them to take their entire race to the grave in an explosion of fire and lightning. Of course, even if they never bothered, the Empire on its own fared little better. If the shadow elf race did survive, the final defeat of all their enemies would leave no one left to vent their hatred and sadistic urges on, thus destroying themselves after all others meet their fates.

Believing that only the dead would inherit the world, Verdius rejected his worship of the Despiser in favor of the Harvester of Souls. He then decided he should prepare for death. Over the course of many years, Verdius constructed a phylactery with corrupted holy artifacts, died and was reborn as the lich Zerfall. He returned to the Empire, posing as a former rival of his previous life who took the journey with him (so that his real name would be secret), and began converting many elves with his wisdom of the inevitable death that awaits the darkness. Only the undead are truly fit for the End of Time, he claimed, so they must prepare to be the final inheritors of an Empire of bones and dust. Zerfall had converted one third of the Sons before the Empire caught on to his plot, and a bloody conflict ensued. Since that time, the Dead of Night avoid open conflict with both their former faction, other churches and the Empire, the latter possessing an even greater zeal for hunting the necromancers than they do the rogue wizards.

Much like the Congregation of the Dead itself, the Dead of Night are a doomsday cult, waiting only for the End of Time to make their grab for power. Until that time, their only agendas seem to be avoiding detection, improving their command of necromancy, and increasing their ranks. The stereotypical necromancer may accomplish his goals by raising armies of skeletons and zombies, but quantity is not a luxury to those trying to remain unnoticed in the limited



confines of the underground. Taking a cue from the shadow elf military, the Dead of Night focus more on quality than quantity, creating any new recruits or servants as greater undead. Vampires and mummies are useful as bodyguards and/or new apprentices, whereas ghosts guard safe houses and magic caches. Since the Empire turns corpses into food, decoration or compost, potential prospects are chosen from the living. The necromancers carefully scrutinize their candidates, looking for intelligence, resourcefulness and strong willpower.

The Golden Alliance

Membership in this guild is currently a sign of great status, and the latest fashionable trend, among the dark elf elite. After the Empress gave public approval of the Golden Alliance, many a merchant family scrambled to join the great capitalist machine for a choice to increase their own wealth and power by exploiting the tastes of customers aboveground. Those families fortunate enough to gain membership are now the sole controllers of dark elf goods exported outside the boundaries of the Empire. The only exception is the Artificers' Guild (see Chapter 4: Characters), who seem to have made an agreement long before anyone else had the opportunity.

So far, the arrangement has been incredibly lucrative. Some Alliance families have reported exponential gains in their profits, and a few have bought their way into the upper class through overly generous donations to the Empress.

However, these are not the only advantages to being a dark elf member of the Golden Alliance. Human members of the Alliance tempt their dark elf counterparts with forbidden contraband of the upper world, and many are addicted to the forbidden delights the new trade agreements bring into the Empire. Forbidden texts and magic, illicit drugs and other such items are the vices of the elite, and the black market trade of the seedier elements of the middle class. Naturally, the Golden Alliance hopes to take advantage of these addicted nobles, should anything go wrong with their relationship with the Empire.

The Secret Network of the Blue Salamander

This network of world domination has long been associated with mind flayers, the last known group to be controlling the vast organization. Because of their current affiliation with the Golden Alliance and their past conflicts with the illithids, no one would suspect very many, if any, dark elf members in this society. In fact, there is only one dark elf member within the Secret Network, but she holds great power within both the Empire and the Secret Network itself. In fact, she is Empress Asaibakil.

The plots implemented by the Society have been incredibly subtle in their connection to the Empire; in fact, they

fully support the rumor that the illithids have control. Asaibakil, however, has been making bolder and broader sweeping moves. By opening the gates of her Empire, she has not only increased her Empire's financial power, but it also allows her to keep close tabs upon the Golden Alliance. She takes a perverse pleasure from siphoning tariffs upon their trade.

The Network's goals of world domination perfectly align with the Empress' dream of expansion. In fact, her current exploration into the Dashan Mountains, as well as her search for the ancient portal to the Elenons, is part of this goal. Once within her grasp, she has plans of conquest for western Svimohzia, including Meznamish, Ul-Karg and Vrandol, the latter being a part of her long-term plan of annexing the Brolenese slave trade away from the Golden Alliance. Once this is accomplished, the rest of Svimohzia will be at her mercy, and then she shall set her sights upon the lands to the north.

The only major obstacle she foresees is the traitor Mithelizek. His own plans of domination and his network, the Vision, are in open conflict with her own. She also firmly believes that he is aware of her status as the head of the Blue Salamander, although she carefully censors such knowledge from anyone. Her paranoia dictates that any setback to her plans is the fault of the traitor and his minions, even suspecting that he is financial backer of the stone dwarf raids upon the border settlements. However, beyond the mysterious moves of her rival, Empress Asaibakil sees a clear path to victory within her lifetime.

Sons of Thaumaturgy

An all-male conspiracy within the confines of the Arcane College, this group of wizards and sorcerers aspire to break free of the restraints set upon them by the Empire and fully achieve the heights of their arcane power. This centuries-old group has long been a haven for intellectual males resentful of oppression by non-spellcaster females, whose sexist ideals see the males as nothing more than tools. They conduct bizarre experiments and research within a network of safehouses throughout the Empire, attempting to attain a level of personal power that will remain undetected by the Empire's intelligence. In fact, it was their network of safehouses that Pale Golden Daughter and her allies used during the Sisters' War. The Sons foresaw that siding with her would be greatly beneficial in weakening the Empire's investigations into their research, and allowing an opportunity to field test certain devices. Of course, they were unable to foresee the coming of the Second Exodus. However, as a token of gratitude for their role in the civil war, both Lady Love and the Despiser agreed that they retain possession of those artifacts and tomes created without the Empire's permission - unbeknownst to their fellow exiles.

Until the Second Exodus, the Sons of Thaumaturgy were content to sulk in their hiding places and focus on individual dominance. Their loosely knit organization was only a means of securing their secret work and spreading knowledge throughout their ranks. However, seeing how fragile the throne could be, their ultimate agenda changed drastically. Previously, their journey to true power was only for the sake of being able to wield it, but now they understood that power is only as valuable as what one can attain with it, and they wish no less than the world. They believe that, with the right preparations and patience, they can topple the Empire.

The Sons of Thaumaturgy return the sexist scorn of their female betters with an unhealthy dose of misogyny. Female wizards and sorcerers are not only barred entrance into their organization, but are often set up to fail or die in magic-related "accidents". They also have little love for evil itself; the initiation process involves destroying an icon of the Despiser with a creative show of evocation. Instead, they pay lip service to The Riftmaster, though this is more to appease him - in case their power mongering ever reveals an imbalance of magical flow.

As the scale of their plans grows, the Sons' level of cooperation diminishes. Whereas they were once eager to help each other and share arcane knowledge, the personal rivalries have shifted from friendly to hostile. Each member strives to be the most powerful spellcaster so that he may assume the position of leader when his magocracy is declared. Magical duels and assassination attempts (by constructs and summoned outsiders) are common, and the main reason that this secret conspiracy is no secret. With each vulgar (and often public) display of the organization's magical strength, the Empire's grip on the Arcane College grows tighter, and the common people become more distrustful of males in power.

The most devastating blow to the Sons of Thaumaturgy came a few years after Meluria the Third's Inquisition. A splinter group inside the coven decided to cross the only line that the rest would not - they were dabbling in the forbidden art of necromancy. These necromancers seceded and formed a new group: The Dead of Night (see above).

The Sons of Thaumaturgy have members both within and without the Empire, although membership is exclusive to male dark elves. They have active ties with Mithelizek, watching for prospective apprentices and skilled spies that can be used in his schemes. He pays for these services with magical knowledge and items from other lands, which they value highly.

Vessels of Drow

Visiting the Empire, along with Golden Alliance merchants and evil-minded foreign dignitaries, are certain dissidents who wish to spread their manifesto. Most of these radicals do

not get very far; in fact, most are snatched up and executed the first time they attempt to preach their revisionist goals. However, there are a few whose discretion outweighed their enthusiasm, and very patiently and quietly converted residents of the Empire to their ideals. One of these revolutionary leaders is Lemeteria Salandre, founder and de facto leader of the dark elf sect of the Vessels of Man (whom the dark elves call the Vessels of Drow, or simply Vessels).

Lemeteria first began spreading her message of a life without the burden and interference of the gods among the males of the lower middle class, but membership in the Vessels has spread to both females and some disillusioned members of the upper class. The dark elf branch's dogma concedes that all of their race's misery has been a result of following the reckless whims of the gods, especially the Despiser, who abandoned them. In fact, most of the undesirable aspects of dark elf culture are blamed on this deity; as such, things such as class distinction and gender inequality are ignored when dealing among Vessels. They argue that the evil ideals are not so much the fault of choices made by their people, but rather the Emperor of Scorn playing them against each other like marionettes for his amusement. Only by converting the Empire to atheism may their race be saved.

To do this, they have three goals. First, they must wrest control away from the Imperial bloodline. Second, the drow must reject evil in all its forms - avarice, hatred and bigotry are things sewn by the Emperor of Scorn, and must be cut out like gangrenous flesh from a limb. Finally, all class and gender distinction are to be erased, as these are the greatest handicaps to their race. Although they cannot agree upon the new form of government to be put in place, they all agree that they wish to stage a bloodless revolution.

Their wish for a peaceful class revolution has inevitably stalled any progress they would make for their ultimate goals, so all they have accomplished so far is recruitment, slowly and carefully done to avoid detection. The Empire has only apprehended a handful of their membership, and fortunately, these individuals were not only disposable, but also tight-lipped in the face of any inquisitors. However, their most successful conversion so far is the mysterious Vilhemia. Charismatic, beautiful and highly intelligent, this alluring female has only been with the organization for six months. Even so, she has converted nearly two dozen people, three of which belong to a very wealthy middle class merchant family who offer funds and access to higher class areas. Although Zathiasel Hamolothos is the official leader of the shadow elf branch of the Vessels, there are many within the group who see Vilhemia as more suited to the position.

The Vision

Though more of a spy network than an actual conspiratorial group, the Vision is nonetheless widespread. It claims agents in most of the major kingdoms and cities in Svimohzia, Pel Brolenon and the cities of the Elos Desert, and many double agents planted within rival groups such as the Vessels of Drow and the Golden Alliance. Nobles, merchants, sages, clerics, bureaucrats, academy professors, wizards, court advisors, and many other important citizens claim membership within the Vision, although only a handful know of its true goals. Most members are under the assumption that their organization's goal is world domination, although the intended methods vary from person to person. Many more are unaware of the identity of their group's leader; most know him only as the archwizard, while some at least know of the name Mithelizek, albeit without knowing any more than that.

Only a small handful of trustworthy lieutenants (and closely watched protégés) within the Vision are privy to the group's true goals and the full story of their enigmatic commander. It is they who are the most vital to the organization's goals; those who correctly interpret information the spy network brings in and gives the orders to guide their underlings in the constant pursuit of the Jelyenesh of the Black Hells and the Ritual of Descent.

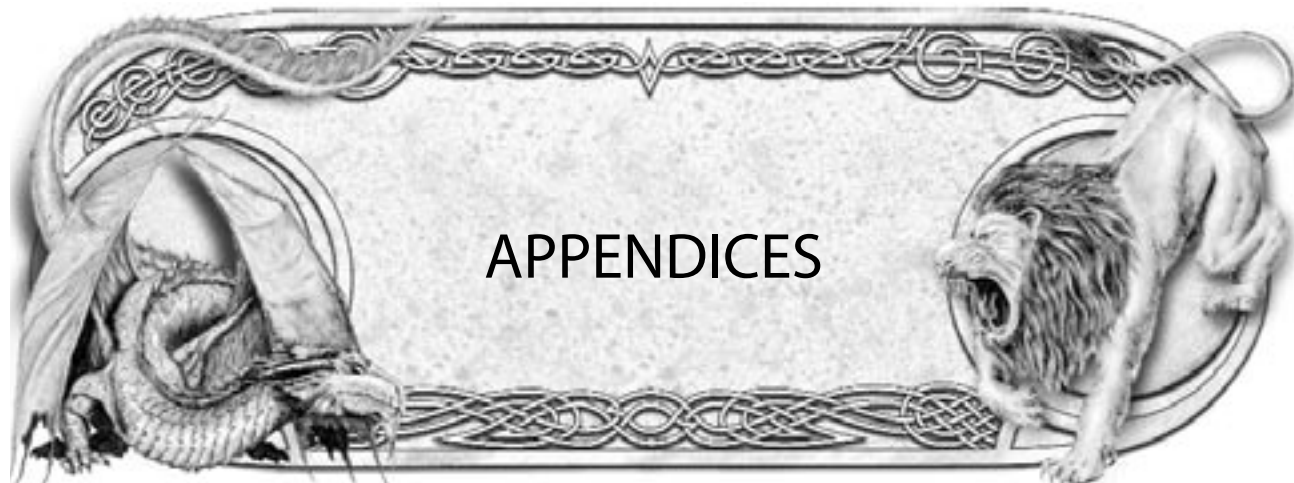
The Vision is only a little more than a century old, but the underworld is starting to notice. Those aware of its existence see it as nothing more than another Blue Salamander and Golden Alliance, and are completely in the dark in regards to its true purpose - turning the powerful Mithelizek into a force of great power.

Vilhellites

The last secret society in the Empire is also the most secretive - only those within the demon cult itself are aware of its existence. This small cult is primarily composed of upper class wizards, with a few former-clerics and keel'thaile in its ranks. Founded by midnight elf exiles (see the Spider Queen section), their one and only goal is to somehow ascend their patron to what they believe is her rightful position. Due to the cult's relatively young lifespan and tight circles of power, the public is completely unaware of the Cult's existence. After all, clandestine meetings with high-ranking church officials and keel'thaile are hardly considered out of the ordinary, even if they are discovered. In fact, outside of their secret masses, the cult has yet to make any actions concerning its ultimate agenda. However, this is soon to change.

Many years ago, a beautiful humanoid creature, with skin like night and eyes like opals, visited a lowly cleric of the Creator of Strife (favored deity of drow warriors). Struck silent by the female form's unearthly and terrible symmetry, the elf could only listen to the melodic words of her demonic visitor. She introduced herself as Vilhel: a shadow elf noblewoman from the time of the Sisters' War. Vilhel wove a tale of her history, explaining that she served as the court wizard and advisor to Empress Meluria the First. Vilhel went on to note that the tales told of the war by the current bards had forgotten her name completely, as her role was crucial to the final outcome. She numbered amongst the rebel nobles who fought against the hated usurper Drow/deltha, and it was through her magic and the sacrifice of her mortal shell that the would-be god breaker had been defeated. The lies of glory hungry Persephaine and her





APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RELIGION

manipulative goddess of love robbed her of her rightful place in the annals of dark elf heroes. Since the foul fabrications of the twilight elves erased her name from the war, she was denied the official canonization of saint. Instead of reserving the right to stand at the foot of the throne of the Emperor of Scorn in his citadel, she found herself as a petty demon noble in the murky Abyss, which was no doubt the final insult of Lady Love. She pleaded with the young cleric to help her regain her rightful status as hero of the Empire, freeing her from the humiliating position she currently holds. The awestruck cleric found she was unable to turn down the dark temptress' heartfelt pleas, as her stories of heroic acts fired up her blood.

Shortly thereafter, the young cleric assembled a small mystery cult to learn the true story of Vilhel and to venerate her until the time of her rightful ascension is at hand. For the time being, the cult's only activity has been secret masses, at which the (false) story of Vilhel is revealed, followed by a prayer ceremony to honor her memory. Soon, Vilhel shall again visit the faithful followers with instructions to travel into the deep tunnels where they shall meet her personal servants, the midnight elves, who shall give their assistance in hastening the time of Vilhel's ascension. Soon.

This appendix contains quick reference information on religion, useful for players and DMs with dark and twilight elf characters.

*Additional information on these religions can be found in the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting and the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

ALSO KNOWN AS: LADY LOVE, PROTECTOR OF THE HEART

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE: Love, harmony

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

SYMBOL: Flying white-shelled beetle over a white mushroom

DIVINE FOCUS: Silver beetle

HOLY DAYS: Anniversary of the Second Exodus followed by a fortnight-long celebration.

PLACE OF WORSHIP: Maintained temples or flower gardens in Halibeth-Joriel

COLORS: Pastels, white and floral patterns

ANIMAL: Beetle

APPEARANCE: The Pure One appears either as a giant beetle or a young, beautiful being with long blond hair in a robe made of flowers. It is said that those who gaze upon her magical robe will fall in love with the next person they see.

CHURCH: Parish of Love

CLERGY: Children of Love

RAIMENT: Robes with silver beetles worn on the collar as listed in the table below.

SACRIFICE & FREQUENCY: Selfless, good deeds as often as possible

ADVANCEMENT: Advancement is based on experience, dedication and success in maintaining love and harmony among the twilight elves, remaining shadow elves and any visitors.

ADRABRINTARIEL THE PURE ONE

Adrabrintariel is the deity most commonly associated with the twilight elves, and is listed here for the reader's convenience. The twilight elf view of this deity, as listed below, is not necessarily identical to the view of other surface races.

Title	Raiment
Initiate	green robe
Servant of Harmony	green robe and 1 silver beetle
Advocate of Harmony	yellow robe and 1 silver beetle
Keeper of Harmony	yellow robe and 2 silver beetles
Servant of Love	pink robe and 2 silver beetles
Advocate of Love	pink robe and 3 silver beetles
Guardian of the Heart	blue robe and 3 silver beetles
Advocate of the Heart	blue robe and 4 silver beetles
Grand Advocate of the Heart	pastel floral robe with white background and 5 silver beetles

Table A-1: Deities

Deity	Elven Name	Alignment	Church	Priesthood
Knight of the Gods	Berereldar	LG	Halls of the Valiant	Servants of the Swift Sword
Holy Mother	Adraladdaen	LG	The Home Foundation	The Brotherhood of Industry
Speaker of the Word	Calamassi	LG	The Hall of Oaths	Keepers of the Word
The True	Eleria	LG	The Courts of Justice	Truthseekers
The Eternal Lantern	Javaeclya	LG	The Assembly of Light	The Order of Light
The Raiser	Gavedever	NG	The Church of the Life's Fire	Friends of the Fields
The Peacemaker	Valaennon	NG	House of Solace	The Peacemakers
The Pure One	Adrabrintariel	NG	Parish of Love	Children of Love
Lord of the Silver Linings	Nanaeclya	NG	Church of Everlasting Hope	The Merciful Fates
The Traveler	Landanna	NG	Temple of the Stars	The Journeyman
The Guardian	Adrededar	CG	The Face of the Free	Messengers of Liberty
Raconteur	Banadar	CG	Theater of the Arts	The Merry Muses
The Shimmering One	Devamaeriel	CG	Church of the Night's Beauty	Moonknights
The Great Huntress	Albabrilia	CG	Temple of the Patient Arrow	The Golden Arrows
The Coddler	Manassi	CG	Church of the Silver Mist	Dream Weavers
The Founder	Ebaenderiel	LN	The Founder's Creation	Builders of Law
The Mule	Darabentariel	LN	The Fraternal Order of Aptitude	Brothers in Logic
Powermaster	Alabriria	LN	Temple of the Three Strengths	Seekers of the Three Strengths
The Old Man	Contabesi	LN	Temple of Armed Conflict	Order of the Pike
The Eye Opener	Elobreria	LN	The Order of Thought	Seekers of Sagacity
Mother of the Elements	Carrobredanten	N	Assembly of the Four Corners	The Keepers of the Four Corners
The Riftmaster	Halobrendar	N	Temple of Enchantment	The Keyholders
The Bear	Valanna	N	Conventicle of the Great Tree	Brotherhood of the Bear
The Landlord	Albereclya	N	Parish of the Prolific Coin	The Profiteers
Fate Scribe	Enaryn	N	The Inevitable Order of Time	The Prophets
Battle Rager	Halamaegyn	CN	The Way of the Berserk	Brothers in Blood
The Watcher	Ranalaessi	CN	No formal church	The Watchers
The Storm Lord	Faranna	CN	The Thunderer's Temple	Tempestions
Risk	Landobalaen	CN	Church of Chance	Challengers of Fate
The Laugher	Jennaentariel	CN	The Order of the Passionate One	The Passionate Peoplehood
The Corruptor	Adrenannon	LE	The Courts of Inequity	The Covetous Ones
The Overlord	Enedeteriel	LE	The House of Shackles	Bringers of the New Order
The Dark One	Beraclya	LE	Church of Endless Night	Knights of the Black Pit
The Flaymaster	Beraendar	LE	Order of Agony	Ministry of Misery
Harvester of Souls	Wyleredar	NE	The Congregation of the Dead	The Harvesters
Locust Lord	Laberel	NE	The House of Hunger	The Gaunt
Emperor of Scorn	Calereria	NE	House of Scorn	The Veiled Priesthood
The Seller of Souls	Valandar	NE	House of Knives	The Purgers
Rotlord	Gherhimm	CE	The Conventicle of Affliction	The Pestilent Ones
The Confuser of Ways	Valamariel	CE	No formal church	The Imposters
Prince of Terror	Kheiskhari	CE	Temple of Sleepless Nights	The Fellowship of Terror
Creator of Strife	Shambourki	CE	Temple of Strife	Minions of Misfortune
The Vicelord	Lhagari	CE	Known as the House of Vice; no formal church	Vicelords or Insulters

CLERICS: The Children of Love believe the Pure One came into being as a result of the love that the Creator felt for all her works. They preach that in ages past, the twilight elves betrayed their nature of love for darkness, leading to their banishment into darkness, from which they may yet return. This gives the twilight elves a reason to live, and remain in Halibeth-Joriel.

Clerics and followers of the Pure One try to embody their deity's spheres of influence. They believe in selfless and unconditional love, as well as devotion to their duty. Clerics of the Pure One would willingly die for one another. They are charged with promoting harmony and bringing as much love into the world as possible. However, the Children of Love do not believe in pacifism. They strive to maintain peace and harmony, but know that enemies of good who cannot be converted or controlled must be eliminated if a state of love between all peoples can be achieved.

Before becoming a Servant of Harmony, a cleric must embark upon a one-year mission in which he or she works within the twilight elf military to promote harmony and understanding between all. During this mission, the cleric learns new combat skills and how soldiers of differing abilities view each other. The Child of Love must share her knowledge with the Parish and the local community before

advancement. Unlike other sects, the twilight elves are not opposed to arranged marriages, if the couple have at least some affection for each other. The Children of Love also act as matchmakers, conduct wedding ceremonies or reconcile differences between couples or friends.

FRIENDS/ALLIES: The House of Solace, the Church of Everlasting Hope, the Home Foundation.

FOES/ENEMIES: The Temple of Strife, House of Scorn, the House of Shackles, the Congregation of the Dead, the Temple of Armed Conflict, the Way of the Berserk.

SAYINGS: A man without love has nothing. - A broken heart is worse than a broken bone. - Love is Eternal. - Achieve harmony through love. - Love thy enemy and he will become thy friend. - It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

CALERERIA THE EMPEROR OF SCORN

Calereria is the deity most commonly associated with the ancient shadow elves, and is listed here for the reader's convenience. Note that current dark elf worship of this deity is quite rare. The dark elf view of this deity, as listed below, is not necessarily identical to the view of other surface races.

ALSO KNOWN AS: THE DESPISER, SLAYER OF THE INFERIOR, LORD OF INTOLERANCE, HATEMONGER, PURGE OF

Blood and Shadows: The Dark Elves of Tellene

TELLENE, HATER OF TWILIGHT ELVES (OR DEJY, HALFLINGS, HOBGOBLINS, KALAMARANS, ETC.)

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE: Hate, bigotry

ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil

SYMBOL: Golden scepter on a blue background

DIVINE FOCUS: Small golden scepter

UNHOLY DAYS: Quarter Moon (Diadolai)

PLACE OF WORSHIP: Among the dark elves, this deity is rarely worshipped. However, ancient ruined temples may still exist in subterranean cities, and old shrines may be found in the deep tunnels.

COLORS: Gold, dark blue

ANIMAL: Badger

APPEARANCE: The Despiser appears as a perfect physical specimen of the same race as the observer. When angry, the Emperor of Scorn changes his facial features to those of a badger.

CHURCH: House of Scorn

CLERGY: The Purgers

RAIMENT: Golden robes are worn during ceremonies and lynchings; otherwise, the clerics dress normally.

SACRIFICE & FREQUENCY: Lynchings, performed at least once a month. Victims are usually foreigners or races considered inferior. If a lynching is not possible, clerics must desecrate or destroy works of art or other goods that are representative of, and have strong sentimental value to, another race.

ADVANCEMENT: Although this religion varies from region to region, advancement is usually attained through seniority and number of converts gained.

CLERICS: Different sects of the House of Scorn exist in all nations. Each race and every kingdom has a different church. Although these sects sometimes cooperate, they are frequently at war with one another. This is entirely due to the teachings of Hatemonger.

The ancient twilight and shadow elf Purgers preached hatred and scorn for all other races, peoples, nations and religions. Even should they be encountered, a House of Scorn operated by another race would be despised by the twilight elves. Alliances would be formed only when it might be mutually beneficial to put aside their differences, such as when a more hated third party is present.

Each House of Scorn attempts to breed hatred and anger toward the other races. This extends to prejudices between the different elven races. Thus, the ancient twilight and shadow elves were instructed to detest other elves as well as other races. Sadly, it is due to the influence of the Houses of Scorn that caused the high elves and the twilight elves to war when Tellene was still young.

The Purgers preach the superiority of their own race. Each House of Scorn teaches that its congregation has been chosen to rule over all. To this end, the clerics of the Slayer of the Inferior seek to cleanse the taint of other races from their people. Foreigners are either enslaved or lynched. This is known as the Purgings.

FRIENDS/ALLIES: The Courts of Inequity, the House of Shackles, the House of Knives

FOES/ENEMIES: The Parish of Love, the House of Solace, the Church of Everlasting Hope, the Temple of the Stars

SAYINGS: Love and friendship are for the weak and ignorant. - Unity and purity are most noble goals. - We shall not rest until the land is pure. - Those of our kind that oppose us shall be the first to die. - It's the drop for you, half-breed!

SHAMBOURKI THE CREATOR OF STRIFE

Shambourki is the deity most commonly associated with the current dark elves, particularly warriors, and is repeated here for the reader's convenience. The dark elf view of this deity, as listed below, is not necessarily identical to the view of other surface races.

ALSO KNOWN AS: KING OF DISHARMONY, MAKER OF DISSENSION, HE WHO BRINGS MISFORTUNE, ILL-LUCK, DISCORDANT ONE, BRINGER OF THE QUAKE (or DEEP CHILL, RISING LAKE, LAVA, etc., depending on what the dark elves consider bad weather in their subterranean home)

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE: Discord, foul weather, misfortune

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil

SYMBOL: A broken rock

DIVINE FOCUS: Spatially impossible geometric shape atop a crooked stick. The existence of this shape is a miracle granted by the Creator of Strife.

UNHOLY DAYS: Day of foul "weather" at least once per month.

PLACE OF WORSHIP: Temple; in a near-surface cavern on unholy days

COLORS: Clashing, usually red, green and orange

ANIMAL: Cockroach

APPEARANCE: He Who Brings Misfortune takes many forms but always appears disheveled and his clothing is always bright, colorful and clashing.

CHURCH: Temple of Strife

CLERGY: Minions of Misfortune

RAIMENT: Garments and colors vary regionally, but are always bright and clashing.

SACRIFICE & FREQUENCY: Daily, edible fungi; monthly, a sentient being, usually one who has been extremely lucky or fortunate.

ADVANCEMENT: Advancement within the church is granted to those who show a particularly high aptitude for wreaking havoc on society.

CLERICS: The Minions of Misfortune and their congregations bring misfortune wherever they roam. Members of the Temple of Strife seek to disrupt harmony and plunge Tellene into a vortex of chaos.

Minions closely follow subterranean geological events and are always present during times of foul "weather." They continually seek to cause misfortune by heightening the consequences of natural disaster. For instance, if the water level of an underground lake begins to drop, they might attempt to pollute it as well; before an earthquake they might secretly loosen structural supports and bonds.

APPENDIX B: MAGIC ITEMS

Minions hate the luckier people of the world and, given the opportunity, will try to cause misfortune in the lives of such individuals. If possible, the fortunate one will be given as a sacrifice to the Creator of Strife. If they cannot abduct the lucky one for sacrifice, clerics will try to cause misfortune by destroying his fungus crops, poisoning his umber bulks, defacing his house, etc. These actions cause paranoia. In fact, they have given rise to a gambler's saying: "Save some luck for escaping Ill-luck." It has even become tradition among some superstitious gamblers to deliberately lose their final three games. This is done almost universally during times of bad "weather" (see above).

The dark elf Temple of Strife has gained some notoriety for their ability to make favorable alliances with non-drow. The alliances are usually geared toward making war on the local humans or hobgoblins. When the drow Minions can muster enough followers or keel'thaile to form a massive army, they descend upon a small surface town. Foul storms of titanic proportions always precede these battles, and the actual assault always occurs during the height of the storm. During battle, some of the Minions of Misfortune play bagpipes, cymbals, horns and drums. Their chaotic, disturbing tunes urge Ill-luck's troops into the fray and announce to their enemies the strife to come.

FRIENDS/ALLIES: The Thunderer's Temple, the Assembly of the Four Corners, the Way of the Berserk, the Impostors

FOES/ENEMIES: The Church of Chance, the Founder's Creation, the Parish of Love, the Theater of the Arts, the House of Solace

SAYINGS: It's a fine, foul day for a battle. - Strife and dissension should be shared by all. - Sometimes misfortune has nothing to do with chance. - Better bad luck than no luck at all.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Elemental Anthame: An anthame is an ornate double-edged knife often used in ceremonial practices, usually to inscribe protective circles or to carve runes.

A gem in the hilt contains a conjuration spell attuned to a specific Elemental Plane (transparent for Air, light brown for Earth, reddish orange for Fire, blue-green for Water). When a rune is carved into the flesh of a nonmagical living creature (or group of bound creatures) of at least animal intelligence, and the command word is then spoken, an elemental appears as if summoned by a summon nature's ally spell. The elemental is under the control of the caster.

Carving a rune is a full round action. Once this is completed, the user chants the command word repeatedly for one round, done with a successful Spellcraft check (DC equal to the HD of the victims). On a failed roll, nothing happens. On a successful check, each victim must make a Will save (DC 20). Each additional rune carved into the victim beyond the first imposes a cumulative -2 penalty, and willing victims may choose to forfeit the save.

On a failed save, an elemental of the anthame's corresponding element appears. Its HD is approximately equivalent to the combined HD of the victims, who are bound to the elemental and drawn into its body. Those who succeed at the Will save are free of the elemental, but still bound by any ropes or other bindings. They must continue to roll the Will save each round until they fail or manage to break free.

This form of summoning has several advantages. First, the anthame can be used anywhere as long as there are properly prepared sacrifices at hand. In addition, the size of the elemental summoned is only dependent on the amount of sacrifices. The most notable advantage, however, is from the binding of the sacrifices to the elemental. The sacrificial beings bound inside the elemental body can survive indefinitely, although they exist in complete agony. Being inside an earth elemental does not reduce their hit points, but they do feel the crushing of their bones against unyielding stone, whereas those bound to a fire elemental burn indefinitely but never have the flesh sear off their bodies. They also have no need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. Sacrificial victims stay inside the body of the elemental at all times, and can travel with it even through places they normally could not (i.e. solid stone). The elemental has complete control over them, and can use them for different functions. They may also be used for hit points, as the elemental can choose to transfer any damage it sustains to one of its sacrifices. Damage spread out throughout the sacrifices is impossible and only one sacrifice at a time may be chosen to receive damage. Once a bound sacrifice has its hit points reduced to zero or less, his body drops from the elemental and is no longer useful for bonuses. If this causes the HD pool of victims to drop below half the HD of the elemental, then the caster loses control of the elemental.

Only one elemental can be summoned at a time using an elemental anthame, and the caster must remain in full concentration until someone dismisses, dispels or destroys the elemental. If concentration is broken, or the sacrificial victim pool inside the elemental drops below half the elementals hit dice, then the controlled elemental breaks free. Once free, it may release the victims and return to its home plane (60% chance) or attack the caster and anyone near her (40% chance).

The creation of these knives is a closely guarded secret within the Artificers' Guild. This is hardly of any regret, since only the Artificers know how to make the anthames without spending an outrageous fortune. Anthames can only be found within the dark elf Empire, although successful negotiations with the Golden Alliance may eventually change that.

Strong conjuration; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, summon nature's ally IX; Price 9,000 gp.

Blood and Shadows: The Dark Elves of Tellene

Goggles of the Drow: The lenses of this item are made of dark, opaque crystal, but allow the wearer to see normally. When worn, neither bright lights (natural or magical) nor magical darkness rob the user of his sight. Both lenses must be worn for the magic to be effective.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, darkvision, daylight; Price 16,000 gp.

Goggles of True Seeing: These ornate goggles contain lenses made from polished opaque onyx set into silver frames affixed with spider silk straps. Although the lenses do not appear to be translucent at first, putting them on enables the wearer to see normally, and grants her 120-foot darkvision, as well as allowing her to see as if by a true seeing spell. Both lenses must be worn for the magic to be effective.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft wondrous item, darkvision, true seeing; Price 24,000 gp.

NEW ARTIFACTS

Deep within the Elenons, guarded by the remaining twilight elves, lie many ancient artifacts of terrible power and majesty. A few artifacts of dark evil also lie within the hands of certain drow. The most prominent are listed here, and should only enter a campaign through a careful and deliberate choice on your part.

Dawnfire: A gift from Klass Broken Axe to Pale Golden Daughter, this magnificent longsword appears simply as a great masterwork of art in the hands of a regular person. However, when wielded by a descendant of Persephaine, its true power becomes apparent. Dawnfire has a +5 enhancement bonus and functions as a longsword with the holy, mighty cleaving, speed and vorpal special abilities. The wielder may also call forth certain spells at will at caster level 15th, though some may only be invoked a certain number of times per day:

- Death ward (in effect while weapon is wielded)
- Detect magic
- Heal (2/day)
- Light
- Searing light (5/day)

Only a person of good alignment may safely handle the weapon. Those of neutral alignment feel a cold indifference to the blade, and feel uncomfortable holding it. If a person of evil alignment touches the hilt of this weapon, she takes 8d6 points of damage. All other characters are unaffected.

Gaz'zirad of Divinity: This relic is considered the most sacred item in shadow elf lore, and was the one artifact that the followers of the Hatemonger were allowed to take with them during the Second Exodus. It is the same dagger that Princess Joleriel used to slay Soletheius, and has been used as the primary symbol of office since the relocation to the Krimppatu Mountains.

This weapon has a +5 enhancement bonus and functions as a gaz'zirad (see Chapter 5) with the keen and unholy special abilities. However, when in the hands of the current dark elf Empress, she may also project a darkbolt (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide) at will, at caster level 15th.

The gaz'zirad only operates in the hands of the coronated Empress. In addition, it only glows while on her person. Its hilt design incorporates the heraldic symbols of the Imperial House Guard, as well as House Halibeth's standard.

Only a person of evil alignment may safely handle the weapon. Those of neutral alignment feel a cold indifference to the blade, and feel uncomfortable holding it. If a person of good alignment touches the hilt of this weapon, he takes 8d6 points of damage. All other characters are unaffected.

Jelynesh of the Black Hells: Once the official symbol of office during the Old Empire, this weapon gained corruption during the ritual that granted Drow'deltha the status of the first Avatar of Evil. The weapon is necessary to perform the Ritual of Descent, and bonds with the Avatar upon completion.

The weapon has a +5 enhancement bonus and functions as a jelynesh (see Chapter Five: Rules) with the unholy and wounding special abilities. The jelynesh is also unhallowed, as if the unhallow spell had been cast upon it. However, when in the hands of the current Avatar of Evil, or when within 1 mile of a creature with a divine bloodline, the jelynesh's intelligence awakens.

Koristhax: +5 unholy wounding jelynesh; AL CE; Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 17; Telepathy, 120 ft. darkvision and hearing; Ego score 24.

Lesser Powers: Deathwatch (continuous), detect evil (continuous)

Greater Powers: Charm person (1/day), Unholy blight (3/day), Shout (acts telepathically; 1/day)

Special Purpose: Koristhax searches for a being of evil alignment, telepathically promising powers and glory to the prospective host. If the host is evil but lacks any divine blood, the sword erodes the owner's will until it is in complete control, and then uses its new minion to find a suitable owner of proper lineage. It can detect the presence of divine blood within 1 mile, and can accurately identify deific ancestry within 500 feet. Once in the hands of an appropriate owner, the sword begins to regale her with promises of power, and directs the host to seek out the Ritual of Descent. Koristhax uses its charm person ability if the wielder objects, and forces him or her to strike out on the search.

Koristhax grants the wielder a +20 bonus to any Knowledge rolls concerning the sword, Drow'deltha, the Ritual of Descent and anything relating to locating the texts. Only a person of evil alignment may safely handle Koristhax. If a person of good alignment touches the hilt of this



weapon, he takes 8d6 points of damage. True neutral characters take 4d6 points of damage.

Vestments of the Dark Champion: Another artifact entitled to an official rank within the Imperial family, this set of clothing and armor is bestowed to the greatest keel'thaile of the Empire. When a new Empress is crowned, a great contest takes place. All keel'thaile compete in contests of strength, speed and cunning. The two final contestants then fight a duel to the death, with any weapons or means at their disposal. The surviving winner is then

bestowed the title of Dark Champion and given the honorable position as the Empress' official bodyguard and steward - and often times her unofficial concubine.

Aside from the new items listed below, the vestments of the Dark Champion also include boots of speed and gloves of (swimming and) climbing as detailed in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide. Any person - with the exception of the Empress - who attempts to don any of these vestments without the eyes of the dark champion (see below) suffers 8d6 points of damage.

Breastplate of the Dark Champion: This beautiful mithral breastplate is adorned with black jewels and silver etchings. Within one of these etchings is a small groove holding a simple gold ring. When the Empress first fits the breastplate upon the new Dark Champion, she removes the ring and puts it upon her left ring finger, signifying the bond between the Empress and her Champion.

The taking of the ring also creates a magical bond between the Empress and her champion that lasts until one is dead. Since it is the sacred duty of the Dark Champion



to protect his Empress' life at all costs, the bond transfers any damage, magical or mundane, taken by her to the Dark Champion. In addition, any debilitating foreign substances entered into her body by force or trickery, such as poison or magical disease, are introduced into the Dark Champion's system, to which he makes a saving throw and suffers the effects as if he were the original target. The bond does not transfer mundane and/or natural causes, such as a natural disease or the inebriation of alcohol.

In addition, the bond only transfers damage and effects while the Dark Champion is wearing the breastplate; considering that the Dark Champion only removes his breastplate to clean and polish it, or while bathing, this is most of the rest of his life. The Dark Champion continues to wear the breastplate while trancing.

The bond lasts until either Empress or the Dark Champion is dead. The death of the Dark Champion has no ill effects to the Empress, but it is unheard of for her to choose another Dark Champion for the remainder of her reign. The death of the Empress, whether by means natural or foul, inflicts 6d6 points of unholy damage upon the Dark Champion. If he survives, he commits ritual suicide. When a Dark Champion dies, members of the royal family personally inter his bones in the Imperial catacombs, where his vestments are finally removed and stored away for his replacement.

Speed while wearing the breastplate is 30 feet. The armor has an arcane spell failure chance of 15%, a maximum Dexterity bonus of +5, and an armor check penalty of -1. It is considered light armor (see Mithral, page 284 in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide) and weighs 15 pounds. When worn, the breastplate bestows energy resistance 10 (acid, cold, fire) upon the wearer, as well as death ward and protection from arrows.

Eyes of the Dark Champion: This pair of black onyx orbs are slightly rounded and polished, resembling two ebon eyes. They are set with circles of jade chips to give the appearance of green irises. After the Champion wins his final duel, he bows before the Empress, who then removes his eyes with her gaz'zirad in a special ceremony. She then places the onyx eyes into his sockets, which magically heal any damage caused by the removal and connect themselves to his optic nerves. They function as normal eyes; he can see, move them about, and his tear ducts moisten them as those he was born with.

Only the possessor of the eyes of the Dark Champion may use the breastplate of the Dark Champion. A person who attempts to don the breastplate without the eyes suffers 8d6 points of damage (with the exception of the Empress). Even the handling of these artifacts by the unworthy is a crime in the Empire, so no cleric will heal this damage if they are aware of its source. The eyes bestow the Dark Champion with the following:

- Darkvision 120 ft.
- Deathwatch (continuous)
- Immunity to magical darkness and natural or magical light (provided it affects the eyes, such as a flare spell)
- A +20 profane bonus to Spot and Search checks
- True seeing (continuous)

While most of the monsters that PCs face in a dark elf-based campaign are other dark elves, monsters still appear quite frequently. This section lists a few of the common subterranean monsters described in the D&D Monster Manual, and provides two new ones based on texts elsewhere in this book.

ABOLETH: A tentacled fish-like creature that can be found in the depths of underground lakes.

ALLIP: Useful as the undead remains of a maddened dark elf that fell from dominance.

APPENDIX C: MONSTERS

ANIMATED OBJECT: In all likelihood, these guard the Arcane College from intruders.

BODAK: Like the allip, the undead remnants of dark elves that dared to touch pure evil.

BULLETTE: A lost or solitary bullette might take up residence in a tunnel or cave that the dark elves use for trade routes or passage.

CARRION CRAWLER: Often found at the remains of subterranean battlefields, as well as in wait for twilight elf patrols.

CLOAKER: A hidden danger on cave walls.

DARKMANTLE: Like its Tellenian piercer relative (see *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*), the darkmantle lies in wait on cavern ceilings.

DELVER: A delver may provide the drow with guard and tunnel-digging services, but can be dangerous when crossed.

DEMON: Dark elf wizards often bargain with demonic powers, and may call upon their services in times of need.

DERRO: These dwarflike creatures are shunned by both elf and stone dwarf, and may torment local travelers.

DIRE ANIMAL: Dire badgers, bats and rats are the most common dire animals found in the Underdark.

DOPPLEGANGER: You never know who that stranger might be...

DWARF, MOUNTAIN: Occasionally found trading with the twilight elves, though you may also find their Moss Beard kin living in a dark elf city.

DWARF, STONE: Fierce foes of the drow, as well as those who intrude upon their deep territory. More information can be found in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*.

EATEN ONE: Those elves who are partially consumed by oozes often return as eaten ones (see *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*), whereupon they seek out subterranean cities and settlements in hopes of finding someone to end their undead pain.

ELF, DARK: Whom this book is really all about; the perfect enemy or player character in a dark elf campaign.

ELF, TWILIGHT: These light-skinned surface elves share a common history with the dark elves, and are detailed earlier in this book.

ELEMENTALS: The various elemental types, particularly those of the Earth subtype, may be found passing through the Underdark.

GHOST: The spectral remnants of long dead elves, possibly haunting an ancient battlefield or site of their murder.

GHOUL: Rarely found with the dark or twilight elves, due to their hatred of undead. Of course, they may be found in uninhabited tunnels or caverns where the living do not like to visit.

GIANT, STONE: These lone hunters of the Elenon Mountains may visit twilight elves on occasion, or at least know where they may be found.

GRICK: A wormlike creature fond of inhabiting tunnels of the Underdark.

GRIMLOCK: These deep natives are often found in the company of their mind flayer leaders.

HOBGOBLIN: Hobgoblins and elves are not on the best of terms, though some dark elves do trade with them occasionally. Otherwise, they are rarely seen in the Underdark.

KUO-TOA: Commonly found in underground lakes, where they shun contact with others. Kuo-toa sometimes form partnerships with aboleths (see above), though they most often act as servants to the larger creature.

LYCANTHROPE: You may encounter werebats visiting (or traveling to) dark elven cities, where they are revered and honored. Save for the occasional wererat, other lycanthropes are rare underground.

MIND FLAYER: These diabolical, telepathic creatures are under an uneasy truce with the dark elves, and may sometimes be found in their cities. They often employ grimlocks for servants. Also known as illithids.

NIGHTSHADE: All nightshades hate daylight, and so can occasionally be found in the dark, subterranean caves of the Elenon or Krimppatu Mountains on the rare occasions when they choose to visit the Prime Material Plane.

OOZE: These amorphous creatures inhabit deep tunnels where they feed on vermin and the occasional elf or adventurer.

PHASM: Phasms have an affinity for conversation, and may disguise themselves as dark or twilight elves simply for that purpose.

RUST MONSTER: Both dark and twilight elves offer rewards for the fighter who brings in the head of one of these metal-devouring creatures.

Large Construct
 Hit Dice: 22d10+30 (151 hp)
 Initiative: +0
 Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)
 Armor Class: 32 (-1 size, +1 dodge, +22 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 31
 Base Attack/Grapple: +16/+32
 Attack: Slam +28 melee (2d10+12)
 Full Attack: 2 slams +28 melee (2d10+12)
 Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
 Special Attacks: Breath weapon, hasted
 Special Qualities: Construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision
 Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7
 Abilities: Str 35, Dex 11, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1
 Skills:-
 Feats:-
 Environment: Any
 Organization: Solitary
 Challenge Rating: 17
 Treasure: None
 Alignment: Always neutral
 Advancement: 23-44 HD (Large); 45-66 HD (Huge)

NEW MONSTERS



SHADOW: Like the nightshades, these creatures from the Plane of Shadow can occasionally be found in the dark, subterranean caves of the Elenon or Krimppatu Mountains.

SKELETON: These evil undead are almost unheard of in the dark elf lands, as almost all bones quickly become bonebread or pieces of armor, weapons and other artistic crafts.

SKUM: These are misbegotten creatures resembling human and fish crossbreeds, who often serve aboleths in their underground lake homes.

TROGLODYTE: Troglodytes prefer caves near the surface, only rarely coming into conflict with the elves of the Underdark.

UMBER HULK: UMBER hulks occasionally come into contact with Underdark elven patrols, but tend to avoid their cities and settlements.

WIGHT: Like skeletons, wights are rarely seen among the dark elves, though they have been known to haunt the twilight elf tunnels of the Elenons on occasion.

WILL-O'-WISP: Though most commonly found on the surface in marshes and bogs, these creatures can also be found underground, feeding off the emotions of their prey and tempting them over cliffs and into deep maze-like tunnels.

WRAITHS: Almost undetectable underground, these shadowy creatures despise all who venture into their underground terrain. They almost never make alliances with dark elves, who generally despise undead.

ZOMBIE: Like skeletons and wights, zombies are rare in the Krimppatu Mountains, for corpse flesh and bones is used in fertilizer, food and crafts.

GOLEM, MITHRIL

This golem has a humanoid body made from mithril. Though only one ancient mithril golem is known to exist in Tellene (see Chapter Three of this book), it is possible that others can be created. The following information is based on that premise.

A mithril golem can be fashioned in any manner, as the iron golem detailed in the D&D Monster Manual, though it always displays armor of some sort. In fact, this golem is so finely crafted that the armor seems less a part of its body and more like actual armor that the golem has donned. Mithril golems may wield a greatsword or other similar weapon, which they carry in a built-in scabbard on their backs.

A mithril golem stands 9 feet tall and (due to the natural lightness of the material) only weighs about 2,000 pounds.

A mithril golem cannot speak or make any vocal noise, though it can respond to commands with a “yes” or “no” shaking of the head. It has no distinguishable odor. It moves with a speed unusual for its size, each step sending a tremble through the floor unless it is on a thick, solid foundation such as can be found underground.

Combat

Mithril golems are incredible combatants, and the twilight elf version moreso, if the attacker must also deal with the power of the jelynesh of the black hells (see Appendix B: Magic Items in this book) which it carries. (Note: the ancient mithril golem of the twilight elves does not actively use the jelynesh of the black hells as a weapon.)

Construct Traits: The mithril golem has the construct features and traits as detailed in the D&D Monster Manual, except as noted below.

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-foot cube, cloud of poisonous gas lasting 1 round, free action once every 1d4 rounds; initial damage unconsciousness, secondary damage unconsciousness, Fortitude DC 9 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Hasted (Sp): A mithril golem is permanently hasted, giving it a constant 30 ft. bonus to speed, a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +1 dodge bonus to AC and Reflex saves. It may also make one extra attack when making a full attack action. The attack is made using the golem’s full base attack bonus, plus any modifiers appropriate to the situation.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): Mithril golems are immune to all spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance.

Table C-1: Werebat Creation Notes

Name	Animal Form	Animal or Hybrid Form Ability Modifiers	Preferred Alignment
Werebat	Dire bat	Dex +6, Con +2	Chaotic evil

	Werebat, Human Form Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)	Werebat, Dire Bat Form Large Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)	Werebat, Hybrid Form Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)
Hit Dice:	1d8+1 plus 4d8+12 (35 hp)	1d8+1 plus 4d8+12 (35 hp)	1d8+1 plus 4d8+12 (35 hp)
Initiative:	+0	+6	+0
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)	20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (good)	30 ft. (6 squares), fly 20 ft. (clumsy)
Armor Class:	15 (+2 natural, +2 leather, +1 buckler) touch 10, flat-footed 15	19 (-1 size, +6 Dex, +4 natural) touch 15, flat-footed 14	21 (+6 Dex, +5 natural) touch 16, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/+2	+4/+12	+1/+2
Attack:	Rapier +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20) light crossbow +1 ranged (1d8/19-20)	Bite +5 melee (1d8+4)	Rapier +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20) light crossbow +4 ranged (1d8/19-20)
20) Full Attack:	Rapier +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20) light crossbow +1 ranged (1d8/19-20)	Bite +5 melee (1d8+4)	Rapier +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20) bite +2 melee (1d8+4) light crossbow +4 ranged (1d8/19-20)
20) Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	-	Curse of lycanthropy	Curse of lycanthropy
Special Qualities:	Alternate form, bat empathy blindsight 40 ft.	Alternate form, bat empathy, blindsight 40 ft., low-light vision, scent damage reduction 10/silver	Alternate form, bat empathy blindsight 40 ft., low-light vision, scent damage reduction 10/silver
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4	Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +10	Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +10
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12 Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8	Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14 Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8	Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14 Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8
Skills:	Climb +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, +5,	Climb +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5,	Climb +0, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5,
Feats:	Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4 Alertness ^B , Dodge, Iron Will ^B , Stealthy ^B , Weapon Finesse ^B	Listen +8, Move Silently +4, Spot +8 (same as human form)	Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4 (same as human form)
Environment:	Warm forests and underground	Warm forests and underground	Warm forests and underground
Organization:	Solitary, pair, pack (6-10) colony (2-5 plus 5-8 dire bats)	(same as human form)	(same as human form)
Challenge Rating:	3	3	3
Treasure:	Standard	Standard	Standard

In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A slow spell counters the golem's haste for 1 round/caster level, but cannot permanently dispel it.

A mithril golem can be communicated with telepathically, though it cannot respond in the same manner.

Construction

The artisan needs at least 2,000 pounds of mithril (equivalent to 4,000 pounds of iron or steel) to construct a mithril golem, as well as rare tinctures and admixtures costing at least 10,000 gp. Assembling the body requires a successful DC 22 Craft (armorsmithing) check or a DC 22 Craft (weaponsmithing) check.

CL 18th; Craft Construct (see page 303 in the D&D Monster Manual), geas/quest, haste, limited wish, permanency, polymorph any object, sleep;; Price 2,000,000 gp; Cost 1,000,200 gp + 79,600 XP.

LYCANTHROPE, WEREBAT

Natural werebats appear as humans in their humanoid form, with a tall, gangly bodies and arms that seem slightly longer than they should be, and very lithe, elongated fingers. They tend to have very shrill, high-pitched voices, despite their physical stature. They are greatly revered by the dark elves, who call them "manehelb."

Werebats are seldom found alone, and travel in groups. These groups consist of a leader and several female and male adults, a few offspring and afflicted werebat slaves. They are nomadic by nature, never staying in the same area for long. They maintain contacts in the underworld of the large cities, cooperating with the thieves' guilds and evil temples in exchange for victims and wealth. Small villages are attractive targets for werebats, as they present the opportunity for rape, plunder and general sadistic mayhem. Colonies tend to associate with only their own - intense rivalries exist between the colonies and chance encounters often lead to blood baths. There are only two exceptions to this - meetings with the dark elf Empire and during the Migration. The Migration is an infrequent event where all the werebat colonies instinctively travel to an undisclosed location deep within the heart of the Vohven Jungle. What occurs there is so far unknown.

Combat

In animal form, werebats hide and spy rather than facing combat directly. In hybrid form, however, they do not shy away from battle.

Alternate Form (Su): A werebat can assume a bipedal hybrid form or the form of a dire bat (see the D&D Monster Manual).

Small Fey
 Hit Dice: 1d6 (3 hp)
 Initiative: +4
 Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)
 Armor: Class: 16 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 12
 Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-6
 Attack: Short sword +5 melee (1d4-2/19-20)
 Full Attack: Short sword +5 melee (1d4-2/19-20)
 Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
 Special Attacks: Feed, spell-like abilities
 Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/ wood, darkvision 60 feet, greater invisibility, spell resistance 15, vulnerability to sunlight
 Saves: Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +4
 Abilities: Str 7, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 16
 Skills: Bluff +7, Concentration +4, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Ride +8, Search +9, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8
 Feats: Dodge^D, Weapon Finesse
 Environment: Underground
 Organization: Gang (2-4), band (6-11), or tribe (20-80)
 Challenge Rating: 4 (5 with Azsul's irresistible dance*)
 Treasure: No coins; 50% goods; 50% items
 Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
 Advancement: 2-3 HD (Small)
 Level Adjustment: +4 (+6 with Azsul's irresistible

Curse of Lycanthropy (Su): Any humanoid or giant hit by a werebat's bite attack in animal or hybrid form must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract lycanthropy.

Bat Empathy (Ex): Communicate with bats and dire bats, and +4 racial bonus on Charisma-based checks against rats and dire rats.

Blindsense: A werebat in hybrid or bat form uses echolocation to pinpoint creatures within 40 feet. Unless the bat or hybrid can actually see the enemy, the enemy still has total concealment.

Skills: A werebat in hybrid or bat form gains a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

The werebat presented here is based on a 1st-level human warrior and natural lycanthrope using the following base ability scores: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

CREATING A WEREBAT

Creating a werebat lycanthrope works as lycanthrope creation defined in the D&D Monster Manual.

TAINTED FEY

Tainted fey are descended from the original fey creatures who once lived in the great Elenon cities with the twilight elves at the Dawn of Time. As the changes made by the Empress Joleriel turned the twilight elves onto their inevitable road to damnation, many of the fair folk fled from the mountains in disgust of the rampant corruption and foul deeds of their former friends. However, there were those whose curiosity concerning this new, strange behavior outweighed their common sense, and thus were dragged down into the depths with the shadow elves.

The tainted fey now haunt areas of pristine beauty along the Elenon and Krimppatu Mountains, such as springs or

crystal caverns. Unlike the commonly shy and elusive fey, however, the tainted ones use their abilities lure to travelers to their homes and feed upon them.

A tainted fey's skin is gray and stretched tightly over their bones, giving them an almost skeletal appearance. Their eyes are hyper-extended and bloodshot, shining their inbred insanity through cold, piercing stares.

SAMPLE TAINTED FEY

This sample tainted creature, commonly called a redcap, uses a pixie (see the D&D Monster Manual) as the base creature. Of all the fey corrupted by the descent of the twilight elves into the shadow elves, the greatest numbers of those tainted were the pixies. Often naive and overly curious creatures, they thought the new changes in the regime were nothing more than curious fun, and only realized the darkness when it was too late.

Tainted pixies wear dark, usually black, tattered clothing. They speak Sylvan and Drow, and usually know other languages. Tainted pixies stand 30 inches tall and weigh about 20 pounds. They received the nickname "redcaps" from their habit of dying their hair in the still flowing blood

Medium Aberration
 Hit Dice: 4d8+15 (33 hp)
 Initiative: +0
 Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)
 Armor Class: 16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16
 Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+9
 Attack: Butt +9 melee (1d4+9)
 Full Attack: Butt +9 melee (1d4+9)
 Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
 Special Attacks: Stampede
 Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., scent
 Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4
 Abilities: Str 22, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4
 Skills: Listen +6, Spot +5
 Feats: Alertness, Toughness
 Environment: Underground
 Organization: Solitary or herd (6-30)
 Challenge Rating: 2
 Treasure: None
 Alignment: Always neutral
 Advancement: 5-8 HD (Medium); 9-12 HD (Large)
 Level Adjustment: -

of their victims. Their favorite victims are twilight elves, whom they greedily consume while they slip slowly into the realm of death.

CREATING A TAINTED FEY

"Tainted fey" is an inherited template that can be added to any fey creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A tainted fey uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type remains the same. Size is unchanged.

Special Attacks: A tainted fey retains all the special attacks of the base creature, except that it no longer uses wooden weapons (such as bows), and gains the special attack described below.

APPENDIX D: TRANSLATION GUIDE

Feed: Tainted fey are carinvores. When a tainted fey slays a humanoid opponent, it feeds on the corpse, devouring the life force as a full-round action. Flesh takes longer to devour – approximately 1d6 hours for Medium creatures. Though many tainted fey can feed on a corpse, only one can devour the life force. Feeding destroys the victim's body and prevents any form of raising or resurrection that requires part of the corpse. There is a 50% chance that a wish, miracle or true resurrection spell can restore a devoured victim to life. Check once for each destroyed creature. If the check fails, the creature cannot be brought back to life by mortal magic.

Special Qualities: A tainted fey retains all the special qualities of the base creature, except for a slight change to damage reduction, and gains those described below.

Damage Reduction: Tainted fey replace any damage reduction/cold iron with damage reduction/wood of the exact same amount.

Darkvision (Ex): A tainted fey gains darkvision 60 ft., if the base creature did not have darkvision already. This also replaces low-light vision, where applicable.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex): Tainted fey loath sunlight, and the merest touch of it burns their flesh. Each round of exposure to the direct rays of the sun deals 1 point of damage to the creature.

Environment: Underground.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: Always evil (any, but usually chaotic).

*Otto never existed in the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting. His counterpart on Tellene is named Azzul. For more information, see Chapter 11: Spells of the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

UMBER BULK

The most predominant staple of meat in the dark elf diet is a domesticated and bred creature known as an umber bulk, or "dire whirli' bug". A lesser cousin of the fearsome umber hulk, this stupid creature consists of a large chitin shell, resembling a primitive, even more beetle-like umber hulk (see the D&D Monster Manual). The creature is five feet tall, eight feet long, and weighs almost 2 tons, propelled by six stubby legs. Two small pairs of beady black eyes sprout out at the front. They are not very bright and easily herded from one grotto to the next, where they graze upon lichens and any other fungus they can scoop up with their slender tongue. Their short lives consist of little other than constant feeding, although they mate at least twice each year.

Umbur bulk cows produce a clutch of four to six eggs. Calves reach maturity in four weeks, and join the herd without the aid of their mother. Umbur bulks remain non-aggressive by nature even when guarding calves, and will pull their eyes and legs into their shells when threatened.



APPENDIX E: VITAL STATISTICS

A good sturdy spear can easily pierce the shell, so slaughtering them for meat is an easy task. The meat yielded is gray, and tastes somewhat like chicken.

Combat

Stampede (Ex): A frightened herd of umber bulk flee as a group in a random direction (but always away from the perceived source of danger). They literally run over anything of Medium size or smaller that gets in their way, dealing 1d10 points of damage for each five umber bulk in the herd (Reflex DC 18 half). The save DC is Strength-based.

- Asairvalk:** General in the dark elven Shadow Army.
Belaereda: Twilight elf word meaning “fighter”.
Celelada: Twilight elf word meaning “warrior”; a fighter of less prowess than a belaereda.
Celmehaian: A twilight elf’s second meal of the day.
Cynirkim: Corporal in the dark elven Shadow Army.
Defelarik: A drow’s first meal of the day.
Drow: An elven word meaning “dark elf;” originates with Drow/deltha.
Drow/deltha: Meaning “first of shadows”; the name of the first dark-skinned elven child.

Roll (1d100)	Female	Male	Of the House of
1-4	Asaibakil	Amaski	Aladan'na
5-8	Azaitelia	Amathen	Artakya
9-12	Chel'lestra	Amelak	Beradalin
13-16	Culajen	Bakhoryn	Cavavres
17-20	Cularkeda	Cyrakyrn	Cebasamin
21-24	Culexi	Devarek	Daxakariel
25-28	Cyanko	Eladarash	Deraesil'la
29-32	Cyriana	Heidelerichi	Freamar
33-36	Hanashari	Hulnoryn	Gyralin'non
37-40	Jelanik	Hurtesijek	Haloanon
41-44	Jeshela	Jeleksiar	Hanor'ra
45-48	Jeshodri	Kiteine	Har'robalaee
49-52	Lashalia	Mithelizek	Imerasala
53-56	Miekar'ra	Monrek	Jenniaxlya
57-60	Meskelia	Selekar	Kexithemios
61-64	Perleixus	Sel'labynkir	Klaberiel
65-68	Setimika	Shirosh	Larelad'dlan
69-72	Teshara	Sinhkor	Lhishora
73-76	Tulineadri	Sinkrel	Mavanator
77-80	Tultetika	Telawraki	Nalakara
81-84	Wylixelin	Torakeine	Oniraren
85-88	Wyorasceina	Tyrasceine	Pleverusla
89-92	Wyuxo	Wekrel	Raxamaeriel
93-96	Xelilia	Werel'lo	Sharasiki
97-100	Zelene	Xeb'beth	Taejenarai

Race	Adulthood	Barbarian	Bard	Cleric
Elf, Dark or Twilight	110 years	Rogue	Fighter	Druid
		Sorcerer	Paladin	Monk
			Ranger	Wizard
			+6d6	+10d6

Race	Middle Age*	Old**	Venerable**	Maximum Age
Elf, Dark or Twilight	175 years	263 years	350 years	+4d100 years

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Elf, Dark, man	3' 10"	+2d4	70 lbs.	x (1d4+1) lbs.
Elf, Dark, woman	3' 8"	+2d4	60 lbs.	x (1d4+1) lbs.
Elf, Twilight, man	4' 10"	+2d8	105 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.
Elf, Twilight, woman	4' 8"	+2d8	90 lbs.	x (2d4) lbs.

APPENDIX F: CITY MAP

They chose to be evil, and they make that same choice with every new generation born. Many would argue that this is the worst kind of evil - the evil freely chosen.

We present here an overhead map of a typical drow city, perfect for use by the Dungeon Master in his or her own campaign. The number of dark elf cities and settlements in the Underdark is left completely in the hands of the DM, as no one truly knows just how many there are... an ominous thought, to say the least.

a player who has read this far, close the covers and either set the book down or go back and read something else - this is not for your eyes. If you are a DM, then feel free to continue.



The individual dark elf is not a two-dimensional villain - she moves around too often to become static. She is constantly checking behind her, both metaphorically and literally, and she knows she must stay two steps ahead of everyone just to have a chance at survival. Even the common shopkeeper keeps her mind sharp and racing at a diabolical pace, much to the surprise of many a visiting foreign dignitary new to the Empire's ways.

Now that we have covered all the subject matter on dark elves that the players may be allowed to know, we can focus on the real dirt - the DM confidential material. If you are

SECRETS AND LIES (DM CONFIDENTIAL)

If you read the entirety of this book so far, then you may have noticed some inconsistencies and loose ends - fear not, this is intentional. The information dictated by Mithelizek was far from complete, as some things were intentionally changed, lied about or left out entirely. After all, a good wizard, like any magician, never reveals his tricks. Of course, there are pieces of information that not even Mithelizek himself is privy to, but the book covers those.

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