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# BUROK TORN: CITY UNDER SIEGE™



A SOURCEBOOK FOR 3RD EDITION FANTASY ROLEPLAYING

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LANDS



# BUROK TORN: CITY UNDER SIEGE™

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# Foreword

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The tragedy of Burok Torn is a tale that literally demands to be told. The fruitful result of a collaboration between two experienced gamers and one somewhat harried developer, this book endeavors to relate the trials and travails of two societies torn apart by the ravages of war and bound by the unyielding demands of honor. Because we started this sourcebook with a timeline and a history, somewhere in the middle of the project *Burok Torn* stopped being just another sourcebook and became something new — a glimpse into the world of the Scarred Lands before the Divine War.

This development made the book an even greater challenge. Jeff spent countless hours writing up nothing but names for clans of dwarves and giving them believable histories and backgrounds (he is, in fact, considering naming his next child after one of the dwarven kings). Jim was given the challenge of telling the entire history of the dark elves from the point of view of everyone but the dark elves. Needless to say, he learned plenty of new and creative ways to write and swear.

In the end, the two authors have created a vivid and believable environment for roleplaying. Though written for the Scarred Lands, it will enliven any campaign and provide your players with many opportunities for adventure. Enjoy the Scarred Lands' newest setting, and may the gods walk beside you in its dark tunnels.

Jim Sverapa & Jeff Harkness, Authors

Anthony Pryor, Developer

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# Introduction

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Nowhere is the ancient rivalry between elf and dwarf more desperate, violent, and tragic than in the secret tunnels beneath the Kelder Mountains of Ghelspad. Here, memories of betrayal and the rage of a dying god contend with the unbending pride of a martial, honor-bound race, while the outside world — the cast-off children of slain titans and the greedy masters of a powerful human state plot to steal the realm's riches and enslave its people.

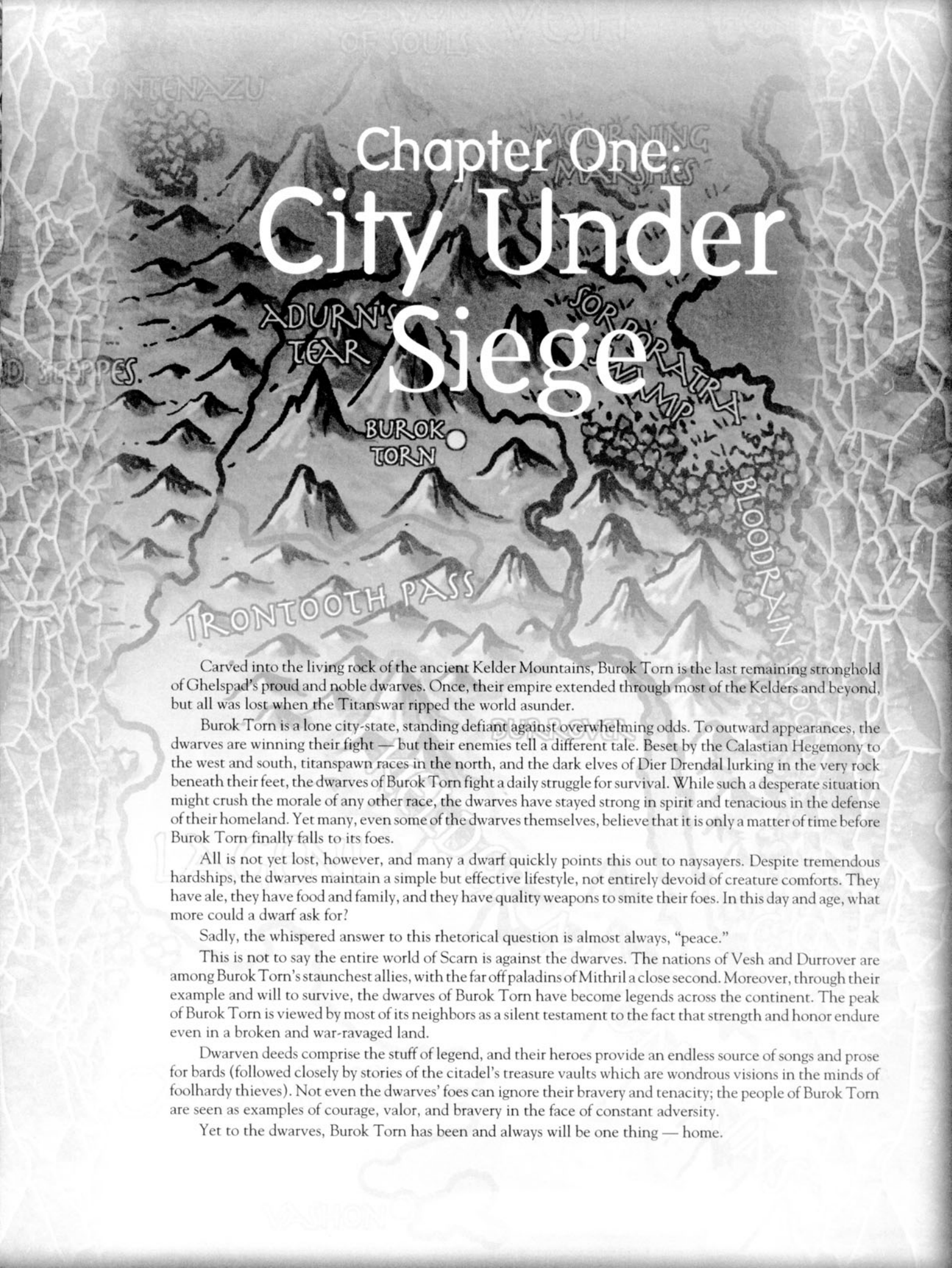
Dwarven characters will find a ready-made home in Burok Torn, or at the very least a safe haven. The guiding light of Ghelspad's dwarves, Burok Torn was founded long before the Divine War and survived disaster, siege, and treachery to become a virtual steel fist of defiance, standing tall against those who would bring it down. The dwarven rune masters command unique magical forces, and provide new and wondrous methods of spellcasting, while the citadel's elite warriors — the iron and stone guardsmen — are renowned across the continent for their martial prowess. And what other realm can claim that a god walks its corridors and is personally dedicated to its survival?

The answer, of course, is the dark elves, whose own god, trapped in a failing leaden body and forced to fight for his own survival, has devoted himself to the conquest of Burok Torn. The dark elves are evil, yes, but theirs is an evil borne of tragedy and crafted by necessity. Betrayed (or so they claim) by the dwarves, the dark elves struggle to save their dying god, knowing that if Nalthalos perishes, they will surely follow.

Although outsiders are not welcome in the heart of Burok Torn, adventurers will find plenty of opportunities to win the trust of the dwarves, and learn many of the citadel's secrets. Those who aid the dwarves in their fight with the dark elves will be treated with respect and admiration by the notoriously proud dwarves, but exploring the depths of the citadel may bring unexpected consequences. The roots of today's conflict are deep and painful, and player characters might learn the truth of that terrible day when the dwarves abandoned their allies to the fury of Chern. Such knowledge would be a terrible thing, yet even now the two races may again be reconciled, and common adventurers may play a role. If not, the cycle of violence is bound to continue, spiraling toward inevitable sorrow and loss.

These, then, are the underground realms of Burok Torn and Dier Drendal.





# Chapter One: City Under Siege

Carved into the living rock of the ancient Kelder Mountains, Burok Torn is the last remaining stronghold of Ghelspad's proud and noble dwarves. Once, their empire extended through most of the Kelders and beyond, but all was lost when the Titanswar ripped the world asunder.

Burok Torn is a lone city-state, standing defiant against overwhelming odds. To outward appearances, the dwarves are winning their fight — but their enemies tell a different tale. Beset by the Calastian Hegemony to the west and south, titanspawn races in the north, and the dark elves of Dier Drendal lurking in the very rock beneath their feet, the dwarves of Burok Torn fight a daily struggle for survival. While such a desperate situation might crush the morale of any other race, the dwarves have stayed strong in spirit and tenacious in the defense of their homeland. Yet many, even some of the dwarves themselves, believe that it is only a matter of time before Burok Torn finally falls to its foes.

All is not yet lost, however, and many a dwarf quickly points this out to naysayers. Despite tremendous hardships, the dwarves maintain a simple but effective lifestyle, not entirely devoid of creature comforts. They have ale, they have food and family, and they have quality weapons to smite their foes. In this day and age, what more could a dwarf ask for?

Sadly, the whispered answer to this rhetorical question is almost always, “peace.”

This is not to say the entire world of Scarn is against the dwarves. The nations of Vesh and Durrover are among Burok Torn's staunchest allies, with the far off paladins of Mithril a close second. Moreover, through their example and will to survive, the dwarves of Burok Torn have become legends across the continent. The peak of Burok Torn is viewed by most of its neighbors as a silent testament to the fact that strength and honor endure even in a broken and war-ravaged land.

Dwarven deeds comprise the stuff of legend, and their heroes provide an endless source of songs and prose for bards (followed closely by stories of the citadel's treasure vaults which are wondrous visions in the minds of foolhardy thieves). Not even the dwarves' foes can ignore their bravery and tenacity; the people of Burok Torn are seen as examples of courage, valor, and bravery in the face of constant adversity.

Yet to the dwarves, Burok Torn has been and always will be one thing — home.



## Looking to the Past

Twenty years ago, when those damnable drendali managed to claw their way into our library, they set fire to it. Needless to say, both King Thain and the rune wizards were incensed. At the time, I was the youngest "elder" of clan Fenex, being only 193 years old. So King Thain appointed me to the daunting task of creating a definitive history of Burok Torn, complete with a royal timeline. Then, about four years ago, I was contacted by Yugoman the Sage. He had heard of my project and was interested in viewing a history of our people. Being almost complete, I showed him what I had. He balked at the amount of history Burok Torn contained. He asked if I could "τρικω it back." I told him he could go jump in a forge.

Well, the matter was discussed among the elders of the conclave, and they decided it would be good for the people of Ghelspad, and hopefully the rest of Scarn, to learn our glorious history. What follows is an abridged version of my original history, condensed into a timeline, with important events from around the Scarred Lands noted. I hope you enjoy this brief look into the history of our proud people.

The following timeline utilizes the traditional Old Calendar (OC) and After Victory (AV) dating system common throughout Scarn. Note that as pre-war events are not well documented, and some even claim that time itself has changed since the end of the Divine War, thus many if not all of the OC dates, especially those that deal with the Divine War, dates are speculative.

Sincerely,

Tored Fenex, Chief Historian of Burok Torn





## A History of Conflict

A timeline of Burok Torn, with notes on the city of Dier Drendal, the dark elves, and important events from around the Scarred Lands also mentioned. Little history was recorded before the dwarves settled in the Kelders, and of what was recorded, much was lost or proclaimed grossly inaccurate.

? — The dwarvish race is created, some claim by the titan Golthagga for work in his forges. The dwarves themselves fiercely deny this, but have not themselves presented any theories about their own origins.

**2106 OC** - The Impregnable Citadel of Burok Torn founded by the Marked King Alathin. The shortened name, Burok Torn, roughly translates to "Dwarven Destiny." Dwarven miners and engineers immediately set to carving out the interior of the mountain.

**2108 OC** - Completion of the central core of Burok Torn. Goran's Fane constructed and hidden in the complex for King Alathin. Construction continues on family strongholds and outside defenses.

**2111 OC** - Dwarven Conclave established. Governing of day-to-day activities passed from King Alathin to conclave. First 12 councilors chosen when dwarven families arriving at Burok Torn receive visions sent by Goran warning of dangerous times ahead.

**2161 OC** - Obsidian-skinned elves discovered south of Irontooth Pass. Dwarves spend full year learning as much as possible about these mountain-dwelling elves, who call themselves the drendali, after their fantastic city of Dier Drendal.

**2168 OC** - Tentative trade established with elves of Dier Drendal. Aboveground and underground trade routes let Burok Torn, Dier Drendal, and nearby lands exchange many trade goods.

**2195 OC** - Strange crystal balls emblazoned with a central "eye" found in recently discovered natural caverns amid ruins of an ancient underground race. Crystal balls, along with other artifacts, collected and transported to dwarven treasure holds. These "crystal balls" prove to be ioun beholders, much to the dwarves' dismay.

**2196-2212 OC** - Ioun beholders escape the dwarven treasury, taking with them approximately 96% of the ioun stones held by the dwarves. The creatures roam the lower halls, attacking the dwarves for the next 35 years. Dwarves hunt the creatures with mixed success.

**2213 OC** - A group of over 100 ioun beholders enters central core of Burok Torn and attacks dwarven rulers. They are beaten back with heavy losses. Dwarves begin determined crusade to root out ioun beholders.

**2219 OC** - Ioun beholders finally wiped out or driven off. Only a handful of ioun stones are recaptured in working order.

**2221 OC** - Creation of *runic pennants* is approved by the conclave and King Alathin.

**2324 OC** - King Alathin dies of old age. Dwarves begin carving Alathin's face into the living rock of the Kelders. This act eventually became a dwarven tradition venerating fallen rulers. Alathin's body mysteriously vanishes from dwarven burial chambers a week after he is interred. Whispers begin that Alathin "faked" his death to pass rulership of Burok Torn to someone else so he could explore new areas of Scarn.

**2325 OC** - Kelder the Companion becomes king by divine proclamation of Goran and grudging assent from the council. Although unpopular, dwarves for the most part abide by decision. A few malcontents, however, speak against the new king and plant the seeds of rebellion.

**2345 OC** - Ten *runic pennants* completed and hung from mountainside of Burok Torn by dwarves who brave the treacherous climb and devastating cold.

**2360 OC** - Civil war erupts in the citadel over the succession of the throne. Burok Torn set aflame after runic magic ignites the stones during fighting between warring factions. Peaks of Kelder Mountains burn for four years as Burok Torn rune masters struggle to extinguish the magical blazes. Three of ten *runic pennants* destroyed in conflagration.

**2499 OC** - King Kelder the Companion dies of mysterious illness in last hours of year. Some attribute his death to a strange meteor shower that lit up Scarn's night sky and abruptly stopped as the final bell tolled midnight. King Kelder's son, Hroth, becomes new king.

**2598 OC** - Meteor shower illuminates Scarn's night sky for second time, but no deaths reported among the dwarves. Some claim the meteors signal that King Kelder shall soon arise to retake control of Burok Torn.

**2642 OC** - King Hroth killed in a forge explosion that immolates most of the citadel's remaining forges. No weapons are made in Burok Torn's forges for approximately 20 years as they are rebuilt. Hroth's son, Galshain Gimrut, becomes king.

**2744 OC** - Burok Torn struck by Kadum's mighty fist during titan's rampage across Scarn. Upper peak of the citadel shattered by the blow. Portions of the Kelders smashed to rubble, but dwarves survive by hiding inside their mountain home.

**2810 OC** - The Charduni Empire on Ghelspad, founded by dark-skinned dwarves who worship the god Chardun, begins to expand into surrounding territories.

**2856 OC** - Burok Torn repels an invasion by blood reapers, apparently sent by Hrinruuk the Hunter

to test dwarven mettle. Legend holds that the reapers were defeated so soundly that the Hunter himself was impressed and never tried to attack the dwarves again.

**2900 OC** - The Charduni Empire continues to expand. Charduni begin to raid dwarven caravans. Burok Torn military leaders believe war is inevitable and begin to prepare.

**2910-2912 OC** - The Charduni army marches on Burok Torn, laying siege to the citadel in the hopes of subjugating the city and enslaving its inhabitants. Two tattered *runic pennants* fall to the enemy.

**2913 OC** - Siege of Burok Torn continues. King Galshain and General Hoyxalmar, leader of Charduni army, fall to their deaths as their armies contend below. The angered dwarves then break the siege and eventually help drive the Charduni back to western Ghelspad. Noraim Diamondfist becomes young king of Burok Torn after his father's and oldest brother's deaths at hands of Charduni dwarves.

**2920 OC** - Charduni consult with a cabal of evil spellcasters known as the black sorcerers of Ukrudan. Together, the two groups attempt to unlock the secrets of rune magic, and the black sorcerers craft several potent runic spells.

**3333 OC** - King Noraim Diamondfist dies of wasting disease he contracted after hunt for titanspawn breeding ground in the Kelder Mountains. Some dwarves think Noraim's attempt to find the breeding ground angered Mormo, who asked Chern to strike down the arrogant king.

**3354 OC** - Creation of Goran's Herald by Elder Conclave. Jhoc Mbud becomes Goran's first herald.

**3365 OC** - Excavation of Baereth Marn begins, with dwarves and drendali using lead golems to speed initial construction.

**3380 OC** - Gorgon raids begin to disrupt trade in the Kelders and threaten the overland route to the citadel.

**3382-3384 OC** - Gorgon attacks destroy established trade routes. Trade grinds to halt as dwarves and elves face organized push by gorgons, led by high gorgon Masetex. Gorgons repulsed after daring raid during which dwarven and dark elven warriors track and slay Masetex in his Palace of Scaled Dreams.

**3385 OC** - Gambedel's Bridge completed. Burok Torn linked to Baereth Marn. Excavation continues in earnest, utilizing both dwarven and elven engineers.

**3394 OC** - King Ardell the Unforgiving dies when lead golem given as gift to the royal family goes on rampage, slaying numerous iron and stone guardsmen along with the king. The dark elves help destroy the creation, but relations between the dwarves and the dark elves become strained as a result.

**3465 OC (?)** - Titanswar erupts and Scarn is thrown into chaos. Most of the history from this time period is lost or destroyed by war. Some dwarves call

for isolation from the world, but others believe that Burok Torn should join the divine races and fight the titans. King Dragh and his retinue are on a diplomatic mission, and are urgently called home.

**3466 OC (?)** - King Dragh and contingent of iron and stone guardsmen try to make it back to Burok Torn but are ambushed and wiped out by Mormo's titanspawn. His son, Draghnor (to be known to history as Draghnor the Forgotten) commits his nation to fight alongside the divine races.

**3475 OC (?)** - Burok Torn besieged by various titanspawn armies. Remaining *runic pennants* destroyed. Upper spires of Burok Torn left defenseless. Several human sorcerers found to be aiding the titanspawn using a debased and evil form of dwarven rune magic.

**3480 OC (?)** - Contingent of hags, believed to be involved in King Dragh's death, captured while trying to infiltrate Burok Torn. Creatures are kept alive to be tried for their crimes. One hag begins a rumor that Dragh was taken alive and yet lives.

**3481 OC (?)** - King Draghnor goes in search of his father. Draghnor is subsequently killed by gargantuan bone lord that incorporated his father's bones. Rule of Burok Torn passes to Draghnor's brother, Thune the Wise.

**3490 OC (?)** - Rune priests determine that the evil rune magic originates in the Ukrudan desert, and is a result of information stolen by the Charduni and passed on to the black sorcerers. Thune and his advisors are horrified to discover that the black sorcerers have allied themselves with the titans and are using their rune magic against the divine races.

**3492 OC (?)** - A great army sallies forth from Burok Torn under the command of Norl Steelheart, determined to find and destroy the black sorcerers.

**3495 OC (?)** - Norl's army finds and lays siege to the black sorcerers' citadel, deep in the Ukrudan desert. The siege proves long and costly.

**3503 OC (?)** - The dwarves finally break the black sorcerers' resistance and destroy the order and its citadel utterly. The threat of evil rune magic is gone, but Norl returns to Burok Torn with only a few hundred of the thousands of dwarves who set off on the expedition. After this costly victory, the isolationist faction within Burok Torn grows more vocal, calling on Thune to withdraw from the alliance.

**3508 OC (?)** - Dwarven army led by Ungar the Smith is wiped out by a horde of Thulkas' goblins. Although the dwarves continue to officially declare common cause with the divine races, Burok Torn has been badly weakened, and sends no more armies to aid the divine cause. Dwarves from other regions fight and suffer grievous losses. Resentment toward Burok Torn for its isolation grows, and continues in some communities to this day.

**3520 OC (?)** - Chern infiltrates Baereth Marn.



**3521 OC (?)** - Baereth Marn succumbs to Chern, and dwarves are forced to abandon second city-state. Battle of Gamedel's Bridge, during which Nalthalos is believed slain in battle with Chern. Later discovered that dark elf god was reconstituted in lead golem by elves of Dier Drendal. Relations between dwarves and dark elves effectively ended. Some time after this date, Chern attacks high elves in Termana and is destroyed.

**3527 OC (?)** - Dier Drendal sunk beneath the Kelders by Nalthalos, after demigod of the drendali realizes he cannot cure himself or leave the lead golem shell within which he was placed.

**1 AV** - Thain born to King Thune the Wise and Queen Jana. The great waterclock in the city's heart is restarted and has kept time ever since.

**45 AV** - Thaal Mareken becomes second of Goran's Heralds with Jhoc Mbud's passing.

**90 AV** - Prince Virduk commits patricide and assumes throne of Calastia.

**92 AV** - Irontooth Pass falls to King Virduk and the Calastian Hegemony. Death of King Thune at hands of Calastian forces. Thain assumes Burok Torn throne.

**95 AV** - Farazon asks use of remaining Devanal Arch to heal Nalthalos. Goran and King Thain refuse.

**97 AV** - Dark elven attacks against Burok Torn begin and continue to present day.

**112 AV** - Calastian forces reach gates of Burok Torn and lay siege. Blood Monsoon drives Calastians off, but dwarves are unable to capitalize on their victory and Irontooth remains in human hands.

**123 AV** - King Thain's wife and daughter killed when Cult of Ancients assassin unleashes demon during banquet. Four councilors of Dwarven Conclave killed during intense fighting in banquet hall, as is assassin, who throws himself into demon's clutches rather than face Thain's vengeance. After slaying the demon himself, King Thain spends next 21 years in private mourning.

**144 AV** - King Thain marries the rune priestess Krysara in elaborate ceremony held in midair in central core of Burok Torn. Celebrations last for over two weeks.

**146 AV** - First dark elf diplomatic overture to Calastia undertaken.

**149 AV** - Queen Krysara gives birth to Prince Turen. The child is nicknamed Thaal for his affinity toward Goran's Herald. Dark elven raids increase in frequency and strength.

**150 AV** - Present day. Goran's Herald nearing end of his life, sparking unrest among Burok Torn's noble families. Dark elven raids continue.

## History and Memory

Even if Burok Torn should fall tomorrow, the memory of this holdout dwarven nation would linger for centuries to come. People in all nations, even beyond the shores of Ghelspad, speak of Burok Torn's defiance in the face of overwhelming odds. Many tell tales of how the dwarves held back King Virduk's legions until the Blood Monsoon decimated the Calastians and drove them back. Others speak of the dwarves' fight against the dark elves, though descriptions of Burok Torn's enemies vary wildly — from gigantic subterranean demons to gibbering black-skinned imps. Most residents of Ghelspad believe dark elves to be a myth or, at best, extinct. The dwarves of Burok Torn, however, know the truth.

What few realize is how *long* Burok Torn has lived in a state of war. To find the only true peace that has ever existed for any length of time in the dwarven citadel, one must go back to the founding of the nation by King Alathin and the demigod Goran. Even then, the titanspawn dwelling in the natural caverns of the Kelder peaks needed to be cleared, forcing the dwarves to begin the history of their mighty nation with bloodshed.

That fearful bloodshed continues today, and the forces arrayed against the dwarves have grown much stronger. With their numbers dwindling, the dwarves' indomitable morale is always tempered by the fear that someday the citadel may fall, causing them to flee or die with their homeland. Only when Burok Torn's last defender falls can anyone truly claim to have beaten the stubborn dwarves.

## A King Rises

Before there was a Burok Torn on Scarn, the dwarven people were scattered across the planet, most living as nomadic primitives. Some say the dwarven runes aided in communication between these far-flung places, with runes left in one area "speaking" when dwarves in a distant land spoke to corresponding runes.

Even then, when Scarn was beautiful and full of vigor, the dwarves were dying out. Their slow birth rates and hard nomadic lifestyle took a vicious toll on their children. Few survived childhood, and those who did often suffered from deformities or malnutrition. Even healthy dwarves found themselves preyed upon by titanspawn.

The coming of the Marked King changed many things for the dwarven people.

From the start, Alathin was unusual for a dwarf. He was golden-haired, with gentle blue eyes and a strange birthmark on his right cheek. No one knew where he came from, and Alathin himself did not speak of his parentage. Nevertheless, dwarves all across Scarn felt the power of his charismatic leadership.

Where most clan leaders looked no further than the setting sun, living their lives from day to day, Alathin spoke often of his people's "destiny." When some complained of the hard life they led, Alathin would nod and speak of tougher times to come unless all dwarves united for the greater good. His quiet wisdom, fearless bravery, and frustrating tendency to answer questions with more questions elevated him to near-legendary status among his people. Some saw him as a prophet, others as the leader who would finally save his people.

All saw a king.

When Alathin called upon the dwarves to cast off their wandering ways, many readily packed their belongings and followed him. Alathin gained followers as he crossed into new countries on his trek across Scarn, eventually reaching the continent of Ghelspad and the place that would come to be called Irontooth Pass.

Some tales say that Alathin's priests fell to their knees when they saw the jagged peak of Burok Torn, the shape that nearly matched the strange mark on the dwarf prophet's cheek. The peak was intact in those days, before the mighty fist of Kadum the Mountainshaker reduced it to its present shape.

The dwarves spent the first winter of 2105 OC living in caves on the mountain's southern face. Many suffered greatly during this time — thousands died from cold and hunger, and from the travails of the march. Alathin, in his usual mysterious way, called them "the fortunate ones."

Even before the first thaw of spring spread through the mountain passes, dwarven miners had set to work building their new home. Dwarves moved into the mountain, whole families living in the tunnels until more permanent homes could be excavated in the mountain proper. It was not ideal, but at least the tunnels provided some safety from the elements and the wandering titanspawn that had begun preying on the dwarves as they huddled in the freezing peaks.

## One Clan Shall Lead Them

While Alathin is remembered as the founder of Burok Torn, King Kelder is widely regarded as the founder of the clan. The Kelder clan is no longer, however, as the last surviving relative of Kelder the Companion died more than 100 years before the Titanswar. Yet King Kelder, in his benevolence, saw fit to welcome all dwarves into an extended family, creating for them the Kelder clan, which they could claim whether they were blood relatives or not. Over the years, many families chose to adopt the king's name as their own, expanding the Kelder line to include most of the families in Burok Torn. The name has since become nearly synonymous with "dwarf," with all of Burok Torn's inhabitants professing to belong to the Kelder clan.

Because of this attitude, many outsiders mistakenly assume that all the dwarves are members of the same family. The dwarves make no efforts to correct such presumptions, because they themselves believe that all of their people are united by common blood, struggle, and sacrifice, making them effectively members of the same clan.





## A Nation Asunder

The dwarves of Burok Torn and the dark elves of Dier Drendal were not always enemies — far from it. In fact, many of the newer halls of Burok Torn were crafted with the assistance of the drendali (although the proud dwarves deny this fact vigorously). This detail, however, is ancient history, long forgotten and wiped from the minds of all dwarves today since the beginning of the war.

While history can be forgotten, however, it cannot be changed.

Fifty-five years after King Alathin founded Burok Torn, the dwarves experienced their first encounter with a new race of creatures. These creatures — beautiful, ebon-skinned beings with a natural talent for magic — dwelt in the valleys and glens of the mighty Kelder Mountain range, south of Irontooth Pass, but well within the expanding domain of the dwarves of Burok Torn.

Shortly after the discovery, a dwarven diplomatic party journeyed from Burok Torn to investigate this new race. They were surprised to discover that the new race called themselves “elves.” The dwarves had encountered elves before, but they had always been haughty, pale-skinned creatures who wanted little to do with the diminutive cave-dwellers. These dark-skinned creatures were adept in many of the same areas as the dwarves, and their magical abilities helped to supplement those of the dwarves’ own rune priests. The dark ones’ homeland was called Dier Drendal, and after several more years of sporadic but

friendly contact, diplomatic relations officially began in 2168 OC.

Dwarven texts from the time detail the fabulous city of Dier Drendal and the many delicate fineries crafted there by the elven people. The most notable of these were the massive golems created by elven artificers and sorcerers. Over the years, many golems were given as gifts to the dwarves by the drendali. In fact, in the decades before the Titanswar, noble dwarf families not uncommonly kept a Dier Drendal golem in their service, doing chores from feeding and bathing children to stoking and maintaining the stronghold forges. These texts are now considered heresy and are kept only as a sign of respect for the dwarven kings and counselors who penned them in their ignorance of the true nature of the dark-skinned devils.

When the Titanswar began, the dwarves maintained trade with the dark elves using underground passages constructed over the years to avoid attacks on trade caravans by gorgons and other titanspawn. The trade city of Baereth Marr, some leagues west of Burok Torn, served as an important point of contact between the dwarves and the dark elves, and together the two races labored to expand its tunnels and chambers.



With the Titanswar heating up, the dark elves began trading less and less as they fought for survival. For their part, the dwarves offered the Dier Drendal elves a home in the stone citadel of Burok Torn, but the proud dark elves refused to abandon their beautiful city to the ravages of the titanspawn. Yet contact between the two races continued, especially in the expanding city of Baereth Marn.

During the war, Burok Torn's outer ramparts sustained considerable damage, including the loss of the magnificent *runic pennants* created by generations of dwarves. Dwarven engineering ensured that the inner workings of the citadel remained safe and intact, with life continuing as normal. Dwarven war parties ventured into the outside world, fighting alongside the other divine races and aiding in the struggle against the titanspawn. But these battles were costly, and a growing number of dwarves began to openly speak against Burok Torn's participation in the war.

## The Rune War

Amid the chaos of the Titanswar, another conflict erupted, one that would eventually cause the dwarven nation enormous sorrow. In the late 2800s and early 2900s, the empire of the Charduni, black-skinned dwarves in service to the Great General Chardun, had actually laid siege to Burok Torn. Eventually defeated, the Charduni carried some of the secrets of dwarven rune magic to the Ukrudan desert, where they worked closely with a cabal of human spellcasters known as the black sorcerers. In the end, though they proved unable to duplicate the dwarves' mastery of runic casting, the allies were able to craft their own crude runes, and use them against their foes.

The dwarves had always suspected that short-lived humans were capricious, and the conduct of the black sorcerers seemed proof positive. Upon the outbreak of the war, the cabal declared common cause with the titans, and turned their rune magic against both the Charduni and the dwarves of Burok Torn. During several sieges, the dwarves noted the presence of dark-clad human sorcerers among the titanspawn, and detected the use of a strange form of runic spellcasting. Eventually, the rune priests found the truth, and realized that the black sorcerers had betrayed even their evil allies, the Charduni, turning their magic against the dark dwarves.

Grimly, King Thune gathered his best warriors into a great army and placed it under the command of his friend, Norl Steelheart. Withdrawing these fighters from the Titanswar and the defense of Burok Torn was a calculated risk, but the threat of the human sorcerers was too much to ignore, and Norl's army departed with heavy hearts, knowing that most of its members would never see their home again.

Deep in the Ukrudan desert, Norl and his army came to grips with the sorcerers, defeating several of

their armies and finally laying a nearly decade-long siege to their main citadel. Some tales — denied by the dwarves — claim that the surviving Charduni, as revenge for their betrayal, actually aided Norl in his struggle against the black sorcerers. Although in the end Norl's forces finally breached the sorcerers' defenses and utterly exterminated the order, the cost was almost too high. Norl returned home, wounded and near death, with only a few hundred warriors.

It was a blow from which the dwarves would never recover. Five years later, Burok Torn's last remaining field army was destroyed by the goblins, and the isolationists had the evidence they needed. Burok Torn needed to see to its own defenses. The humans, elves and other divine races could fight on their own. Although Thune supported the divine cause until his dying day, Burok Torn would send out no more armies. In any event, the dwarves would soon have more trouble than they knew how to deal with, for their citadel had attracted the attention of the titans.

Chern was coming, and nothing would ever be the same.

## Baereth Marn, The Diseased Grave

The crumbling peak of Baereth Marn still stands in the shadow of Burok Torn, but this planned second city of the dwarves serves today only as a haunted reminder of the lost golden age of the dwarves and the haughtiness of those that would seek to defy fate.

Soon after the defeat of the titan Gaurak, the gods turned their attention to Chern, the Lord of Plagues. Pursued by the gods, and knowing that they could destroy him, Chern sought refuge in Baereth Marn. When Chern struck, the city housed thousands of dwarves and drendali — laborers, merchants and ordinary inhabitants. Until this time, neither the dwarves nor the elves had been the target of Chern's wrath. Now, unfortunately, this was to change.

When Chern invaded Baereth Marn, the titan liquefied, filling passages with diseased bile, flowing through halls, seeping under doors, and gushing into chambers. A stench of death and pestilence filled the halls, and soon the city swarmed with deadly insects, stripping the flesh of any caught in their path. The bones of workers fell beside their tools as Chern swept over them, their bare skeletons contorted in agony.

The leaders of Burok Torn reacted immediately, sending dwarves and visiting elves rushing to seal the tunnels that connected the citadel to Baereth Marn. Only Gamedel's Bridge, a stone span over a bottomless chasm, was left open and heavily guarded. The dwarves fervently hoped their kin might somehow find this one open passage and use it to escape. Yet all sent to guard Gamedel's Bridge were under strict orders: collapse the bridge and the chamber that housed it if anything other than a dwarf or dark elf appeared.



The dwarves and elves trapped in Baereth Marn fought on, though they knew that they were doomed. Brave engineers sacrificed themselves to allow others to escape. Dark elves and dwarves stood shoulder-to-shoulder and fought back Chern's minions and the questing tendrils of his liquefied body. Those defiant souls are still remembered in the dwarven songs for saving whole families of innocents. Many elves also perished in this fashion, but to their shame, the dwarves of today do not speak of them.

Dwarven rune masters brought their abilities to bear against the invading titan. Combining their powers, they crafted shimmering walls of magical force strong enough to stop the enraged titan and his servants. Yet the titan always survived — and always sent new swarms of insects or other foul creatures against the defenders. Slowly, even the magic of the rune masters began to weaken in the face of the Scourge's onslaught.

In a final act of defiance, the dwarves sundered Baereth Marn's forges, releasing a great river of molten metal. Riding the waves toward inevitable destruction were the masters of the sundered forges, finding footing on shards of stone or melting slabs of metal, knowing full well that they were on a suicide mission. Laden with alchemist's fire, these brave souls ignited themselves once they reached Chern, burning the titan and consuming themselves so that their flesh could not be used against their own people. Many of Chern's minions were destroyed in this way, and the titan himself was sorely wounded.

Even these sacrifices were in vain, however. The brave dwarven and dark elven defenders of Baereth Marn withstood the Scourge for 61 days before at last succumbing to the titan's diseases. In death, these heroes bought their people enough time to create a means to destroy the titan once and for all.

## The Bridge of Betrayal

The final act in the tragedy of Baereth Marn was soon to be played out, and in the end it would shatter two civilizations and lay the foundation for a terrible conflict that continues to this day. Together, and in consultation with their respective gods, the dwarves and the dark elves worked to formulate a battle strategy calculated not just to defeat Chern: they meant to destroy the titan entirely.

The goddess Madriel had long been an advocate of Goran and the dwarves, and when Goran and his priests hit upon a plan to defeat Chern, they approached the Redeemer, asking for her cooperation. The plan, Goran told her, was to draw the Plague Lord to Madriel's extraplanar domain, where the goddess was most powerful, and could destroy him utterly. Madriel was at first reluctant to allow Chern's sickness into her realm. In those days, the gods were less secure — not yet able to manifest themselves as avatars, the gods faced real destruction in battle and were at peril even on their home planes. Despite this,

Madriel was confident enough in her powers that she felt she and her minions — archons, devas, and planetars — could defeat the titan once and for all.

With Madriel's approval, the dwarves put their plan into action. The key was a powerful artifact called the Devenal Arch. Created by the finest dwarven runesmiths and priests, the arch was built of pure white marble, inscribed with potent runes and imbued with Madriel's healing magic to form a dimensional gateway, leading to the Redeemer's realm. The arch was positioned over the center span of Gambedel's Bridge, the sole remaining route into Burok Torn, through which Chern and his diseased minions must pass to attack the main dwarven city. The arch had the additional power to cure all diseases of those who passed through it, and the dwarves hoped that this would further weaken Chern and make him vulnerable to Madriel and her celestial allies.

For all the work that had gone into the creation of the arch, it had limitations. The dwarves were uncertain how long the gateway would remain open, given the size and power of the being that it was expected to transport. In all likelihood, once activated, the runes would only be able to allow Chern's passage for a few minutes before they were depleted and the arch rendered useless. Furthermore, the runes would take several minutes to activate fully, and Chern would need to be held back for that period. Anyone trapped on the wrong side of the arch once it was activated would have to retreat through it and be transported to Madriel's realm — not necessarily a bad situation, for the goddess could be warned of Chern's imminent arrival. Yet the warriors who fought to hold Chern back would suffer terribly.

At last, Goran revealed his plan, and the existence of the arch, to Nalthalos and the drendali. Nalthalos announced that his people were ready to fight, and agreed to hold the bridge until the dwarven runemasters could activate the gate, then either lure Chern through the arch by feigned retreat or push him through by force. This was a brave strategy, for Nalthalos and his people risked utter destruction in the process.

Even then, as dwarf and elf stood together against a common foe, Goran made a crucial omission. He neglected to tell the drendali of a second Devenal Arch, located deep inside Burok Torn, that could serve as an escape route to the astral plane should the citadel fall. Although the thought of their beloved citadel falling to the enemy was almost too much for the dwarves to bear, even the most dedicated of its defenders had to acknowledge the possibility. The runesmiths were confident that the second arch would allow the entire population to escape before its power was expended.

No one is certain why Goran did not tell the drendali the whole truth. Certainly the arch could have been used to save the dark elves as well, but

Goran wished to save it for his people alone. It may well be that the malign influence of Chern was already beginning to make itself felt in Goran's mind, but whatever the cause, his lie of omission was nothing compared to the disaster which was to come.

When word came through that the last of Baereth Marn's defenders had succumbed to Chern's ravages, the alliance knew that the final battle loomed. The armies gathered: the drendali on the far side of the bridge, the dwarves and their runemasters on the near side, both little knowing that utter catastrophe lay ahead.

In the end, both races deserved blame for the catastrophe. A dark elven traitor, his name since lost, approached Chern, seeking power and influence, and told the titan of the Devenal Arch. The elf got his wish, though perhaps not in the way that he wanted it, and was transformed into a fearsome glabrezu demon then forced into Chern's service. The demon, Xa'cravka, was to literally plague Burok Torn for many years. Chern, in the meantime, schemed to disrupt the alliance and destroy the two hated demigods. His first victim was Goran.

The dwarf god embodied everything that a dwarf should be — brave, bold, loyal, and matchless in battle. Like others of his race, however, he was possessed of an overdeveloped sense of honor. Any oath he swore was unbreakable, unless someone else broke their bond first. If treated with dishonor, Goran and all dwarves would instantly disown and reject the oathbreakers. While Goran was powerful, he was still a mere demigod, insignificant in the shadow of the vastly powerful titans.

At first the visions were minor, if disturbing — images of slain dwarves, weeping widows, and orphaned children forced once more to wander Scarn, their home destroyed. Goran believed these to be images of what would happen if Chern triumphed, and his resolve to stand with the elves was strengthened.

Slowly, though, the visions began to change. Goran saw dark elven warriors massacring his people and dwarves enslaved in the city of Dier Drendal. The final vision was the worst: the dark elf god Nalthalos stabbing a poisoned dagger into Goran's own back as the dwarven god stood to face Chern. As the vision faded, Nalthalos and Chern both laughed at the dying god, and darkness swallowed him up.

So close to Chern's malign influence, Goran was overwhelmed by the visions, and for a time actually believed them to be true reflections of the future. Time was short, he realized — even now his armies gathered and the treacherous Nalthalos' plan was being put into action.

On the bridge, a fearful droning sound grew, as millions of tiny insects swarmed into the chamber, heralding the arrival of the Plague Lord. Dark elves bared weapons and prepared spells, while dwarven

runemasters began to intone the words that would activate the gate.

Then Goran appeared, resplendent in his shining armor, axe in his hand, and spoke.

"Traitorous elves," he snarled. "I have seen the truth. Your duplicity shall be punished. I bid my people return to Burok Torn and leave you to your fate."

Nalthalos and the drendali stared in horror as the dwarves retreated. Many dwarves were confused and uncertain, but their god had spoken and they had no choice but to obey. Warriors slung their weapons, priests put up their holy symbols, the runemasters ceased their chanting, and the army departed.

Then Chern erupted from the corridor, rushing over the dark elves like an unclean flood. Dozens perished in the initial onslaught, and even Nalthalos was forced back through the now useless Devenal Arch. The arch itself was smashed along with the entire center span of Gambedel's Bridge as Chern surged over it, then descended upon Nalthalos. The demigod defended as best he could, but the power of a titan proved greater than any could imagine, and for the first time Nalthalos felt the agony of disease coursing through his body. Plague-coated blades pierced his flesh, and diseased insects swarmed into his open mouth and eyes. Beset, feeling his life slipping away, Nalthalos collapsed, and the Plague Lord loomed over him, preparing to deliver the killing blow.

Even as Chern moved to destroy the wounded demigod, a shaft of golden light rose from the depths below as Madriel the Redeemer arrived. She had seen the disaster from her planar home and now was determined to aid those in need. Clad in shining armor, held aloft on pure white wings, the Angel of Mercy struck at the plague lord with her spear, driving Chern back.

The Unclean One struck back, and soon the two were locked in a deadly struggle. As Nalthalos lay dying and his healers desperately struggled to save him, Madriel was forced to give ground to Chern, step by step. Yet even as her strength failed, and it seemed that Chern would once more triumph, two more mighty beings joined the fight — Corean the Avenger, his face grim with rage, and the warrior-god Vangal, a terrifying vision in blood-caked armor and filthy, matted black hair. Both turned their full might against Chern. Already weakened, the Plague Lord fled, with the two gods in hot pursuit.

Chern's flight ended in Termana, where — making little distinction between the dark elves and the high elves — he sought to take vengeance by slaying the high elven demigod. Though Chern succeeded, it proved his undoing, for the enraged elves overwhelmed him, at last putting the Lord of Plagues to rest. Chern's terrible curse forever marked these elves, but that is another story.





Even then, as the dark elves gathered their wounded and mourned for their god, Goran returned at the head of the dwarven army. Heedless of the black glances cast at him by the drendali, he approached the stricken Nalthalos.

"So perish oathbreakers, dark one," he said, then addressed the elven survivors. "You have chosen war and treachery over peace and brotherhood, but I grant you more mercy than you would have granted us. You may leave this place with your lives, but you are never to return."

The drendali were stunned, and even then might still have been able to persuade Goran of their innocence, but then the weakened Nalthalos, maddened by the plague and furious at the dwarves for their betrayal, spat in Goran's face then reached out with the last of his strength, grabbing the dwarf god's beard and ripping a portion of it from him. He then cursed the dwarves, swearing eternal enmity and calling upon his people to avenge him. His priests carried his wounded body away from the dwarves.

Goran gazed into the chasm where the bridge had collapsed and said, "Let this gulf between us always be," said Goran. "For like it, your treachery is without depth, and can never be filled."

With that, the dwarves departed, leaving the dark elves to their rage and their sorrow.

The titan Chern was truly a master of plagues, and in that final battle he proved that not all diseases afflict the body. His foul touch had corrupted the god of the dwarves, for although to this day he remains a steadfast champion of justice and truth, and a staunch defender of his people, he has never forgiven the dark elves, and along with his people, still clings to the belief that they intended to betray him.

The dark elves were not spared Chern's ravages either, for they are today a grim and wicked people, driven on by hatred and memories of betrayal. Once, they were a peaceful and admirable race, dedicated to magic and the arts, but now they are angry and bitter, and with each passing year their rage grows, now directed not only at the dwarves, but at all the divine races and the gods whom they feel abandoned them.

As for Nalthalos, he was saved, after a fashion, by his people, who crafted a mighty lead golem body for him. He lives on to this day, driven by hatred, seeking to take Burok Torn and avenge himself upon the dwarves. The golem body is so bound to Scarn that not even the most powerful magic can transport him to his home on the Astral Plane, where he might be able to heal himself, and with every day his grasp on existence grows weaker.

The dwarves remember the final days of Baereth Marn as the Battle of Baereth's Passing. They still believe that Goran's visions were true, and that the dark elves conspired with Chern to destroy Burok Torn. Holes in this story are usually ignored or explained away, and it may well be that even Goran has come to believe what is, in the end, nothing more

than a comforting fabrication. That the dwarves' very survival was founded upon a tragic failure of dwarven honor is Burok Torn's darkest and most terrible secret.

The dark elves, hundreds of whom actually fought in the battle, remember the events in "The Ballad of Betrayer's Bridge," a much more accurate account of the day. "Betrayer's Bridge" is a somber bardic song that ends with many creative curses against the descendants of those who left the dark elves to die. Many dark elven performers who sing the song in the depths of Dier Drendal enjoy adding newly coined curses to the ode. Once, they were a good and kind people, but today those who even acknowledge their existence believe them to be a cruel and evil race.

Baereth Marn remains a diseased and tormented peak, the bones of thousands of dwarves and dark elves interred within. The passage to Gambedel's Bridge was collapsed soon after the battle and now lies filled with rubble. No one has lain eyes on the place in many years, and few dwarves or elves would care to see it again.

Baereth Marn is a blighted city of the dead. No living thing has ventured within its walls since Chern's defeat, although some titanspawn and undead have forced their way past the sealed exits. The dwarves of Burok Torn fight these creatures with heavy hearts, for they are a reminder of ancient evil. Some are even the shambling remains of their own kinsmen. The peak still casts its shadow on Burok Torn, shrouding both dwarves and elves in unending gloom and sorrow.

It was not until years after the tragedy that Nalthalos's herald, the imp Farazon, discovered the existence of the second Devenal Arch, still lying unused in the depths of Burok Torn. Many of its powers had drained away — although its connection to the Astral Plane remained strong, it no longer held the great healing energies that it once had. This discovery fired a tiny spark of hope in the drendali, for it was possible that dark elven priests could once more imbue the artifact with healing magic, and the dark elven wizards believe that the arch can be overcharged with enough arcane energy to transport even Nalthalos' golem body to the Astral Plane. The combination of healing magic and a return to his home plane may be enough to cure Nalthalos and return him to his former state.

Unfortunately, the drendali know that the dwarves would never allow this, and even in his reduced state Nalthalos is too full of hatred and anger to ever ask. And so the war began that rages to this day, as the dark elves seek to infiltrate Burok Torn and steal or capture the arch for their own use.

## A Time to Rebuild

After the Titanswar, the dwarves turned their attention toward rebuilding their lives. Unlike many other races, who had suffered terribly in the war, the



dwarves had spent most of their time protected by Burok Torn's stone walls, and had an easier time than most.

All the same, the citadel took much damage. The dwarves spent years repairing cracks and fractures caused by earth tremors and displacements. Some chambers were too dangerous for habitation and were abandoned. Broken masonry and rubble was carted out of the citadel or used for construction elsewhere. In one of the citadel's great dining halls, a large fallen slab of stone was transformed into what is now called Goran's Table, representing a place of great honor where the most influential warriors and priests take their meals. Deeper in Burok Torn, mining tunnels had collapsed, but most of these were restored and mining operations restarted.

While most damage to the interior of the mountain has been repaired, Burok Torn's outer ramparts were shattered and today remain a stark, ugly reminder of the war and its aftermath.

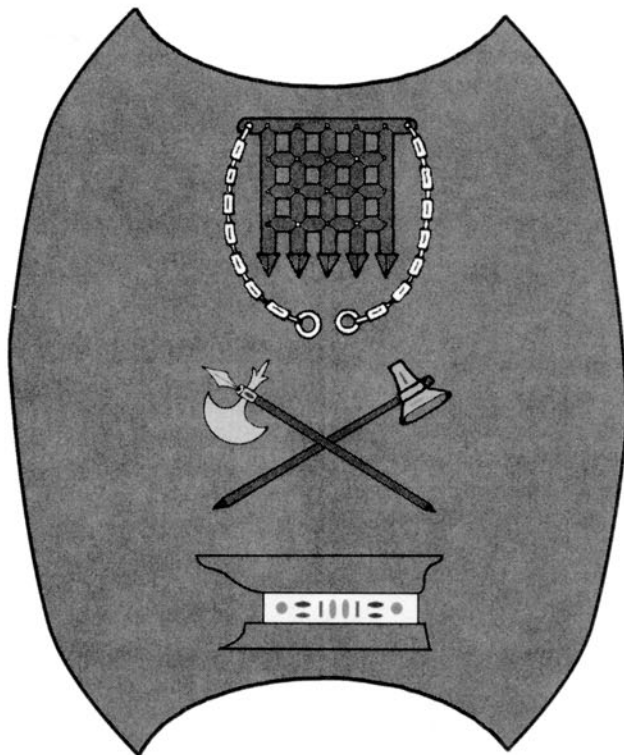
Since the end of the Titanswar, the dwarves of Burok Torn have faced new challenges, both from their one-time allies the dark elves and from the treacherous attacks of King Virduk of Calastia, who has set greedy eyes upon Irontooth Pass and the dwarven citadel beyond.

The dark elves' attacks have thus far been straightforward, consisting primarily of head-on charges into Burok Torn's lowest chambers in an attempt to gain ground and, ultimately, the Devanal Arch hidden in

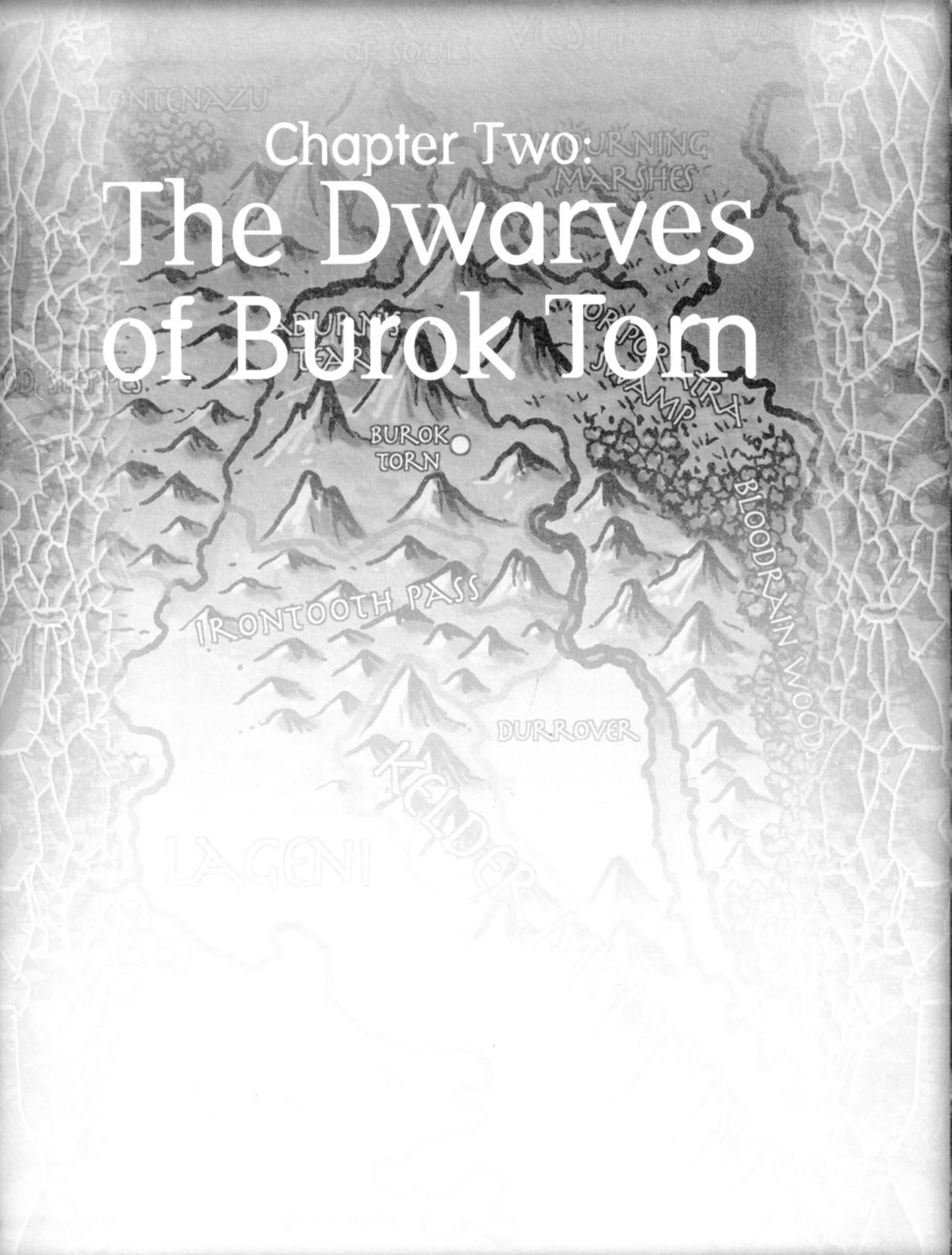
the city. While a few large, pitched battles have occurred, most engagements are against small, elite groups of dark elven infiltrators. So far, the dwarves have maintained the upper hand, but the attacks are beginning to take their toll, like persistent pinpricks against a giant.

King Virduk, however, is a stone of a different color. While his initial assault on Irontooth Pass proved successful, his attack on the walls of Burok Torn met with utter disaster. The dwarves, although unable to leave their mountain home easily because of the dragon king's armies, nevertheless rode out Virduk's siege for many years. In the end, the Blood Monsoon of 112 AV finally defeated Virduk, though the dwarves would have preferred to meet the dragon king's army and deadly battle-mages on the field of battle.

Centuries of warfare have honed the dwarves' fighting skills to a keen edge, and today they count among the finest warriors on the continent. Many military leaders in Vesh and other nations assume (correctly) that an all-out dwarven assault to retake Irontooth Pass is inevitable. Most expect the battle, when it comes, to be short and bloody, with the dwarves hell-bent on retaking their ground, teaching the invaders a fatal lesson and showing the Scarred Lands what it means to stand against Burok Torn. For his part, King Virduk hopes to deliver an unpleasant surprise to the dwarves when they come, and not even the gods themselves can predict the outcome.



Chapter Two:  
**The Dwarves  
of Burok Torn**





## Mountain Dwarves

Ghelspad's dwarves favor subterranean homes built below mountainous areas, particularly the Kelder mountain range. They have a deep and divine connection to the earth and are known for their serious demeanor, impressive tactical skills, and superior craftsmanship – particularly metalworking such as armor- and weaponsmithing. Mountain dwarves also possess a rich magical tradition and count many wizards among their ranks. Dwarven wizards have expanded their already formidable powers even further since the Divine War through their research into the runic magic which they acquired during the war. In addition, mountain dwarves have a strong bond to their demi-god Goran, and dwarven society respects its priests as much as its warriors. Their mastery of all forms of magic, coupled with their raw tenacity and superior equipment, has allowed the mountain dwarves to survive in Ghelspad despite decades of war with both the Calastian Hegemony and the dark elves of Dier Drendal.

Mountain dwarves tend to be short and stocky, weighing roughly the same as an average human but substituting girth and muscle mass for height. While males pay less attention to their facial hair than do dwarves in other campaign worlds, their beards are still important to them in a social sense. Female dwarves have clear complexions and no facial hair until they reach old age, at which time they usually have slight facial hair growth. Dwarves prefer to dress in hides and furs to keep themselves warm; only wealthier dwarves own finer clothing, typically bought from humans. Dwarves have little skill with tailoring and loom work, nor do they raise the animals or plants necessary for producing thread. They do boast a long and highly respected craft tradition, which they demonstrate through ornamentation such as finely made jewelry. They also maintain a tradition that predates the Divine War of using their runic language for ornamentation. Calligraphy, sculpture, and metal crafting tend to be among the most (though hardly the only) respected art forms among mountain dwarves.

**Regions:** Following the Divine War, Ghelspad's dwarves had many holdings in the Kelder region; unfortunately, recent conflicts with the Calastian Hegemony have reduced that influence to the single city of BüroK Torn. The dwarves' expertise in the arts of metalsmithing, however, coupled with their need for linens and other items typically found above ground, has resulted in strong trade relationships with the human nations of Ghelspad, and as a result dwarves are found in nearly every civilized region on the continent.

**Racial Abilities:** Mountain dwarves have all of the following racial traits:

- +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma. Mountain dwarves are tough and hearty, but territorial and reserved.

- Medium-size.

- Dwarven base speed is 20 feet.

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

- *Stonecunning:* Stonecunning grants dwarves a +2 racial bonus on checks to notice unusual stonework, such as sliding walls, stonework traps, new construction (even when built to match the old), unsafe stone surfaces, shaky stone ceilings, and the like. Something that is not stone but that is disguised as stone also counts as unusual stonework. A dwarf who merely comes within 10 feet of unusual stonework can make a check as if he were actively searching, and a dwarf can use the Search skill to find stonework traps like a rogue. A dwarf can also intuit depth, sensing his approximate depth underground as naturally as a human can sense which way is up.

- *Runic Heritage:* The innate magical nature of Scarred Lands dwarves and their racial mastery of runic magic grants them the following spell-like abilities: 2/day – *detect magic*, *arcane mark*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a sorcerer of a level equal to the dwarf's character level. Dwarves use *arcane marks* for a variety of purposes, from invisible battlefield instructions, to warnings left in deep tunnels, to marking possessions with their clan name. Dwarves also use such marks on themselves, their clothing, and their armaments for decorative purposes, inscribing baleful tidings in their enemy's own language before entering battle with their foe or inscribing their clan name, clan history, and prayers before religious and political ceremonies.

- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison and disease.

- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects.

- +2 dodge bonus to AC against opponents of size Huge or larger.

- +2 racial bonus to melee attack rolls if another allied dwarf is within 5 feet. Ages of tunnel fighting have made dwarves masters of close-quarter, teamwork tactics, and this knowledge is passed down to each generation.

- +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks related to stone or metal items.

- +2 racial bonus on Craft checks related to stone or metal.

- +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal checks that are related to dwarf hounds (see *Creature Collection*, page 65). Mountain dwarves also gain a +4 racial bonus to their Will saves to resist the deafening bark of the dwarf hound (as noted in that entry).

- *Automatic Languages:* Common and Dwarven.

- *Bonus Languages:* Any titanspawn language.
- *Favored Class:* Fighter or wizard. A multiclass dwarf's fighter or wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 in *Core Rulebook I*). Dwarves are known for their heritage as a warlike folk as well as for their mastery of powerful runic magic. The choice of fighter or wizard as a character's preferred class must be selected as soon as the character acquires a level in either the fighter or wizard class and does not change thereafter.

## Life in Burok Torn

The dwarves of Burok Torn, stoic and noble despite desperate circumstances, are seen by the outside world as a reclusive and ill-tempered folk constantly fighting or preparing for war and unwilling to see the world beyond their stone walls. While this stereotype holds some truth, the situation today is changing somewhat. Since Thain's ascent to the throne, new ballads have been written about the Aleking's justness and tragic past — the sad dirge sung by the bard Beshtan in the taverns of Vesh called "The Demon Wine," a recounting of the deadly attack by the Cult of Ancients assassin, being of particular note.

Still, many continue to view the dwarves with ill-disguised contempt: for their relative lack of action during the Titanswar, for their insular culture, and for their perceived haughtiness and arrogance. Most do not consider the terrible price that the dwarves' inaction cost them, or the fact that, when involved in the war, the dwarves were among the Divine Races' most indomitable and doughty fighters. That the dwarves, with some justification, feel that the outside world abandoned them in the Divine War's aftermath and that few appreciate or even know about their ongoing struggle against Dier Drendal, is yet another reason for their apparent isolationism and distrust of outsiders.

In addition to their ongoing war with the dark elves, the dwarves' distrust of the other divine races was made manifest by King Virduk's invasion. Reluctant to accept aid for fear of betrayal, King Thain's people may initially appear surly and angry toward outsiders. When dealing with the dwarves, one is therefore wise to remember that they are not truly hostile, though their demeanors have led more than a few to think otherwise. The king suffers from the same shortcomings — while not openly hostile with potential allies, the Aleking still takes a long time deciding who are his friends. Yet once his trust is earned, one cannot ask for a more loyal friend.

While outsiders are not fully trusted, the dwarves have not completely shut themselves away. The dwarves still allow other races to live and work in Burok Torn, but these "guests" are kept under close observation, and their movements are limited. The

dwarves keep a constant watch for thieves and spies. Penalties for such acts are simple but effective: those caught are usually dumped outside to fend for themselves — and in the Kelders, titanspawn hunt day and night for lone travelers.

The dwarves' attitude, while not winning them any friends, has kept them alive in the face of deadly peril. The problem that the proud dwarves now face is the incessant nature of their foes' attacks — no sooner do they regroup on one front than they are beset on another. Unsurprisingly, the dwarves are grim and unfriendly, surrounded as they are by foes that would not bat an eye if all the dwarves were hung by their beards from the Kelder's cliffs.

The noble stoicism of the dwarves has not diminished over the years, despite the hardships they have endured. The Aleking leads Burok Torn with courage and fortitude, and the demigod Goran himself sometimes defends their corridors. Should the king fall, however, the dwarven people know they might well fall with him. All dwarves pray that King Thain will live to see his son take the crown, providing his people with an unbroken line of succession and the will to endure.

## Location

Burok Torn is ensconced in the high peaks of the Kelder Mountains, south of Adurn's Tear and north of Irontooth Pass. The Blood Steppes lie west of Burok Torn, while the Sorporatra Swamp and Bloodrain Woods lie to the east. A thin ribbon of a road winds through the mountain peaks to Burok Torn, although a good imagination is needed even to remotely classify this as a "road." This rugged mountain trail was once a fine overland route that the dwarves used to trade with their neighbors, the elves of Dier Drendal; yet with the sinking of the elven city, the trade route has been allowed to fall into disrepair. Now, it is barely noticeable as a road, although rangers working in the area sometimes mark the route with trail signs to help travelers find their way. Although the dwarves inside Burok Torn do not go looking to help travelers overcome the difficulties of the Kelder Mountains, they also will not refuse aid and a place to rest for those in need who arrive at their gates.

Time and conflict have made the dwarves inside Burok Torn highly self-sufficient, eliminating the need for the overland trade route entirely. What the dwarves cannot make themselves, they are willing to do without. Still, they do occasionally want some items they cannot make, and enterprising merchants have found that the staid dwarves desire luxury items and other goods from foreign lands, and pay good money if such items are made available.

As a result, many underground tunnels are seeing more traffic. These passageways were originally used to trade with Dier Drendal before the elves and dwarves went to war, in order to bypass the many



titanspawn who attacked caravans traveling the overland route. Where many of these tunnels lead and where they return to the surface is unknown to any save the dwarves themselves and a handful of trusted confidantes. Only a privileged few caravan masters have been shown the secrets of these underground trade routes.

Burok Torn rises nearly 30,000 feet, almost as high as the massive peak of Adurn's Tear. The city-state occupies most of the mountain's interior, where the busy dwarves have mined thousands of tunnels and chambers. A second peak, Baereth Marn, lies northeast of Burok Torn, although this second city-state has been abandoned since it was attacked by Chern during the Titanswar. Other peaks around Burok Torn are smashed and broken, a testament to Kadum's ferocity and strength.

Here, in deep tunnels safe from the outside world, the dwarves live, work, and take their leisure. Burok Torn's tunnel system extends for miles, with giant forges and smelters, water reservoirs, and burial vaults located deep in the bowels of the earth. Many of these tunnels have become dangerous in recent years, however, as the dark elves' attacks grow bolder.

## Physical Features

Burok Torn is a working city housing some 185,000 dwarves spread throughout many sprawling levels of twisting corridors and cavernous rooms — so many, in fact, that maps of the environs no longer exist or are practical. The thought of surveying the entire citadel is a mind-boggling thought, even for the dwarves who live and work there. The dwarves intuitively know where to travel in Burok Torn and rely on their ancestors to aid them should they become lost. Visitors will not be so fortunate, as the dwarven spirits seem only to speak to those of their own race.

Burok Torn contains everything the dwarves need to survive, from its still-rich mines to its massive forges and underground farms. Branching tunnels lead deep into the Kelder Mountains, providing escape routes should an enemy prove too powerful. The presence of the dark elves, however, has recently made these tunnels treacherous.

A number of underground streams provide fresh water, and elaborate wheels collect this water for the populace. Two massive underground reservoirs ensure that the dwarves can ride out any siege even if their fresh water supply is cut off.

One reservoir was poisoned by the dark elven god's followers, but the dwarves and some helpful priests of Madriel from Vesh purified the water before too many dwarves became ill. The dwarves have since taken steps to prevent another such incident, surrounding the streams that feed the reservoir with magical wards and assigning cairn hunter patrols to keep a constant watch. The second reservoir is high in the peak, and feeds the Sluice Gates and Aquellet's Cascade.

These underground streams are home to large blind cavefish that form a staple of the dwarven diet. In fact, during King Virduk's siege of Burok Torn, the dwarves ate cavefish so frequently that some insisted they were "becoming" dwarven cavefish. The joke is still heard around many dinner tables when the plates laden with cavefish are brought forth from the kitchens. Almost as loud are the groans from dwarves grown sick of cavefish morning, noon, and night.

Yet while the livestock and poultry kept in Burok Torn are a welcome relief, they are by no means limitless. The stocks of cavefish, on the other hand, never seem to run out. Some dwarves say cavefish was obviously Goran's favorite food, a statement often quickly followed by muttered comments such as "Why couldn't He have liked a nice, juicy slab of steak?"

The middle levels of Burok Torn constitute the dwarven strongholds, great branching complexes of family quarters, containing both defensive positions and living areas. Many hundred strongholds exist, all built around a central core where flows a tremendous waterfall known as Aquellet's Cascade. The king lives in this area, but the location of his stronghold is a closely-guarded secret.

The lower levels contain the dwarven forgeworks — great pits of fire and molten metals that burn day and night as dwarven weaponsmiths and armorers work their craft. Some of the finest weapons and armor of the Scarred Lands once came from these forges, but recent times have seen the dwarves forging more mundane weapons for their own armies to use against King Virduk and the drendali. A handful of enchanted weapons are created in the forges each year, but this small amount cannot compare to those crafted during the heyday of the forges. Great rock chimneys lead from the hearts of the furnaces to the upper crags of Burok Torn to vent smoke and fumes. A side effect is that these steaming vents also warm the upper peaks, melting the snow so that it drips through the rock and into the underground reservoir and streams. These levels also contain the gates and entry halls of the city — levels that can be filled with molten metal from the forges should the Burning Ring be activated.

Burial vaults make up some of the lowest levels of Burok Torn, but these are some of the most intensely guarded areas owing to the constant threat of the drendali. Cairn hunters roam these halls in packs, and some claim that ancient constructs are also stationed here to protect the bodies of the dwarven ancestors from grave robbers or invaders.

## Inside the Citadel

Burok Torn can afford to be defiant. Its defenses are as tough as they come, and its warriors are all battle-hardened veterans willing to lay down their lives in the citadel's defense. Even the common citizens of Burok Torn are capable fighters, and every army sent against the city has met with disaster.

King Virduk was luckier than most. In a bold and audacious stroke, his armies dashed across Lageni and took Irontooth Pass, killing the dwarven king and routing his forces before reinforcements could arrive, and actually made it to the gates of Buruk Torn before being shattered by the Blood Monsoon. The dwarves acknowledge that the Calastian attack was nearly a success and have since shored up their defenses, hoping one day to march into Irontooth and take it back from the invaders.

## The Runic Pennants

*Runic pennants* flew from the ancient battles of Buruk Torn before the Titanswar and the recent conflict with the Calastian Hegemony. These were massive banners, each a full 500 feet long by 50 feet wide and covered in thousands of individual runes inscribed by skilled dwarven runemasters. Each pennant is said to have taken over 20 years to create, and their combination of runes and inherent magic created a series of powerful magical effects.

These magical effects varied from pennant to pennant, and many wild tales circulate about their abilities. Though all were destroyed over the years, a number of pennants are now being recreated by the city's runemasters. In their efforts, the dwarves are attempting to recreate some of the legendary effects of the pennants, including the control of nearby weather, the creation of treacherous footing for the dwarves' opponents while near the pennants, and the production of ferocious lightning storms and thick, concealing fogs. So far, no one knows how successful these new pennants will be, but the dwarves themselves are filled with confidence, hoping that a new collection of *runic pennants* will herald Buruk Torn's return to greatness.

As of today, however, the pennants are not yet ready, and the dwarves must rely upon their gates, the harshness of the surrounding terrain, and the courage of their warriors to hold off invaders.

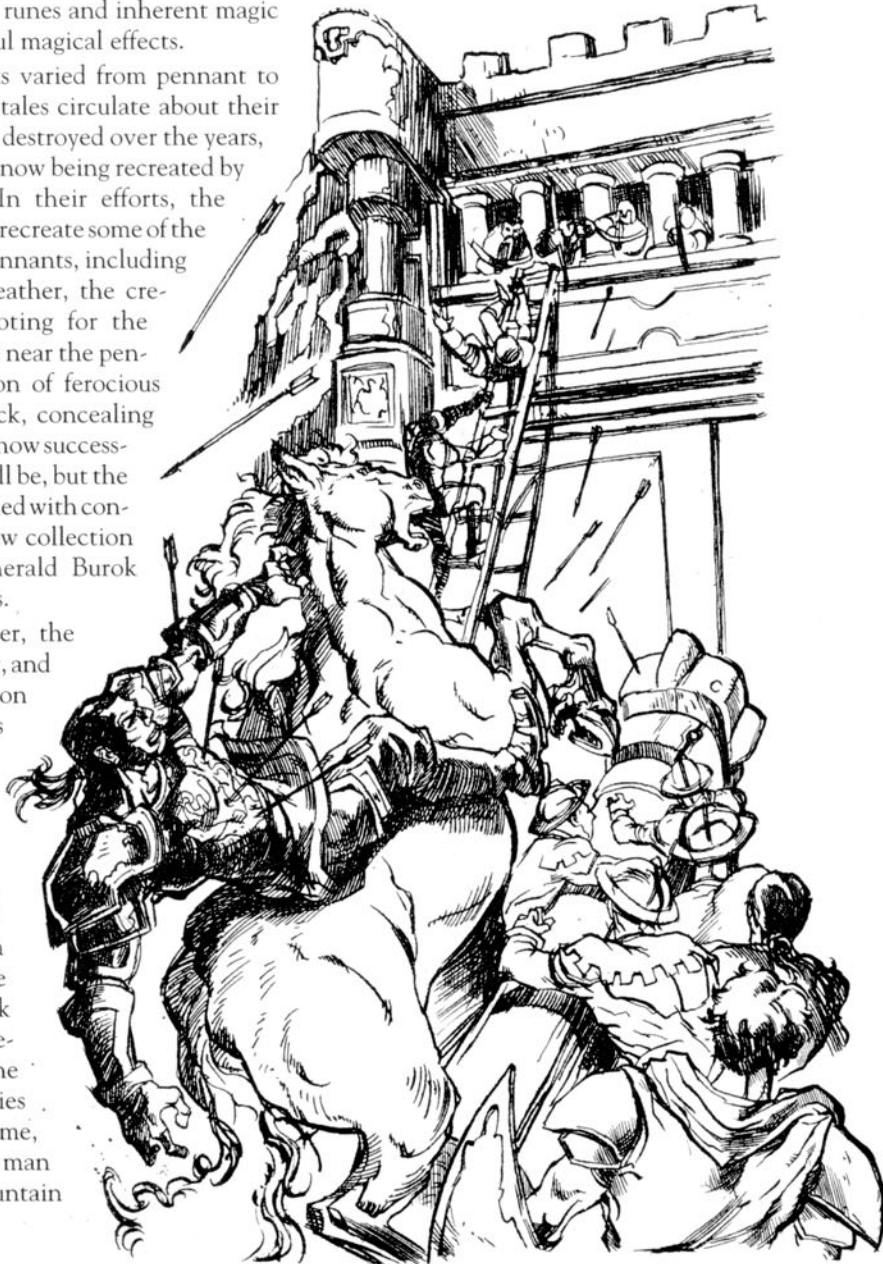
## Entering the Citadel

Entering Buruk Torn without the consent of the dwarves is a hopeless task at best. The citadel's defenses have withstood the might of titanspawn armies and their evil masters, time, and numerous sieges. One man standing against the mountain

has as much hope of getting inside as he does of capturing the wind.

For those who come with friendly intentions, though, the way into the mountain is easier. Entrances to the city are well-marked: each 30-foot-tall gate is a meticulously carved portal created over decades by skilled dwarven craftsmen. Some were damaged during the Divine War, others bear scars from King Virduk's siege engines or the burrowing marks left by Garabrud, the Obsidian Hound, but all remain strong and unbreached, even after so many centuries.

Each of these gates has hardness 20, 750 hit points, and a break DC of 80. As might be gathered from these statistics, the destruction of the gates is no mean feat, and the dwarves do not make it any easier, pouring missile fire, hot sand, and lead upon any attackers. Hidden tunnels near the gates can also





disgorge hundreds of battle-hardened dwarves who can cut breaching parties to pieces, then vanish just as quickly. These tunnels are well hidden (requiring Spot or Search at DC 30 to find) and are narrow enough to be easily defended should the enemy attempt to use them. They are also equipped with collapsible supports and can be instantly closed even if a persistent foe manages to fight through them.

The three gates, called Alathin's Destiny, Galshain's Trial, and Goran's Blessing, are 30-foot thick stone doors weighted and counterbalanced to open from the inside only. Even then, the doors are enchanted to open only for a designated gatekeeper. One family, the Jurestrats, has held the position of door duty for 700 years, passing the responsibility from fathers and mothers to sons and daughters (and sometimes a competent cousin in times of need). Each family member receives a special rune at birth that allows him to open the doors by touching a concealed rune plate inside the citadel. No member of the Jurestrats has ever allowed an enemy to breach the gates, and all know what dishonor would befall their clan should they ever fail in their task.

The gate called Alathin's Destiny is built around a natural cave on the southern face through which the city's original founders entered the mountain. Alathin's Destiny emits a soft chime upon opening, but today no one knows what the sound signifies. Some claim that the chimes direct dwarven souls to the afterlife and each time the door opens, dwarven spirits depart to claim their eternal reward in Goran's halls. Others call this religious tripe spouted by the rune priests, and instead say the chimes are nothing more than a magical alarm system — only the city's founders know the truth, and they are all gone now.

Galshain's Trial, the city's second gate, still bears the marks of an assault by the Charduni Empire under the infamous General Chodok. Savage fighting occurred on the north side of the mountain, with dwarves pushing back and forth in battles that raged for weeks. Burok Torn's elite dwarven warriors and battle-ready rune masters held their ground until King Galshain faced General Chodok in single combat on the ramparts above the gate. Mortally wounded, Galshain nonetheless seized his foe in a death grip and both fell to their deaths before the mighty gate. The death of their king renewed the fighting spirit of the tired dwarves, and it was not long before the Charduni were forced to retreat.

Goran's Blessing, on the eastern face of Burok Torn, bears the likeness of the dwarven demigod and is inscribed with thousands of small runes, inscribed over the years by countless rune masters and priests. Anyone of a good alignment who passes through this gate is healed and refreshed. The dwarves therefore prefer to fight from this location, but many enemies know of the gate's power and refuse to engage the dwarves here.

A fourth door, Ardell's Jest, is actually not a portal at all but a carved sculpture resembling the other doors. King Virduk launched an assault against this doorway, but his heavy siege equipment proved useless. The besiegers were then flanked and slaughtered by a host of Iron Guardsmen and Shield Arms who seemed to rise up out of the ground around them. The real entrance on Burok Torn's west side is a hidden tunnel set back from the mountainside, allowing dwarves a secret way to get outside the citadel. When closed, the entry appears as a part of the normal landscape, with trees and bushes growing over it. When opened, the portal is just tall enough for the dwarves to exit through. It is also easily collapsed should any foe discover its secret. So far, not even Virduk suspects that the gate is not what it seems, and outsiders are not allowed near it lest its true nature be revealed.

## The Outer Vents

On the high Kelder peaks, great stone shutters allow light and fresh air into the inner chambers. Stone chimneys also vent smoke and gases away from Burok Torn's forges and out these vents. A streamer of dark smoke always rises from the Torn's peak, blown by the cold mountain winds.

King Virduk attempted to take Burok Torn through the upper vents once the mighty runic pennants were destroyed, but the Calastian soldiers sent down the long vent funnels never returned. The attack was a fool's errand, for the dwarves had long since learned to stoke their forges to white-hot fury all day and all night while under siege. Dwarven weaponsmiths claim weapons made with the resulting "Calastian ash" were of poor quality and had to be destroyed, and many grumbled about the labor involved in cleaning out the chimneys.

## The Kings of the Mountain

One of the best known features of the mountain did not survive the ravages of the Titanswar. The visages of the dwarven kings were carved into the cliffs by hardy dwarven craftsmen who braved the savage cold and deadly conditions to render their kings' images. Little did they know the destructive forces that would soon descend upon Scarn.

Before the Titanswar, the 100-foot tall carvings were a famous sight in the Kelder Mountains, and many a caravan took it as a sign of good fortune when they came in view. The carvings could be seen from many miles away and appeared alive when the setting sun struck them. Steam vents opened behind two of the faces — making it seem as if smoke rolled from the mouth of the ill-tempered King Hroth and from the pipe of Kelder the Companion. The other images of the kings were similarly lifelike, from the gleaming black obsidian eyes of Hroth the Judge to the dark red cinnabar in the beard of Ardell the Unforgiving.

Alas, after the destruction of the Titanswar and the ravages of King Virduk's forces, the images have been all but destroyed. All that remains are featureless knobs of rock, shattered or worn away to nearly nothing, and only a few traces of the peerless craftsmanship that created them. Some compare these images to those on the Godsface Cliffs. Given time, they say, the Blood Sea-battered natural wonder of the Godsface Cliffs will appear no better than the nearly forgotten images of Burok Torn.

## Inner Defenses

Inside Burok Torn, the dwarves are a formidable fighting force. Years of conflict have honed their martial skills, and recent incursions by the dark elves have further sharpened their strength and alertness. Any invader faces not only the dwarves and their magic, but narrow spaces, darkness, and hidden traps designed to delay — or kill — the unwary.

Yet the ever wary dwarves, after years of the dark elven attacks and titanspawn raids, and not even taking into account the destruction wrought by Chern upon Baereth Marn, have doubled and tripled their security measures deep inside the mountain, creating a steadfast sanctum only those welcomed inside get to see.

Anyone lucky enough to pass through the formidable defenses on the outside of Burok Torn faces new challenges once inside. Obstacles include the seal doors and the fearsome Burning Ring.

The rune-reinforced seal doors are massive portals some 15 feet high and up to 30 feet wide. Each is made of solid stone worked over by the rune masters to create a near-impregnable barrier. The seal doors are the only access to the inner passageways of Burok Torn for most normal invaders.

When a general alarm signals the imminent closure of the seal doors, dwarves throughout the city-state halt what they are doing make their way deep into the citadel as the doors slowly swing shut. The seal doors do their job well, sealing Burok Torn away from the outside world, but some dwarven engineers decided that powerful magic might be used someday to overcome even these wondrous portals. So these dwarves created another deadly line of defense.

The Burning Ring includes the seemingly superfluous outer hallways and rooms of the city-state. None of these corridors and openings have doorways, and all are an interconnected ring that runs about the citadel's central core. It derives its name from the radical security measure that dwarven engineers created for use against invaders.

When a foe has fought all the way to the seal doors, the dwarves stoke their forges to white-hot intensity so that each forge becomes a bubbling cauldron of superheated metal. When the dwarves can no longer work the forges for fear that they will burst, they abandon the forgeworks and march to the central core and safety.

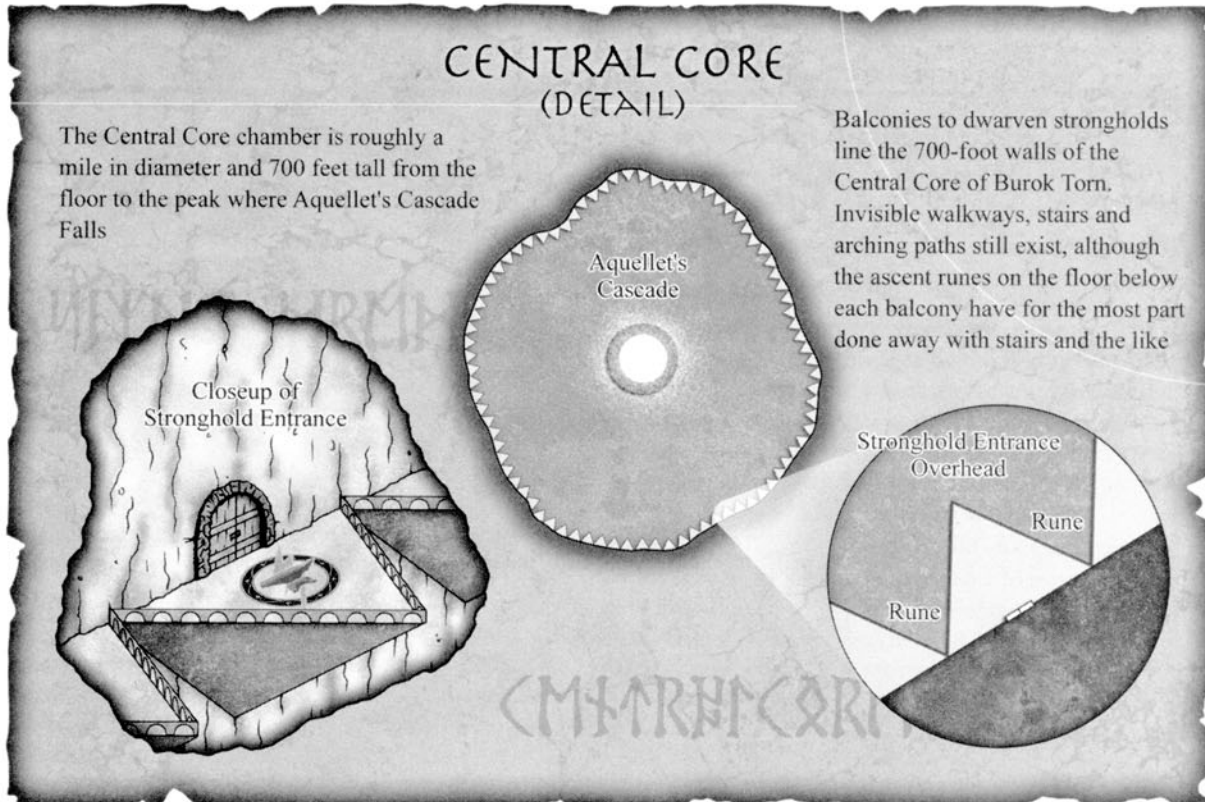
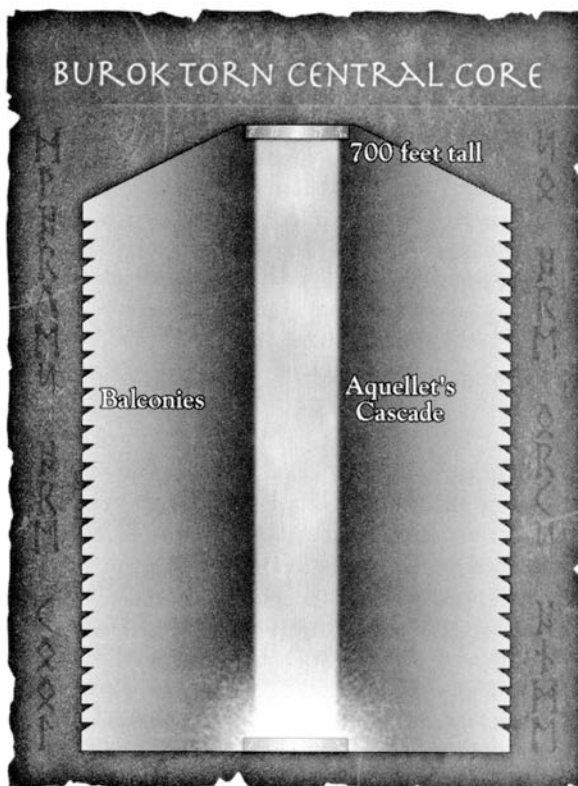




Soon, the taxed forges overflow and burning metal pours through predetermined channels that lead to the outer hallways. Soon after, the Burning Ring is filled with superheated slag, and any foes not protected against the heat are incinerated. After a time, the molten river seals Burok Torn behind tons of solid metal.

This defense, though potent, has never been used in the history of Burok Torn, and most dwarves hope it will never be needed, given the difficulty involved in removing the resulting mass of iron and getting the city back to normal — but all know that few invading armies could stand against the Burning Ring if it is ever used.

While the Burning Ring is the last-ditch line of defense for the dwarves, this does not stop numerous enterprising dwarves from setting up shop in its confines. Taverns run from wagons, armorers, weaponsmiths, and mercantile sellers all find room to sell their wares in the Burning Ring of Burok Torn. Space is first-come, first-served, and no dwarf is allowed to set up a permanent residence in the outer rooms of the Burning Ring. The dwarves who sell their goods in this manner often take up a “nomadic” existence, pushing wheeled trade carts through the rooms and corridors of the Burning Ring as they seek out new customers.



## The Heart of the Citadel

The heart of Burok Torn is a vast chamber deep in the core of the mountain citadel. Inside this chamber, a number of wondrous sights await those fortunate enough to see them.

The first is Aquellet's Cascade, a massive column of water that drops from the top of the 900-foot high chamber into a half-mile diameter hole in the center of the cavern floor. Next are the many stone balconies ringing the chamber, each marked by elaborately carved entrances bearing the crests of various dwarven families. Finally, a visitor to the room cannot miss the thousands of runes engraved upon the floor and walls of the cavern, glowing with a faint but steady luminescence, combining to make the chamber as bright as day.

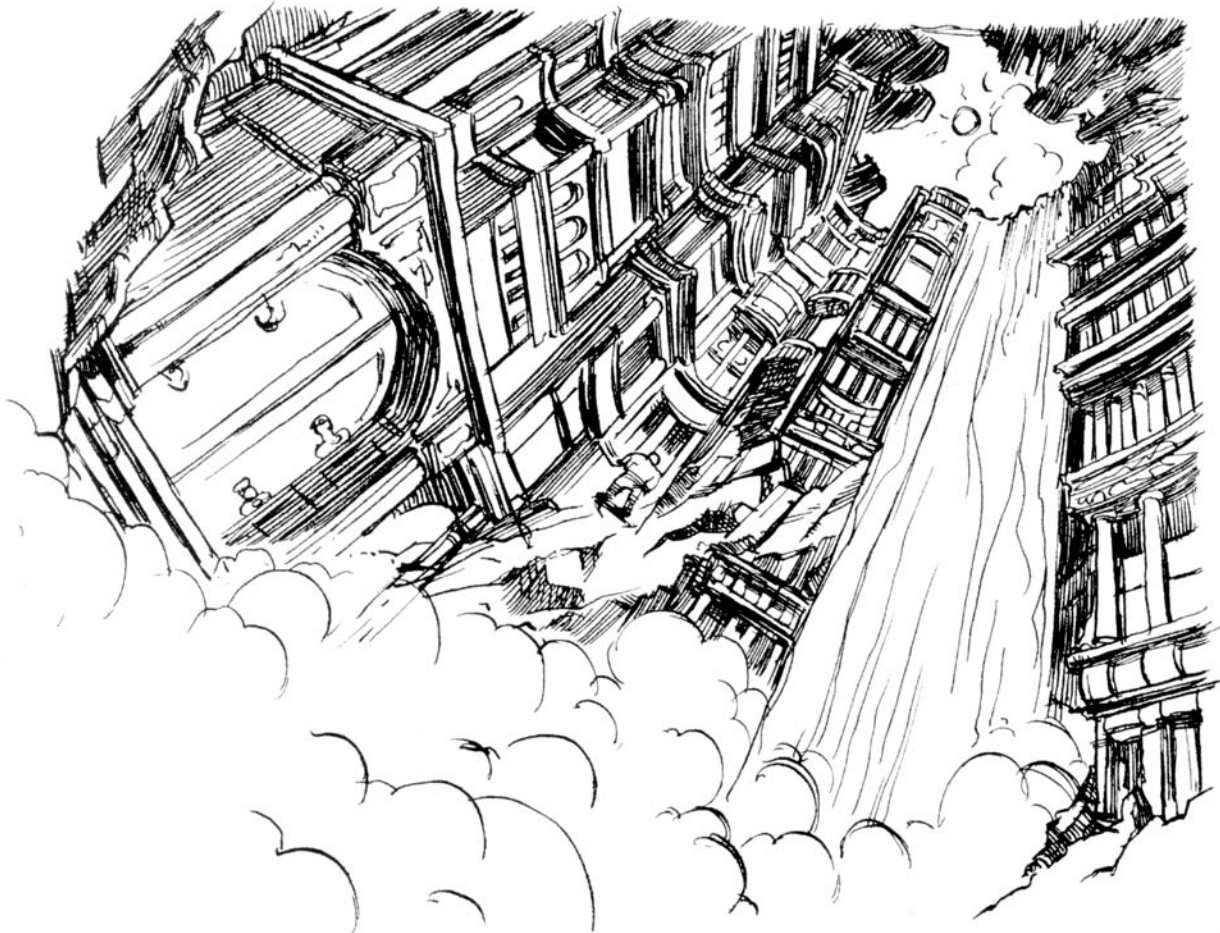
Aquellet's Cascade is named for the lone dwarf miner who was attacked by four night tyrants while scaling the inner wall of the chamber and checking its structural integrity. Seeing the creatures approach, Aquellet struck his pick into the ceiling to draw his axe, but never got the chance. His strike tapped an underground reservoir suspended above the chamber, and the sudden rush of water caught even Aquellet off guard.

The night tyrants were smashed on the floor below, their waterlogged bodies burst open by the force of the water. Aquellet's body was never found,

although dwarven teams braved the still cascading waterfall in a futile search for his body. This led the dwarves to the discovery of the second reservoir deeper in Burok Torn. Many assume Goran rescued Aquellet and that he now dwells with the dwarven god.

The massive underground reservoir that feeds the 700-foot-high Aquellet's Cascade so far shows no signs of running dry, despite the tremendous amount of water that it produces. Dwarven engineers who studied the reservoir found it is constantly fed by the melting snow from the Kelder Mountains as well as from a number of underground streams. The symmetrical nature of the upper opening and the fact that the endless rush of water has not weakened the chamber over the centuries are both taken as miracles — and further proof (as if any is needed for the average dwarf) of Goran's boundless mercy and wisdom.

Today, Aquellet's Cascade is used for drinking water, cooling the forges, and as the protected entryway to Goran's Fane. The color of the falling water changes over the year, from deep blue in the depths of winter to green in the spring. The vast opening in the cavern floor where the waterfall disappears is surrounded by protective and noise-damping runes, so that normal conversation is possible in the central chamber.





The runes carved about the cavern serve as more than decorations. Each is a powerful protective ward, preventing any tunneling spells or dimensional spells from crossing through the walls of the central core and into the dwarven strongholds. These were cast by rune masters over centuries, and their magic is maintained by the current members of the order.

Approximately 600 balconies ring the central core, with the most prestigious occupying the upper reaches of the room. Many of the lowest are not connected to dwarven strongholds at all, but lead into barracks and training grounds for the dwarven armies.

*How do the dwarves get up there?* is a common question asked by visitors. Some of the balconies are, after all, more than 700 feet off the floor. Surely a dwarf doesn't climb that great height every day of his life? The closely-guarded secret lies with the rune masters and the special magics cast in the entire central core.

Upon each balcony, offset slightly to one side, sits a rune marker that is indistinguishable from the other carved runes. On the floor below is a corresponding rune. Each family has its own rune, usually cast and maintained by a rune master in the family. These marker runes, called *ascent stones*, are the preferred entry to the strongholds.

A dwarf simply stands upon an *ascent stone* for a moment, long enough for the stone to distinguish someone walking over it and someone wanting to be lifted to a balcony. The dwarf rises gently to the corresponding rune on one of the balconies above. This trip is quick, with the ascendant rising to the top of the chamber in less than a minute. The reverse trip is accomplished in the same manner, with an individual stepping onto the corresponding balcony stone (known, logically, as a *descent stone*) and moving rapidly back to the floor. The dwarves are loathe to allow outsiders to see this process, and share it only with their most trusted friends.

## Dwarven Strongholds

Each cantilevered balcony juts from the rock and leads to a carved entryway. From this entryway, a rough-hewn stone passage leads into the mountain. At the end of these passages is a great portal, with a finely-crafted inner door. Most are still constructed of stone, but some families have imported rare woods from as far away as the Hornsaw Forest to accent these portals. Family runes ring each entryway, lintels and stones finely carved and worked by generations of dwarven craftsmen.

Beyond the door, the opulence and ingenuity of dwarven culture is made manifest. Each stronghold contains from 50 to 500 rooms, depending on the wealth and influence of its family.

These chambers rival the most luxurious buildings in Calastia and Vesh. High buttresses appear to hold ceilings in place (although this is not the case:

the ceilings are as immovable as the mountain itself), and fine tiles are overlaid on the stone floors. The dwarves even have "windows" in many rooms: carved portals magically linked to permanent *arcane eyes* embedded in the sides of the mountain.

The stronghold of the Stonefists particularly enjoys some notoriety for the wild viewpoints of their windows, including a falling *arcane eye* that plummets from the top of a Kelder cliff and is then teleported back to the top. Most visitors find these windows disturbing, and a good number have actually gotten sick while looking at them, a fact that amuses the Stonefists no end.

Many of the *arcane eyes* were shattered during the Titanswar, leaving the dwarves inside Burok Torn blind. The dwarves are slowly re-establishing the eyes, but it is a painstaking and expensive process.

Rooms in the strongholds bear little resemblance to caves. Rich tapestries in vibrant blues and golds are common, as are elaborate murals and dwarven portraits in cloistered hallways. Elaborate chandeliers, carved columns, marble floors, tiled walls, and vast libraries are also common features of Burok Torn's strongholds.

Grand dining halls are a staple of dwarven life, whether to feed immediate relations or to host banquets for visiting dignitaries. The dining chambers of the strongholds are all large and well-appointed, but rival the wealth of Thain's grand hall. Banquets are common in these halls—food and ale flow freely, and many feasts continue for days. In recent times, security has tightened at Burok Torn's banquet halls since a Cult of Ancients assassin that killed Thain's wife and child, but the feasts continue in the same grand tradition, though many celebrants feel a faint unease that they never felt before.

A dwarven stronghold is home and hearth to many generations of a clan, all living practically within shouting distance of one another. At birth, each son is granted a section of the mountain that connects to the main family holdings and allowed to carve out his own portion of the family demesne. Fathers often help their sons early in these endeavors to make sure the quality of the new construction is consistent with the rest of the stronghold.

When dwarves marry, the wife normally leaves her family and moves into her husband's quarters. She is immediately accepted into the husband's clan, gaining its protection and aid. Dwarven fathers generally prefer suitors who have large or particularly well-constructed estates, and are usually unmoved by a young male's accomplishments as a poet, painter, or bard.

It is not uncommon to have many generations of dwarven families living in strongholds connected to a patriarch's holdings. Usually, only a living patriarch's home connects to the central core. When a patriarch passes away, his oldest living takes over his quarters. On occasion, a son refuses this honor, leaving the

ancestral home empty to honor his father's memory, or to avoid a feud with other, jealous family members.

Each dwarven stronghold has a "back entrance," although this route is not used often. The dwarves were wise enough, however, to know that a single entrance to their strongholds could get them all killed quickly, so strongholds are always equipped with some means of quick escape. Most of these exits are shafts or stairs cut through the rock, winding down to the lower levels like a bolt threading through the mountain stone. Goods and materials cannot be brought up these narrow stairwells, and humans might find the stairs too low or the shafts too narrow.

For the dwarves, these stairs serve as peace of mind should the central core fall to invaders, as happened in 2196 OC during an invasion by ioun beholders. A few older traditionalists still use the stairs, but most of the dwarves have come to rely on the *ascent runes* to get to their dwellings. The exits of these stairs are usually in deep tunnels or other out-of-the-way areas that the dwarves can leave without being noticed.

## Dwarven Stronghold

This layout depicts a typical family stronghold. Most have similar features, and even King Thain's home follows a familiar pattern, centered on the family forge. Dwarven strongholds typically house 20-50 dwarves, although young male members may hollow out their own extensions and move in their wives and families, increasing the stronghold's population.

**1. Grand Hall**  
This large hallway has a number of halls branching off it, as well as corridors leading to the strongholds of the family's sons. The entry is usually heavily decorated and most families keep a statue of the stronghold's founder here.

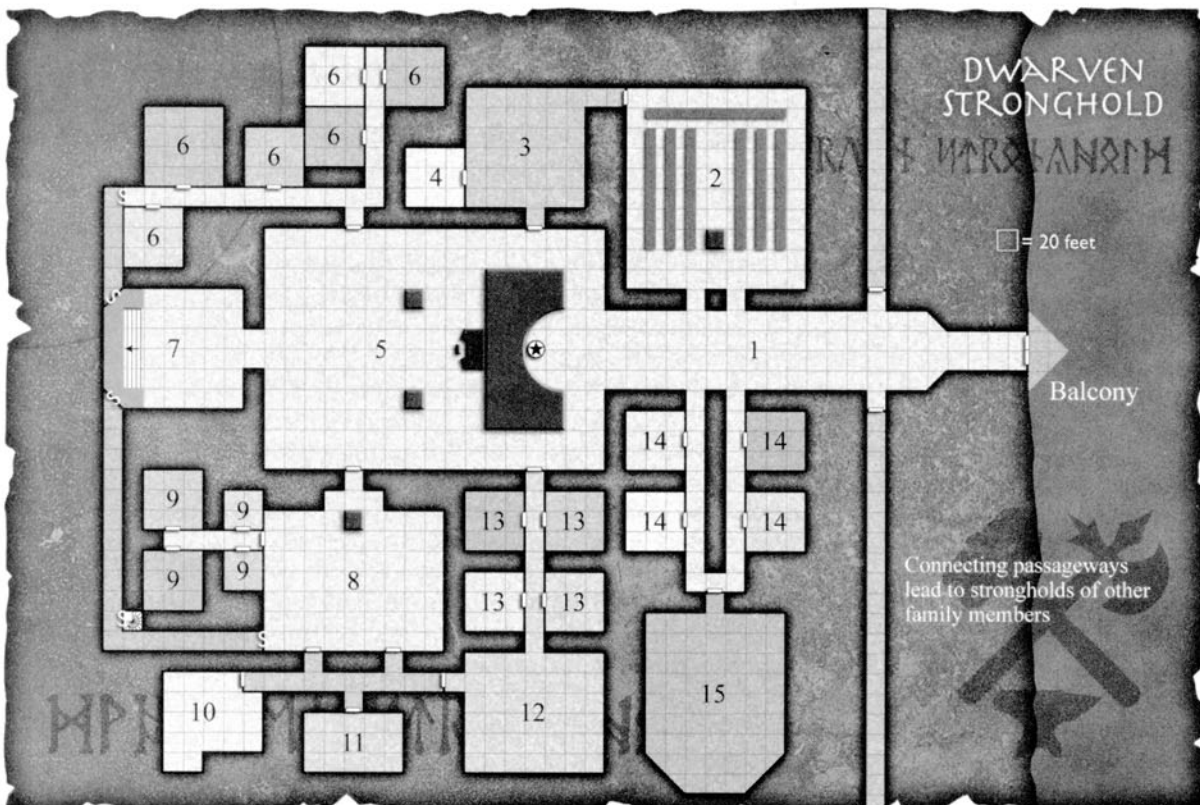
**2. Dining/Assembly Hall**  
This large room is used for gathering the family together for meals and meetings. Meals are taken at stone or wooden tables, with stone benches typically used for seating. The head of the family sits at a master table overlooking the other tables.

**3. Kitchen**  
The kitchen contains two large ovens used to prepare meals.

**4. Larder**  
A dwarven larder is stocked with enough food to keep the family fed for up to three months. In some family larders, permanent runes keep food cool.

**5. Central Forge**  
The central forge dominates the largest room in the dwarven stronghold, providing those who work here plenty of light and ventilation. Chimneys twist through the rock above the forge to allow smoke and steam to escape through the upper peak of Buruk Torn. All manner of tools and weapons are crafted in these forges, which are supplied with molten metal via a complex flow tube set-up connected to the Forgeworks.

**6. Children's Rooms**  
Children still living at home reside in these individually decorated rooms. The walls are typically



covered with images of dwarves at work and play or decorative patterns carved into the stone. Light runes keep these areas cheerfully illuminated. As children leave, their rooms are converted to storage and other purposes.

#### 7. Audience chamber

The influence of the dwarven kings upon their people is evident in this room. A “throne” sits on a raised dais, although no mere family seat rivals Thain’s own throne. The head of the dwarven family (or the eldest living son) claims the throne to “lead the family to greatness” as he sees fit.

#### 8. Treasury

The wealth of a dwarven family is stored here, although the dwarven families tend to separate their wealth into smaller rooms by item (see Room 9) to prevent any recurrence of the ioun beholder attacks that destroyed many parts of the city. Often, the central pillar just beyond the door from the forge is moveable from the inside and can be used to block the doorway. Dwarves forced to flee their forge will try to seal the door here using the block, then escape down hidden stairs at the back of the room.

### Bonds of Family

Burok Torn is home to many families of dwarves. Below are listed some of the more prominent families with stronghold entrances off the central core.

**The Batessfits:** Most dwarven families are patriarchal — the Batessfits are an exception to that rule. Guided by the motherly Melian, these dwarves have developed many new mining techniques that have led to the discovery of sizable deposits of raw ore. The Batessfits’ family has about 42 members currently, many having been killed during the Titanswar when Kadum collapsed a mineshaft they were digging. The patriarch of the family was buried in the collapse, leaving Melian to direct and control the clan. She is a loving mother to all of her sons and daughters (of a total of 13 sons, only five live today, along with seven daughters who have all moved out of the family dwellings). The current family stronghold is at a standstill until Melian’s grandsons reach their majority.

**The Rahnforks:** The Rahnfork men are all smiths, each bearing the blackened skin and calloused hands of their trade with pride. The master smith Erjot Rahnfork leads the family, overseeing his 14 sons’ construction projects with a critical eye. Erjot has two daughters, Morlenna and Abergel, who are being courted currently by the Jurestrat and Korelstoen sons. Each of the 14 sons has a stronghold carved off the Erjot’s holding, although only nine currently have wives. Erjot’s wife, Henna, was slain during a titanspawn attack outside Burok Torn while gathering herbs, a fact that the patriarch has never forgotten. His mercilessness in battle against any form of titanspawn (even benign ones) is legendary.

**The Korelstoens:** A family with a warrior tradition, the Korelstoens have six sons currently living who serve the dwarf king as Iron Guardsmen. One, Hepron, is a Shield Arm, having saved the life of Prince Turen when an audacious dark elf tried to seize the child and escape to Dier Drendal. Hepron cut the legs from the kidnapper as he ran, and caught Prince Turen with one massive hand before the child could strike the ground. Hepron is the eldest son and is living in his parent’s home after the couple passed into Goran’s graces last winter.

**The Hedelstones:** A family of miners, the Hedelstones are a reclusive lot who dine in their stronghold exclusively, never joining with others in the king’s dining halls. Experts at finding veins of precious metals, the Hedelstones are nevertheless social misfits in most circles and are widely considered to be boorish and common. Family members prefer the dark tunnels of the mines to hide them from others and to minimize contact. The family seems to make decisions as a whole, without a single representative serving as the head of the household. If someone needs information about the deep tunnels, however, the Hedelstones are the ones to ask, assuming the person can get one of them to talk.

**The Schotals:** The Schotals are a mixed family with two factions, one devoted to service as rune wizards and the other as rune priests. Twin brothers lead each faction in the family: the rune wizard Schotals are led by Jurgen Schotal, while the priests are directed by Hoylen. In the family stronghold, competitions are common as one side tries to perfect new divine or arcane spells to better serve the dwarven nation. Some of the greatest discoveries in magic and divine spells have come from this household, although who first made these discoveries is often in question. Both brothers teach students in their respective fields, although they make sure never to bring said students home “for fear of corrupting them.” One odd sight in the Schotal home, however, is at mealtime, when all members of the family put aside their debates and sit down in a central dining hall to eat together. Discussion is good-natured and friendly, and magic is definitely a forbidden subject at the table.



**9. Treasure caches**

Jewels, gold, silver, and the other family treasures are kept safe, locked behind stone doors.

**10. Mother's Room**

This chamber is given over to the pursuits of the mother of the family. Often decorated in a style jarringly different from the weaponry motif in the rest of the stronghold, the room exudes a dwarven woman's touch, although many dwarven females also hide weapons here in case they need them. The room often has its own water basin and privy fed by redirected water from above.

**11. Master Bedchamber**

The head of the clan and his wife share a bed in this opulently decorated chamber. Some family heads import woods and bed linens from faraway lands to decorate this sleeping chamber. Master bedchambers often feature large fireplaces, adjoining temples, studies, or dining rooms.

**12. Father's Room**

As the mother of the clan gets her own personal space, so too does the father. Usually, it is difficult to distinguish between this room and the master forge room, although many dwarven males like to fill this personal space with trophies of their warring days or of the titanspawn they have killed. The room often contains its own water basin and privy fed by meltwater from above.

**13. Storage**

Many of the items no longer needed by the family are kept here (along with numerous "trophies" of the father of the clan, hence their proximity to his room).

**14. Water Basins**

These large privies and wash rooms are separated for the men and women of the family. Each room has water basins and privies with water channeled from meltwater flows above.

**15. Private temple**

Every dwarven family maintains some shrine to Goran, although some are more elaborate than others. The most extravagant have stained glass murals of Goran's life and a statue of Goran himself. The most basic contain a raised dais upon which is centered an altar dedicated to the demigod of the dwarven people. The family tries to gather at least once a month for private worship. Private funerals are held in these chapels before the body of the deceased is cremated in the family forge.

**Goran's Fane**

Deep beneath the mountain, in a series of chambers carved by the followers of the Marked King Alathin, lies the home of the king of Burok Torn, a palatial demesne known as Goran's Fane.

Both temple and seat of power, Goran's Fane is the best-protected site in Burok Torn — not because of the Shield Arms and iron and stone guardsmen

who protect the place, but because of the magical entry to the area created by the ancient rune masters.

The location of Goran's Fane is believed to be common knowledge among dwarves, though to an individual, the inhabitants of Burok Torn would rather submit to death by the most agonizing of tortures rather than betray their king. Many outsiders believe that the Fane is located in a large unmined area west of the main city. The dwarves themselves remain silent on this point and often grow angry if pressed.

Most dwarves do, indeed, believe that the Fane is located in this region. Yet the ruse that the ancient rune masters crafted has their own people fooled. The unmined portion of Burok Torn is actually what it appears to be — an unmined, solid part of the mountain that no dwarves are allowed to tunnel into for fear of disrupting the elaborate deception.

Ironically, the dwarves are also correct, in a sense, for Goran's Fane is still located in Burok Torn, and even in the approximate area where most believe it is. It simply is not located on Scarn. Instead, Goran's Fane is found in Goran's home realm, in the ideal version of Burok Torn that the demigod maintains as his planar home. Goran's Fane was originally located inside the mortal Burok Torn, where the rune masters and miners created the first halls and temple for King Alathin. When the Fane was completed, the dwarven engineers departed, and the rune masters called the molten slag of the forgeworks to fill their tunnel. When the rune masters were finished, the only way into Goran's Fane was through a magical gate placed within Aquellet's Cascade.

A problem, though, soon arose with the dimensional gateway. The rune masters had tapped the Plane of Elemental Earth as a conduit to Goran's Fane, but when the gods defeated the djinn and sealed off the elemental cities, the spell was broken, leaving King Noraim and his followers trapped in the Fane. Furthermore, the fearful magical backlash had rendered the place magically dead, and normal *teleport* spells did not work. Prayers to Goran were ineffectual, for the god admitted that even his magic was useless, and for two years Noraim and his court endured, waiting for rescuers to tunnel through and reach them. When finally the dwarves broke through to their king, Noraim asked Goran to assist the rune masters in crafting a new hall.

Goran consented, granting the rune masters temporary power to transport Goran's Fane to the planar duplicate of Burok Torn. This is the real reason no dwarves are allowed to tunnel into the restricted area; the mountain in that area was displaced from Goran's planar home, and thus considered sacred. The Dwarven Conclave does not want dwarves tunneling into an area where such potent magic awaits. Some are afraid that removing any portion of this godly realm might instantly cause the two sec-

tions to again switch places, an event that would have unforeseen and potentially disastrous consequences.

Goran's Fane contains a temple of Goran, including a life-like statue rising from the bare rock as if struggling to be free. Goran's Herald often can be found inside the temple, both as the king's protector and as an object of worship. Unlike Gorak's temple in Buruk Torn, the temple in the Fane is relatively small, sufficient for use by the king, his family, retainers, and bodyguards. Thain's scepter rests in the outstretched hand of the statue when he is not carrying it.

King Thain lives in an extensive complex connected to the temple. His compound has rooms that range from colossal (huge enough to house several normal-sized keeps) to tiny (single dwarf guard posts), and all sizes in between. Thain and Krysara have a well-decorated suite of rooms in the Fane, where they live with Prince Turen, and individual quarters for their many servants. In the Fane, even the servants live like kings.

The Shield Arms' main force is stationed inside Goran's Fane and is in charge of all security details. The Shield Arms are led by the capable First Shield, Captain Umar Garrit, who directs all aspects of the Shield Arms.

When a dwarf is summoned by King Thain, he must approach Aquellet's Cascade and step directly into its raging waters. He is then instantly transported and appears perfectly dry in the Fane's entryway, where a contingent of Shield Arms awaits. Anyone not invited is swept away into the torrential depths below the citadel, presumably to an unpleasant

demise. Dwarves need not fear this fate if they follow Goran; an invisible shield created by the rune stones surrounding the waterfall prevents any dwarves from accidentally stepping into the waters. Other races are not so protected.

When King Thain wishes to emerge from his planar stronghold, the rune stones around the base of the waterfall announce his impending arrival by turning



the waters a royal blue with dancing motes of gold. Soon, a contingent of Shield Arms appears, marching miraculously from the waterfall. The colors fade after King Thain arrives in Burok Torn.

## Goran's Fane

### 1. Receiving Pool

This pool of shallow water connects to Aquellet's Cascade in the central core via *teleport*. A guard of 10 Shield Arms (*dwarf, Ftr10, LG*) backed by 2 rune masters (*dwarf, Wiz5/RnM3, LG*) stands permanent watch over this entryway into Goran's Fane. No one enters Goran's Fane without the consent of King Thain.

### 2. Foyer

The fane's main entry hall is hung with rich tapestries, depicting the previous kings of Burok Torn. Six rune master Shield Arms (*dwarf Wiz5/RnM5, LG*) guard the chamber. The stairs leading to the king's chambers are magically protected by a *wall of force* that can be raised and lowered by a single command word.

### 3. Servant's Rooms

Servants have their own quarters accessed by a corridor branching off the foyer. Each servant gets his own room, although many move their families into the fane's chambers.

### 4. Captain Garrit's chamber

First Shield commander Garrit lives in this spartan room. He keeps a few trophies of his victories

and conquests, but even these are small and lost in the barrenness of the room. A small gem on a gold stand is a specially created *arcane eye* device that lets Garrit find King Thain at a moment's notice or simply look about Burok Torn as he wishes.

### 5. Operations Room

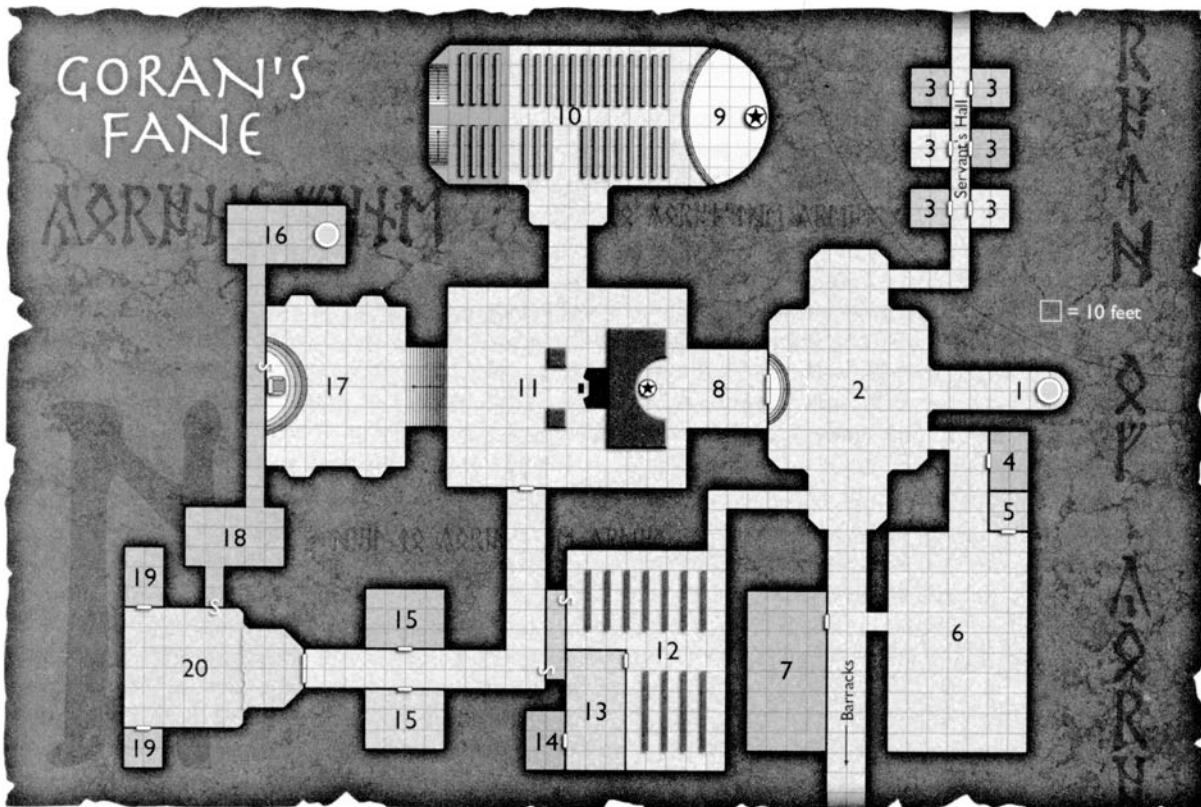
Permanent *stone window* spells turn the walls of this room into clear panes allowing those inside to see out onto the mustering grounds. Only Garrit's walls remain solid. Garrit meets with his Shield Arm leaders here to discuss tactical plans or the defense of Burok Torn.

### 6. The Mustering Ground

When the Shield Arms need to train, they come here. This large room will accommodate an entire regiment of dwarven soldiers, allowing them to simulate battle conditions or train in any way needed. The training is watched by commanders in the Operations Room. New recruits into the Shield Arms are indoctrinated into the ways of the elite force through rigorous training here.

### 7. Barracks

As Goran's Fane is located in Goran's realm, there always seem to be just enough rooms to accommodate the Shield Arms staying here. Some of the newest Shield Arms find this godly magic a little awkward at first, especially when a new barrack appears out of nowhere. At any given time, there are between 20 and 50 dwarves (various levels and classes) in each of these buildings.





**8. Thain's Corridor**

This short corridor's main feature is a statue of the current king of Burok Torn, in this case King Thain. When a new king takes over, the statue magically alters to his likeness.

**9. Statue of Goran**

This statue of Goran appears to be clawing its way from the rough rock wall. One hand is outstretched and is used to hold the Warscepter of Goran when not being carried by King Thain. The statue stands a full 20 feet tall.

**10. Goran's Fane**

The temple of Goran contains numerous stone benches and a balcony where King Thain and his family preside over spiritual gatherings to Goran. Bas reliefs on the wall depict events in the history of the dwarves and various exploits of Goran's. The image of Nalthalos tearing away Goran's beard is especially vivid.

**11. Central Forge**

The central forge stays lit year-round, although King Thain rarely gets time to work there. It is a fully functional apparatus, however, and capable of producing masterwork and magical weapons.

**12. Dining Hall**

The main dining hall contains stone tables and benches where the Fane's servants and Shield Arms take their meals. The head table has been removed, as King Thain either dines in his private residence or eats with the dwarves in Burok Torn's main dining halls.

**13. Kitchen**

The kitchen is equipped with two giant ovens.

**14. Larder**

Although small, the larder of Goran's Fane never runs out of food, no matter how much is removed from its small stores. Goran's blessing over Thain makes sure the larder is always well-stocked with Thain's favorite meal of spiced apples in ale sauce, and frozen treats from far off Vesh for Prince Turen.

**15. Storage**

These storage rooms are for the extra belongings of King Thain and Krysara. Thain's chamber is home to an ale-still, which he works more often than his forge, while Krysara's houses many of her books on magic and history.

**16. Escape Pool**

This secondary route to Aquellet's Cascade is a one-way transport only. It is maintained in case King Thain or his family should ever be forced to flee Goran's Fane.

**17. Throne Room**

King Thain and Krysara's thrones are located here, and Thain meets all visitors to Goran's Fane either here or at his forge (Area 11). Rich wood paneling lines the walls, and busts of all the past kings

sit on wooden shelves inset into the wood. Vibrant carpets cover the floor.

**18. Weapons and Wardrobe**

King Thain maintains this small chamber along an escape route to the secondary escape pool (Area 16) so he can dress and arm himself if he is forced to flee his sleeping chambers. Thain keeps a secondary suit of mithril plate mail and a +3 *warhammer* here. Krysara keeps two *wands of magic missiles* and an extra *brooch of shielding*.

**19. Prince Turen's rooms**

Prince Turen currently sleeps in the northern chamber located off his parent's room. The child has a small bed and enough toys and other playthings to keep him occupied for days. These extra rooms magically appear to house the members of the royal family, and in the past have numbered at least 30 for extended families. Thain and Krysara thus find it interesting that another room has appeared off their main chamber. Both wonder what this suggests for the future.

**20. King Thain's chambers**

King Thain and Krysara sleep in a magnificent four-poster bed brought here from Mithril. The chamber is decorated with objects that represent the passions of Thain and his wife, including war trophies and books on runic magic. The outer room is separated with a curtain so Thain or Krysara may read late at night while the other sleeps.

## The Forgeworks

The forges and smelters of Burok Torn are marvels of stone and steel the size of normal human keeps. The Forgeworks form a loose ring around Burok Torn located above the Trade Circuit, where most of the non-dwarven population of Burok Torn lives.

These titanic bastions of flame and molten metal are far larger than the many smaller forges individual dwarves maintain in their strongholds. The larger forges are for the defense and continued well-being of Burok Torn, providing raw material for weaponry, fortifications, and the crafting of many fine trade goods that the dwarves sell to nearby nations. The forges are also a key in the defense of the dwarven citadel should invaders actually penetrate the inner halls of the city-state.

The Forgeworks are kept constantly at high temperature by adepts and smiths-in-training, allowing the master smiths the time to work on weapons, armor, or whatever else the dwarves require. The forges are capable of producing enough worked metal to outfit an army with quality weapons. It still takes the dwarven smiths time to prepare these weapons, but having a steady (and some claim endless) supply of metal from the smelters means the smiths need stop only to sleep or eat — and many are known to do both while seated at their anvil.



If an accident occurs and one of the massive vats of molten material bursts, sluice gates from above can be opened wide to admit a torrent of water and cool the vats. These channels are also used to manage the water flow for cooling individual weaponry as the dwarves need it. All know the danger of a broken vat and the possibility of a flood engulfing their work area. For this reason, the dwarven smiths routinely inspect the vats, their forges, and every component in between to make sure no accidents happen.

Lately, some disturbing cracks have been discovered on many of the vats, some of which were just replaced after King Thain took control of the citadel. The dwarven smiths scratch their heads at these faults in the vats, for what else could they be? No one has so far suspected that the assassin Lianca (see *Wise and the Wicked*, pp. 64) has begun to frequent the area, using magical means to damage the vats. Her hope is that King Thain comes to inspect the forge vats himself in order to determine what is wrong, and she can cause one of the vats to break completely, unleashing a torrent of molten metal on the dwarven monarch. Like most of her fellow cultists, she is patient, since Thain has so far assigned these duties to his assistants.

Working in the Forgeworks is a grueling task, even for the hardened smiths who have made it their life's work. Temperatures routinely rise above 100 degrees, and many dwarves find the constant heat and hellish glare of the forges almost too much to

bear. Visitors are often struck by the stifling heat and reddish light and become ill.

Dwarven guides are quick to direct ailing visitors to the many runes located along the walls of the Forgeworks. These runes, designed and placed by the rune masters shortly after the Forgeworks began operating, cool the air within 20 feet to normal temperatures, allowing those suffering from the heat to obtain some respite.

The forges are vital to Burok Torn's continued existence. Without the constant stream of weaponry and armor the forges provide, the city would have fallen long ago. Now, with the dwarven population dwindling and the continued Dier Drendal threat, some wonder why the Forgeworks continue to operate at full potential. It is wise not to mention shutting down the forges to the smiths, however, for they are certain to react angrily to any such suggestions. These dwarven smiths do not pause often in their work, but a doubter in their midst is enough to make them take notice.

## The Forgeworks

All metal crafting and weaponsmithing inside Burok Torn is done in the Forgeworks or the personal forges of the dwarves. The Forgeworks' main goal is to provide weaponry for the army of Burok Torn, as well as other assorted weapons of war that might be required. The massive molten ore reservoirs also serve as a defensive measure when the Burning Ring is flooded to halt invaders. This is a typical forge — many others ring the Forgeworks area, served by a central cart system.

### Forges

Molten metal is taken from the smelters via heated overhead tubes to individual forges where teams of dwarven smiths craft weapons and tools. Teams of 20 dwarves work each forge day and night.

### Observation Deck

These decks rise 50 feet into the air and allow the dwarves to watch the activity below.

### Central Cart Track

This track runs around the ring of forges located in Burok Torn. Carts that run back and forth on the track deliver ore and other materials and carry away finished weapons and armor as needed. Carts are manually pushed along by apprentices.

### Smelters

The smelters are used to separate ore into its components so the metals can be used to make weapons and other items. They are fired by magically-heated rocks or coal, delivered via the carts that run along the central track. Each smelter contains a specific metal. Metals normally available include mithril, silver, gold, and iron.

### Refresher Zones

The refresher zones are spots of cool air maintained by runic magic. Despite the hellish temperatures near the forges, the air in a 20-foot radius around the runes is kept cool and pleasant.

## The Gardens and Meat Pens

Several passages from the Central Core exit to the underground gardens and meat pens where the dwarves grow crops and raise livestock. These areas are open to natural sunlight via high vents and a mirror system that allows the dwarves to focus light throughout these rooms as needed.

Fields of fruits, vegetables, and all manner of grains are grown in these chambers, with the mirrors providing the sunlight and intricate tubes connected to the upper reservoirs providing irrigation in the form of artificial "rain" released at regular intervals.

The meat pens are where the cattle are born and raised, maintained by dwarf stockmen. These animals never leave the interior of the mountain, but are allowed room to graze on grasses grown for just this

purpose. New animals are cared for in special "barns" — nearby chambers where newborn calves and piglets are suckled.

Given that the interior temperature of the mountain citadel stays constant the year round, the dwarves grow food constantly. The only problem the dwarves encounter is when the soil is depleted by constant growing cycles. The dwarves then turn the area into a grazing area for the cattle, allowing their manure to re-fertilize the fields for use in coming years.

## The Treasure Vaults

The treasuries of Burok Torn are well-guarded areas containing coins, jewels, and magic items. The dwarves maintain an extensive catalog of all of the items in their treasuries, and it is said many artifacts of wondrous powers are kept here, locked away from greedy outsiders.

The dwarves still collect ioun stones to fill their vaults, but no more than a few stones are ever grouped together. The dwarves lost whole caches of stones to the ioun beholders when they attacked in 2196 OC. No crystal balls can be found in any of the treasure vaults.

## Lights in the Darkness

Despite being able to see in near-total darkness, the dwarves of Burok Torn nevertheless prefer brightly-lit spaces and so keep many lights burning. This proves convenient to outside visitors and also minimizes the risk of attack by shadow-skulking foes. Light runes can be brightened or dimmed with a touch and simple command words. Lights are dimmed on a regular cycle, corresponding to dawn and dusk outside the citadel, but the rune masters are taught several emergency commands that can instantly douse all nearby runes or turn them on to full brightness.

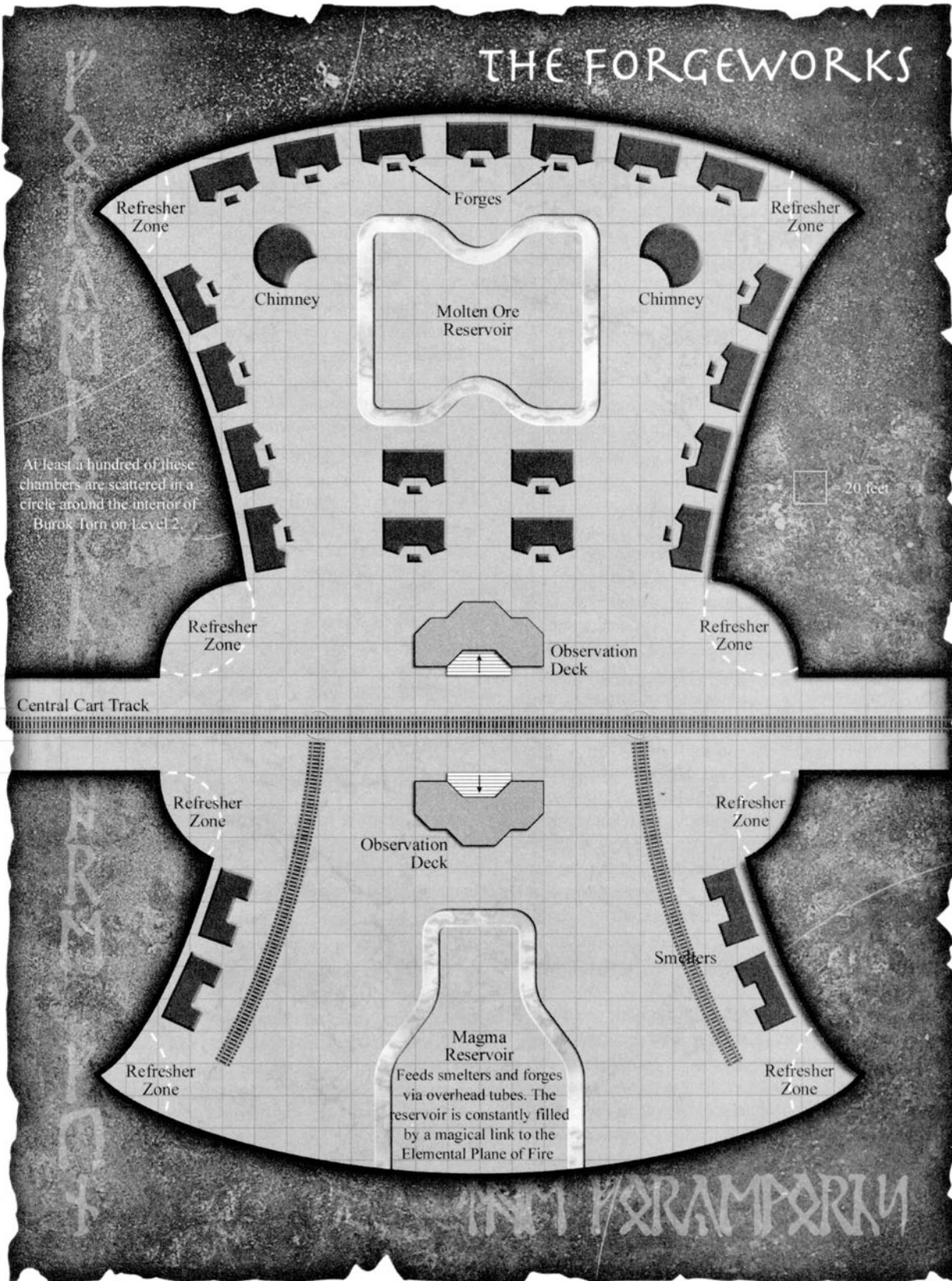
Many of the upper levels and the Burning Ring are lit by glowing runes set in the walls. Elsewhere, the forgeworks are lit by the constant glow of molten metal. Lights do exist in the forgeworks, but the ever-present red miasma seems to dim even the strongest light.

## Keeping Time

The dwarves measure the passage of time in Burok Torn with a great central water clock that is highly accurate and powered by the constant flow of snowmelt from above. This clock has kept time almost continuously since the founding of the city, save during the Titanswar when seismic and weather disturbances caused the great machine to stop for several years. Since 1 AV, however, the clock has operated continuously. It remains one of the few mechanical marvels remaining from before the Titanswar.



# THE FORGEWORKS



A low gong sounds throughout the city each hour. Sometimes this resonant tone wakes up visitors, but after a time residents grow accustomed to the sound and sleep through it. The sound reverberates from the upper levels to the tombs, though in some distant regions, such as the mines or the noisy forges, it is difficult or impossible to hear.

When Burok Torn is under siege a series of gongs is sounded to alert the populace of danger. These alerts override any sleeping runes so that even slumbering dwarves are not caught unaware. These alerts were designed by King Galshain to muster the defenders of Burok Torn, but the general populace responds as well. Often, dwarven miners and forge smiths take up their weapons after an alert sounds and join the iron and stone guardsmen for whatever battle comes Burok Torn's way.

There are runic clocks set throughout the citadel as well. These are lines of 24 runes that illuminate one at a time as each hour is sounded. At midnight, all the runes are briefly illuminated, then extinguished as the process begins anew.

## Feeding the Dwarven Nation

Many dwarven strongholds boast impressive dining halls capable of holding an entire extended dwarven family and their guests — as many as 200 diners in all. None is as grand as Burok Torn's central dining chamber, however, where King Thain and his family dine at least once every day. When dining, Thain is protected by double guards of Shield Arms, all on alert for a repeat of the tragedy in which Thain's first wife and child died.

The main dining chamber can hold as many as 15,000 dwarves at a time in three separate halls. Dining goes on around the clock, with meals prepared in the many kitchens that ring the hall. Each of the three dining halls maintains a head table set for King Thain and his entourage as a sign of respect, even if the king is dining elsewhere. King Thain makes a point of visiting each dining hall sometime during the week if possible, to share in the camaraderie of his fellow dwarves.

Ringling the ceiling of the dining halls are stone likenesses of the realm's kings, smaller versions of the colossal images destroyed during the Titanswar. Each dining hall has 12 wide stone fireplaces spaced along the walls and a 40-foot diameter fire pit in the center of the room. After evedine, garrulous dwarves like to pull their benches up to a fireplace or firepit to swap stories and smoke their pipes. Fires are maintained with coal during the winter or with timber from trees gathered from nearby forests during the remainder of the year.

Individual larders located off of the dining halls are stocked with enough food and drink to feed the citadel's entire population for years. Burok Torn has at least 20 main larders, each enchanted by the rune masters long ago to keep them chilled. The kitchens

are also massive, able to prepare and maintain enough food for several hours for each dining hall. Often, meals are made ahead of time and warmed in the huge ovens (similar to the giant forges) when meals are called.

Meals signaled on the silver gongs are:

**Morningfast (Goran's Offering):** This meal is typically the first of the day for the dwarves, signaling the start of their shifts either on patrol or in the Forgeworks. Smiths in the middle of complex jobs often send their apprentices to fetch food for them at morningfast. Baked breads, fruits, and sausages made from cavefish or stock from the meat pens are commonly served at this meal. Eggs have to be imported and are considered a delicacy.

**Midmeal (Goran's Contemplation):** The midmeal of the day sees the most dwarves in the main dining hall as they travel here from their duties in the Forgeworks or mines. Meals consist of steaks or cavefish, depending on what is most available, as well as dwarven alebread, porridge, and vegetables.

**Evedine (Goran's Rest):** The final meal of the day is similar to the midmeal, but steaks and roasts from livestock are preferred to cavefish (though often cavefish is all that is available). A hearty supply of vegetables, fruits, grains, and seemingly endless loaves of baked bread seasoned with a mix of alespice and peppers are also served. Ale flows freely during these meals. Dessert is served after the main courses, often a slice of spiced cake or a vat of rich pudding. Evedine is usually followed by long sessions near the fires, as dwarves smoke pipes, share stories, sing songs, and relax from the day's labors.

## Entertainment and Sacred Days

The dwarves have a number of sacred days and observances, all related to Goran in some fashion. Even entertainment often involves practical activities related to the safety and prosperity of the citadel.

### Sacred Events

**Forge blessing:** The simplest ceremony is a divine blessing by a rune priest over a new forge before it is connected to the Forgeworks and stoked for the first time. In this ceremony, a handful of metal shavings blessed by the priest are thrown into the empty forge while prayers to Goran are intoned. The dwarves claim that the more influential the rune priest making the blessing, the better and stronger the weapons and tools made by the forge.

**Marriage:** Marriage is a great ceremony among the dwarves, for the simple fact that every union helps to keep the nation alive for another generation. Yet before a marriage can even be performed, a dwarven suitor must declare his intentions by crafting a ring for his intended at his personal forge. For such rings, dwarves favor platinum with rune insets, but the styles vary according to the dwarf who creates the ring. If the suitor is approved of by the bride's



father (usually based on the size and quality of the suitor's personal stronghold), a rune priest is summoned to join the couple together. During an elaborate ceremony most often held in the central core with the bride, groom, and rune priest kept magically aloft in Aquellet's Cascade, the couple exchanges vows and rings before the dwarven nation, and the marriage ritual is performed, granting the couple love and good fortune (see *Relics and Rituals*, page 134). Dwarven males do not always wear their wedding rings on their fingers after, but the dwarf always keeps his ring somewhere — some even tie it into their beards. Losing a wedding ring is considered an omen of great ill fortune.

**Naming a child:** The naming of a child is considered by the dwarves to be their greatest and most significant ceremony — more so now that fewer dwarves are being born. Parents of a newborn consult with a rune priest or rune master to select a name and “mark” the child. The parents usually choose a name from among their ancestors, and the runic attendant then “marks” the child by placing the newborn's hand or foot against the bare stone of Burok Torn while casting a spell to imprint the child's birth into the history of the mountain. The child's hand- or footprint lingers on the walls for a few weeks, but the magic lasts as long as the child lives. At any time, rune priests or rune masters can track any child still living in Burok Torn by summoning the child's mark. The mark creates a magical trail that leads to the lost child, or to the adult in later years. A mark vanishes when the person it belongs to dies.

## Entertainment

**Dwarf hound races:** A popular pastime in Burok Torn, dwarven hound races are held each spring. Dwarven breeders from throughout Burok Torn bring their best hounds to this race, as do dwarves and even human breeders from other realms. Royalty from other nations are extended invitations to this popular event, but few take the dwarves up on the offer given the amount of time and effort involved in getting to Burok Torn.

Up to 20 dwarf hounds race during these festivals, with each wearing a collar bearing the symbol of its owner and a small swath of fabric identifying the owner's house. Each dog is loosed into Burok Torn's tunnels from a central starting point and must complete a specially prepared maze created by the dwarves. No plans of the maze are kept, and it is rebuilt with new shapes and dimensions every year to prevent anyone from training a dog to a particular pattern. It should be noted that the maze is not designed to harm the hounds in any way. Any hound that becomes hopelessly lost in the maze is disqualified, then retrieved.

The end of this maze traditionally opens into newly excavated tunnels or mine shafts. From here, a dwarf hound is expected to scent out a new vein of precious metal. When a hound finds such a vein, it

## Choosing a Herald

A ceremony the dwarves undertake only rarely, but which is quickly approaching, is the choice of a new Herald for Goran. With Thaal Mareken nearing the end of his service to Goran, the dwarves must decide soon upon his successor.

When the choice is finally made (after what is sure to be a furious debate among the Conclave members), the dwarves gather to send the chosen soul to Goran's graces. In typical dwarven style, this ceremony takes place near the Forgeworks, in a special forge crafted solely for this ceremony. The forge is 30 feet square and 8 feet deep. The entire forge is filled with magma funneled from the other forges of the citadel.

During the replacement ceremony, Goran's Herald lies in the vat, submerged beneath the burning magma. When the Herald's darkened skin completely vanishes, the dwarves begin the second part of the ritual: sending a new dwarf into the magma.

The chosen dwarf, usually an elder of the dwarven nation who has proven himself worthy of service to Goran, is chosen by a vote of the Elder Conclave. Thaal Mareken was a natural choice, having the support of the people of Burok Torn as well as the Conclave. The current selection process is far more difficult, as there are many worthies in the dwarven citadel, all of whom are vying for the honor of serving their god. A great deal of prestige comes to the family of the chosen herald, so many rivalries have sprung up as the clans argue over their relative influence and achievements.

The chosen elder wears a simple white robe during a ceremony that extols his virtues to Goran. This can take several hours, depending on the elder selected. When the litany is finished, the elder descends down a short flight of steps into the burning magma. Despite the heat of the deadly lava, the new Herald feels no pain and utters not a word during his descent. When he is completely submerged, the lava pulses a brilliant white, and all assembled know that the transference is complete. The previous dwarf's soul has joined Goran, and the new elder has taken up residence in the Herald's metal body.

When the Herald arises soon after from the magma, his body is once again a polished silver color, and he is ready to serve Goran for approximately another 100 years.

Many hope that the latest decision facing the Conclave does not degenerate into open warfare among dwarven families who believe their patriarch should be the one to serve Goran directly. The current Conclave members know they have a difficult task on their hands.



unleashes its thunderclap bark, alerting judges and shattering rock around the deposit or vein. Judges then rush to the scene to determine the extent of the hound's find. Size and purity of the vein is estimated and the dog is removed from the race. Each dwarf hound is allowed only one find per race. The hound that found the best vein is declared the overall winner. The second phase is the most important and there are many tales of hounds who were slow in the maze, but then turned defeat into victory by finding especially rich veins of gold, silver, or mithril. In this manner, the dwarves are entertained, and new deposits of ore are located.

Betting on races is common, although most non-dwarven races find the wagering scale and the means of determining the odds to be obtuse and hard to decipher. The dwarves, however, know exactly what they are betting on and when to place the bets; huge amounts of money and possessions often change hands. During a typical race, it is not uncommon for a dwarf to win back wealth he had, moments before, gambled away, only to lose it again before the race's completion.

Only once was a race declared void: A dark elf raiding party slew several hounds that had discovered and encircled the group, deep in the heart of Burok Torn. Once the breeders discovered the fate of their prizewinning hounds, the dark ones were quickly dispatched.

**Runic Marbles:** Dwarven children cast spent *runic marbles* in complex games of skill and luck, using the marbles as shooters and bouncing them off stones and other obstacles with a single throw. These nearly indestructible marbles can make many bounces, and it is not uncommon to see a group of dwarven children chasing a careening marble, shouting out the bounces it makes.

While the children consider this only a game, this pastime also lets them practice with the marbles in case they should need the skill during wartime when they are adults. For years, a few of the more radical dwarven minds have been saying the army should form a band of children together as *runic marble* casters to help the regular army with well-placed throws. So far, the idea has been laughed out of the Conclave, but hard times might necessitate younger recruits joining the dwarven front lines someday.

## Worshipping Goran

Dwarves of Burok Torn pay homage to Goran in everything they do. No finished weapon leaves the forges without a prayer to Goran. No child is named until he has first been blessed by Goran's priests. Daily meals, often eaten in communal banquet halls with extended families gathering together, often feature stirring tales of Goran's many deeds.

The dwarves locked inside the stone citadel are surrounded by evidence of Goran's blessings, but they

## Runic Marbles

**Description:** *Runic Marbles* were given to the dwarves of Burok Torn by Goran as spell-saving devices, then later as spells unto themselves to protect them during the constant battles with the dark elves of Dier Drendal. Inside each transparent marble is a dwarven rune, corresponding to the spell that the item holds. The marbles' powers vary, but their usage remains the same. The common method is to roll the marble into the area where a spell-effect is desired. Marbles lose all abilities after being cast. Dwarven children of Burok Torn greatly value spent *runic marbles* as collectibles. Some rare *runic marbles* are said to contain two or more runes. Goran still mines *runic marbles* in his planar domain and grants them to his followers.

**Powers:** The powers of *runic marbles* depend on the type of marble cast. Some typical marble enchantments and their effects are:

**Arcane Eye:** Rolling marble lets caster see into area in which marble is cast.

**Fireball:** Marble begins glowing as it rolls, until it ignites at a distance determined by the caster. Some skill is required to throw this marble where it is intended.

**Bottomless Pit:** Marble creates a bottomless pit (as per spell) beneath any object it strikes while rolling. Again, skill is required, and many dwarves practice casting spent marbles should they be required to cast this marble.

**Flash:** Marble bursts into brilliant flash of light when caster wills it.

**Wall of Stone:** Stone wall appears where marble stops.

All saves against a *runic marble* are as a 9th-level sorcerer (DC 9 + spell level).

are unlike many races in that their god often walks among them. Goran has done this for centuries, roaming the city's halls as if he were simply another dwarf. Dwarves no longer kneel before their god; his visits have made him almost commonplace.

Increasingly, Goran has been spending more of this time in defense of the city. Many dwarves, beset by dark elf raiders, have been rescued by the timely intervention of their god, who also administers healing and comfort to the wounded. Those healed by the god invariably rush back into battle, their will to survive and loyalty to the city renewed.

Altars inside Burok Torn range from carved stone daises atop which the dwarven priests venerate Goran, to small forges marked with holy symbols and



who transfer their services from employer to employer, and even have several small brokerage offices where they can be hired.

These trading houses provided the assassin Lianca the perfect means of infiltrating Burok Torn, however, since she could enter as an Asuras employee and get free run of the complex. Lianca has since retired from her post with Asuras' trade offices in Burok Torn, citing a desire to return to the outer world to make a living. No one questioned her decision, and no one has suspected her true motivations. Safe from suspicion, Lianca found her way into the mountain and has been learning the routines of the dwarves who live there. She knows the patrols very well now, and also knows that she can claim to have gotten lost from her guide in the heat and excitement of the Forgeworks. At worst, the dwarves are most likely to

lead her back to the Burning Ring and turn her out with a stern warning. She would be hanging from the upper peaks of the Kelders if they knew the truth about her.

Normally, outsiders are not allowed to go unescorted into the main chambers where the dwarven strongholds lie, but must instead remain in chambers above and in the vicinity of the Burning Ring. Subject to painful death should this defense be triggered, mercenaries and refugees know to head for high ground when the alarms are sounded. The dwarves have another set of concealed seal doors that open into the areas granted to the guests, allowing them to free the people trapped inside if the Burning Ring is activated. Guests will be kept comfortable, but under guard, while the dwarves tunnel out of the Burning Ring should the defense ever be used.

HMUTRAN VAVI BURU KARNEN Y HONIN TO TNOUW PERSADY SEVRE VIVSOR AOH

## A Center for Trade

Burok Torn has become a center where many trade houses conduct their daily business. Despite difficult conditions (and the constant danger of being subjected to the Burning Ring defenses), these trading companies find that a good profit more than offsets the danger. Often, younger merchants are trained here, as it is relatively safe and offers them a chance to mingle with those of many different cultures.

Here are some of the trading companies currently operating in Burok Torn's outer defensive ring, although any number of smaller concerns are also present:

**House Asuras' trade offices:** House Asuras has set up shop in the Burning Ring, bringing all manners of fineries to the dwarves of the citadel. The shop sells fine silk from Vesh, bolts of cloth from the Bridged City, and even can special order elven crafts as needed. Telos Asuras' granddaughter Natilae Asuras oversees family activities in the citadel.

**Tirton's Traveling Traders:** This trading group spends a few months in Burok Torn's halls, then travels the treacherous Kelder route through the Irontooth Pass to lands farther west. It is believed the Tirtons have some deal with the Calastian Hegemony for safe passage, and this automatically makes them spies in Burok Torn's eyes. The fine wines and ales the Tirtons bring with them, however, mean the dwarves are willing to take the risk — although all kegs are tested for poison before the dwarves drink from them.

**Herlton's Menagerie:** Herlton Carn, a human weapons dealer from Mithril, often mans a small booth in Burok Torn, hoping the dwarves are willing to trade weapons for the wood and minor magical items he offers. He also sells small trinkets ("Each containing a sampling of the Blood Sea!") and other oddities to the dwarves, claiming that they offer a glimpse of the world outside Burok Torn's walls. He accepts coin, but prefers magical weapons from the dwarven forges. He hopes to set up a permanent trade with the dwarves in which he gains weapons from them for only a few baubles. So far, the dwarves have not agreed to this arrangement.

**Karint's Book Buyers:** Karint, an old elven woman, deals in historical volumes, taking these books to the great libraries still remaining in the Scarred Lands for inclusion. So far, she has not found much for sale in Burok Torn, although she knows extensive histories exist. Undeterred, she makes her living for the time being by telling stories and selling parchment "treasure maps" that she herself made.

HMUTRAN VAVI BURU KARNEN Y HONIN TO TNOUW PERSADY SEVRE VIVSOR AOH





# Chapter Three: Of Gods and Kings

Since its founding, Burok Torn has been blessed by strong leaders backed by the blessings of Goran. With the exception of the Marked King Alathin who founded the city-state, the succession of rulers has been hereditary. Many dwarven kings, including Thain most recently, have taken the throne after their father met an untimely end through warfare or tragic mishap. Some, on the other hand, have been extremely long-lived, ruling for centuries.

Here then is our past, condensed (damn Yugoman's suggestion) as much as I was able to without omitting any salient points. Often, our kingship has proven difficult, most recently from the bloody death of Thain's father but extending back to King Gioruk's heroic stand against the Chardum Empire. Each king is listed below, along with the years of his rule, once more in the common Old Calendar (OC)/After Victory (AV) format.

One point of note: I have included the current rumor of King Alathin's death being false simply because it points to how beloved was the founder of Burok Torn. I'm sure there is nothing more to these tales than the willful imaginations of the tellers. After all, Alathin could surely not still be alive, could he?

- Torek Fenex, Chief Historian of Burok Torn

## The Marked King Alathin (King 2106-2324 OC)

The Marked King is something of a mystery, even to the dwarves. The early days of this famed king of Burok Torn are lost in the mists of time, but his influence still lingers over Burok Torn. Alathin led his dwarven followers into the Kelders in search of their “destiny,” but even his closest companions did not know his origins. All texts describing Alathin, however, mention the birthmark on his right cheek, a mountain peak identical to the image of Burok Torn seen from a distance.

Alathin was a lawful and just king, setting a high standard for those who would follow. His proclamations carried with them the force of law and his ideas were heralded among the dwarven people who helped found their nation. Alathin created the Elder Conclave to mete out dwarven justice and helped to set an example of loyalty to the dwarven god, Goran. When Alathin returned to Goran in 2324 OC, the dwarven nation fell into despair for a while as debate raged over who would succeed him.

Goran finally felt the sorrow of his people and appointed Kelder the Companion to the position, founding the lineage that continues today with King Thain. Even though their god had decreed that Kelder lead them, many dwarves felt the loss of their first king and wished he could return. Some claimed that the Marked King was not truly dead, but had faked his death to become an anonymous dwarf and continue to serve his people. Many believe that the Marked King was actually Goran in disguise. Whether Alathin was an immortal or a god masquerading as a dwarf has not been revealed in the centuries since his “death.”

## King Kelder the Companion (2324-2499 OC)

Goran is known to have appointed Alathin’s successor, but few know that Alathin himself named Kelder the Companion as the new king. Goran, despite Kelder’s faithfulness and friendship, actually questioned Alathin’s choice, but he acquiesced and Kelder was appointed king the next year.

### The King is Dead, Long Live the King!

As Burok Torn grew and its people looked to him for guidance, the Marked King felt despair tugging at his soul. He had helped to fulfill the destiny he saw for the dwarves, but what now? He became restless, seeking new challenges, and created the Elder Conclave to adjudicate disputes between dwarf families.

Titanspawn attacks against the citadel provided Alathin with the opportunity to fight and lead troops in battle, but even the deadly ioun beholder attacks within Burok Torn’s walls could not distract Alathin from his growing sense of wanderlust.

He had led the dwarves to their home — a true and proper home where they could grow and prosper. He had created a safe haven for the dwarves where they could face the world without fear. His visions from Goran had led him to this place, but did Goran have further need of him? Could he not step aside and let someone else lead the dwarven nation? Was it not time he got a chance to rest after so much heartache and turmoil?

His heavy heart was open to Goran, thankfully, and the god of the dwarves offered Alathin his fondest wish: to leave his throne behind and wander the world freely. Yet even Goran knew that he might one day need Alathin again, so he added one condition: Alathin would not be allowed to pass into Goran’s graces until Burok Torn truly found peace.

Alathin understood he was accepting immortality by agreeing to the deal, but why not? It would leave him ages to wander Scarn and experience its wonders firsthand. The more Alathin considered Goran’s offer, the better it seemed. In the end, he accepted with a smile, one of the first he had worn since taking over the mantle of rulership.

All that remained was his “death.”

Alathin and Goran both agreed that simply stepping down would create divisiveness in Burok Torn that the dwarves might not overcome on their own. Goran arranged Alathin’s death, then spirited his body away after it was interred in the burial vaults. When mourners discovered the missing body, it added to the legend of the former king. Some claimed Alathin had gone ahead to prepare Goran’s realm for the dwarves when they died.

Actually, Alathin traveled north, wandering the famed Bridged City, then headed east, scaling the Godsface Cliffs to “get a better look at the workmanship.” To this day, the Marked King still travels the Scarred Lands, although none alive would know him. His first action upon his resurrection was to ask the god to remove his famous birthmark. Now, Alathin appears as any other dwarf, although an ancient wisdom is reflected in his old eyes.

Despite Goran's support, Oskar Kelder the Companion proved controversial and was opposed by some traditionalists. Many dwarves felt Kelder, a mere 200 years old, was unfit to lead the dwarven nation. Many claimed that his axes had not even been properly blooded yet, and that the nation must be led by a true warrior. Others wanted to remain isolated and complained of Kelder's passion for diplomacy and relations with other peoples.

Yet Kelder, despite these perceived flaws, proved a capable leader, building up the dwarven forgeworks and founding the Iron Guard during his lifetime. As the progenitor of the current royal line, Kelder's memory is today praised and celebrated by those living in the city-state's fortified walls. Kelder slipped quietly into death as a meteor shower lit up the sky in the final hours of 2499 OC.

### King Hroth the Judge (2499-2642 OC)

The founder of the Stone Guard, King Hroth is best remembered for his direct and decisive nature. Hroth was a burly dwarf, with a gruff demeanor and short temper. Foreign dignitaries often found themselves at odds with the crude king, but most came to respect him in the end, for despite his vulgar manners, Hroth was possessed of a deep intellect.

Hroth matched wits with some of the greatest minds in Scarn during their visits to the dwarven city-state, challenging them to mental duels of memory. Some said Hroth could remember the names of every soldier who had ever served him during battle, down to the scars and runes each had marked upon his body. Hroth also had some innate magical talent and was the first dwarf to scribe protective runes upon his bodyguards' armor — a practice the Iron and Stone Guardsmen continue today. Hroth died doing what he had always done, getting his hands dirty fixing problems. When the forges exploded, killing thousands of dwarves along with their beloved king, the nation felt the loss deeply.

### King Galshain Gimrut the Tall (2642-2913 OC)

Nearly five feet tall, Gimrut is remembered as one of the weakest of the ruling kings of Burok Torn, despite his bravery when he fought the Charduni leader on the cliffs above the city gates. An introspective king, Gimrut was more interested in the politics of other nations than in the city's mines and forges. He customarily dressed in white, kept his silver beard in two near braids, and wore a crown of ioun stones crafted by the wizards of Aurimar. Many of his laws are still followed to this day, and the tale of his fight with the Charduni is frequently recounted. Some believe that he venerated Hedrada as well as Goran,

but such talk is considered somewhat disloyal by most dwarves.

### King Noraim Diamondfist (2913-3333 OC)

King Noraim Diamondfist took the throne upon his father's death, but it was never a position to which he felt suited. The gray-haired dwarven king, whose hand was permanently held in a fist from a childhood mining accident, would have been more comfortable as the second son of his family, enjoying the comfort of his stronghold and leaving hard work to subordinates. He took the throne only reluctantly, leading his people in the still-smoldering war against the Charduni.

Ever his father's son, Noraim rose to the occasion, donning Gimrut's rune armor and leading his troops to victory, driving the Charduni from the mountains and eventually from Ghelspad altogether. Noraim died of a wasting illness he contracted during an expedition into the Kelders in search of titanspawn.

### Ardell the Unforgiving (3333-3394 OC)

Ardell the Unforgiving suffered many insults as a child due to his prominent nose. Some believed that the memory of these taunts helped make him an implacable and vengeful foe, earning him the title Unforgiving. When a giant made the mistake of laughing at his nose, Ardell led a force of dwarves into the mountain, slaughtering dozens of the giant's kinsmen, and leaving an enduring legacy of antipathy between the two peoples. Though he earned a wary respect among his kinsmen for the war, many felt that Ardell was excessively violent and found his grim nature distasteful. Ardell's untimely death at the hands of a malfunctioning lead golem that was a gift from the dark elves created great tension between Burok Torn and Dier Drendal and laid the foundation for much of the hatred that the two races feel toward each other today.

### Dragh (3394-3466? OC)

More at home on the battlefields of Scarn than he was actively ruling Burok Torn, Dragh was away from his nation on a diplomatic mission when the Titanswar finally broke out. Dragh and his retainers immediately started for home, but were ambushed in the Kelder Mountains by an army of Mormo's titanspawn. The outcome of the fight was never in doubt, for Dragh and his entourage were outnumbered 30-to-1. Dragh and his warriors never surrendered, however, digging into a mountain re-doubt and slaughtering hundreds of titanspawn before being finally overwhelmed.





A handsome dwarf of broad shoulders and a broader smile (displaying five gold teeth from the first ore vein he ever mined), Dragh died heroically, and the tale of his final battle is one of the most-cherished stories among dwarven bards and priests. Dragh is remembered today for strengthening Burok Torn's gates and reinforcing her military, tasks that served the city well during the long years of the Titanswar.

### Dragnor the Forgotten (3466?-3481? OC)

Despite being Dragh's firstborn son, Dragnor's legacy is largely forgotten today, earning him his unfortunate moniker. He ruled for only a few years before being tricked by a coven of hags. His wife, magically influenced by the enemy, convinced him that the hags knew of ways to resurrect Dragh and bade him meet with them. Upon arrival in the hag encampment, Dragh and his bodyguard came under attack by undead, including a bone lord created from the bones of Dragh and his retainers. Dragnor himself died, torn apart by the gold teeth of his own father. Dragnor and his father's bones were never recovered, and finding them is considered one of the dwarves' highest priorities, as is vengeance against the hags who betrayed the king.

### King Thune the Wise (3481? OC-92 AV)

Thune, who took the throne upon his brother's death at the hands of the hags, ruled with wisdom and insight, as well as great prowess in battle. He did not,

however, inherit his father's good looks, and many carvings portray the king with his features obscured by a great helm. Thune's strength lay in his sharp mind, his skill with the warhammer, and his belief in the Marked King's vision of the dwarves' destiny. He rightly saw the mountain and not the dwarves as a lasting symbol of hope and courage in the Scarred Lands, and made many efforts to fortify and improve the citadel's defenses.

Thune met his end at the hands of King Virduk's dragon legions when they took Irontooth Pass in 92 AV. Despite their bravery and skill, the dwarves were overwhelmed, and the Calastians advanced to the gates of Burok Torn. Spurred by arrogance, the Calastians impaled Thune's body on the black teeth of the pass and left it to rot. Stone Guardsmen later retrieved the bones for interment, but the memory of the defeat still burns in the dwarves' memories.

### King Thain the Just, The Aleking (92 AV-present)

King Thain is the epitome of the dwarven nation and of Burok Torn itself. The fifth son of King Thune the Wise, Thain grew from early childhood surrounded by the trappings of royalty but knowing that he would never be king. He could not have foreseen the deaths of his brothers and father, nor his quick ascent to the throne.

A wise and just king, Thain has been tempered in the fires of the past and hardened by the many tragedies of his life. Even today, he worries something might happen to take his beloved Krylara and his heir, Prince Turen, from him. This thought con-

sumes Thain, and he has recently taken to brooding for long hours, thinking of how to protect them. The Shield Arms are under his standing orders not to let Krysara and Turen leave Goran's Fane without at least 20 dwarves to protect them.

Despite so many sad events, King Thain is surprisingly cheerful during feasts in his honor, often bringing kegs of dwarven ale he has brewed himself. He refuses to imbibe too much lest his faculties be impaired in a crisis, however, and he manages to maintain his sobriety even after numerous toasts in his honor.

Thain has sworn a blood oath to rid the Scarred Lands of the dragon king Virduk, but even he must accede to the needs of Burok Torn before he can fulfill his vengeance. His greatest current threat comes from below, where lurks the roaming city of Dier Drendal. He has made it clear that once Dier Drendal is found and destroyed, the dwarves will take vengeance upon treacherous Calastia. He secretly hopes the city of the dark elves turns up quickly and is dispatched as easily, although he knows this is unlikely, even in his own lifetime.

## Royal Family

Thain's family is on the thin side compared with some of the larger dwarven clans. He has been married twice, first to the lady Lucella, who gave him a daughter, Princess Milla, and most recently to Krysara, who produced the current heir, Prince Turen.

Lucella was a high-born lady of the family Filenrak, a dark-haired beauty with insightful eyes who knew what her husband was thinking at all times. Lucella knew as much about the political and military aspects of Burok Torn as Thain and often helped him to make difficult decisions. Lucella was credited by Thain as his inner guide to arriving at the correct path.

Milla was a vision of her mother, a sweet and innocent girl who shared Thain's lusty side for life. She would likely have been an adventurous lass who followed in her father's footsteps as though she were his son. The Cult of Ancients destroyed all that could have been when their assassin unleashed a demon from a wine bottle against Thain. Lucella and little Milla died in the attack, and their loss still pains the dwarven king.

Thain himself laid his family to rest in the burial vaults of Burok Torn, placing their bodies side by side and weeping over his loss. When finally he rose, he swore an oath to grind Calastia into rubble.

Krysara is the Thain's current wife. An accomplished rune master, Krysara is a quiet, introspective woman who rarely leaves Goran's Fane. Krysara was also a popular instructor and mentor of younger priests, but she had to forego teaching students when she married King Thain, for fear that an enemy might find a way to subvert one of her students to kill another member of the royal family. She is the

mother of Prince Turen, a toddler who is personally protected by Goran's Herald.

**Krysar, Female Dwarf, Clr10/RnM7:** CR 17; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 17d8+51; hp 134; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +4 *amulet of natural armor*, +2 *ring of protection*); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+6, +3 *mace*); SQ dwarf, runecasting, design of faith, runic shield 2/day, craft rune, runic healing, share rune, turn undead; ALLG; SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 16.

*Skills:* Appraise +5, Concentration +8, Craft +4, Decipher Script +8, Hide +2, Innuendo +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +15, Knowledge (runes) +19, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +5, Pick Pocket +4, Spot +5, Swim +7, Tumble +6.

*Feats:* Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Inscribe Rune, Leadership, Permanent Rune, Still Spell.

*Possessions:* +3 *mace*, +4 *amulet of natural armor*, +2 *ring of protection*, *wand of healing*.

*Cleric Domains:* Earth, Strength.

*Cleric Spells Per Day:* 6/9+1/8+1/7+1/6+1/3+1.

## The Dwarven Conclave

The Dwarven Conclave, also known as the Elder Conclave, serves in King Thain's name as judge and jury in Burok Torn. For the common dwarf, the conclave is the highest authoritative body available. The conclave settles border disputes, ore claims, forge usage, and allocation of resources in the citadel. King Thain can overrule any and all decisions made by the Conclave, but the elders know the limits of their power and rarely make decisions he is likely to reverse. Thain selects the wisest elders to serve, keeping the Conclave a stable and reliable entity that looks out for the best interests of Burok Torn.

The Conclave is composed of 12 dwarves, male or female, all elders of established Burok Torn families. While a few are hereditary seats, with the elder passing the title onto a son or daughter with the king's approval, this is not a requirement for membership. The nomination process is open to all, but families tend to promote a single member to King Thain for consideration. The Conclave's board is replaced in cycles, with four new dwarves joining the existing members every 20 years. Thus, each member serves a total of 60 years unless interrupted by death or retirement.

Decisions are made by majority vote. In the case of a deadlocked enclave, the deciding vote falls to the king or a designated appointee. Serving as a 13th appointee is considered an unlucky posting, so few dwarves are eager to take this position. Those who have accepted have been close friends with the kings who appointed them and thus did not fear the monarch's wrath if they made a decision contrary to the king's will.

The Conclave soon faces the ultimate test of its decision-making ability. Goran's Herald, currently maintained by the spirit of Thaal Mareken, is nearing the end of his "life" as Goran's servant and needs to be replaced by another dwarven elder. Sides are already being chosen as families promote their eldest and wisest to serve Goran's will. The Conclave is already seeing squabbles break out among rival households.

Conclave members dress in long, unadorned robes, befitting their role as impartial judges. New council members receive silver colored robes, in honor of the new souls who serve as Goran's Herald. Council members nearing the end of their term wear dark grey or black robes. The four middle councilmen wear a robe with a silver and black motif.

## Current Conclave Members

### Black Robes

**Avvertal "Frostmane" Jor:** This elder dwarf of the Jor family is nearing the end of his service and secretly hopes he leaves the Conclave before Goran's Herald passes on. He desperately desires to replace Thaal Mareken, who once mentored Avvertal in the dwarven styles of fighting. Avvertal earned the nickname "Frostmane" when he was caught outside Burok Torn after the runic pennants fell. When dwarven searchers found him the next morning, he would somehow survived the cold winter night in the high peaks by wrapping his beard around him and hunkering in the snow. When dwarves chipped him from the ice and snow, much of his beard stayed behind. The beard has since grown back, but the nickname has never been forgotten.

**Avvertal "Frostmane" Jor, Male Dwarf, Ftr 14:** CR 14; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 14d10+42; hp 108; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 15 ft.; AC 22 (+1 Dex, +7 chainmail, +2 shield, +2 ring of protection); Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d10+5+1d6, +2 flaming waraxe); AL NG; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Appraise +3, Concentration +5, Craft +3, Forgery +6, Heal +3, Hide +5, Jump +8, Listen +1, Move Silently +1, Ride +18, Spot +3.

**Feats:** Blind-fight, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Leadership, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (waraxe).

**Possessions:** +2 flaming waraxe, +2 chainmail, +1 small steel shield, +2 ring of protection, ring of warmth.

**Graith Glayroc:** Graith is an accomplished rune wizard, although he is old and his ideas are often seen as antiquated and unimaginative. Graith is also nearing the end of his term with the Conclave, although his fellow rune masters hope he can somehow be kept

in the post, if not for the leadership he provides, then for his influence with the rune masters.

**Graith Glayroc, Male Dwarf, Wiz 15/RnM 5:** CR 20; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 20d4+60; hp 100; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +3 ring of protection, +4 bracers of armor); Atk +14/+9 melee (1d4+2, +2 dagger); SQ runecasting, design of faith, runic shield 1/day, craft rune, runic healing; AL NG; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +14; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 19, Wis 13, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Alchemy +24, Appraise +8, Concentration +24, Craft +9, Forgery +7, Hide +3, Intuit Direction +11, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (religion) +4+X, Knowledge (runes) +4+X, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Scry +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4, Swim +7, Tumble +2, Use Rope +7.

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Inscribe Rune, Permanent Rune, Quick Draw, Scribe Scroll, Spell Mastery, Spell Penetration, Still Spell.

**Possessions:** +2 dagger, +3 ring of protection, +4 bracers of armor, ring of regeneration, staff of power.

**Wizard Spells Known (4/9/9/8/6/3/2/1).**

**Mollen Jurestrats:** Mollen is the patriarch of the Jurestrats clan, the family of dwarves responsible for controlling Burok Torn's Gates. Mollen possesses the runes for this defensive measure of the dwarven people and takes his responsibility seriously. After losing three sons to the dark elves, Mollen sees Dier Drendal as an abomination that should be destroyed outright. He sees the possibility that, once the elves are removed, more room could be gained for the dwarven people to expand their empire. Mollen's posting is a hereditary one, and he passes his role on to his eldest son, Fralston, when his service is ended.

**Mollen Jurestrats, Male Dwarf, Ftr 10/Def 5/IGd 4:** CR 19; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 10d10+5d12+4d12+76; hp 212; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 28 (+4 dodge bonus to AC, +10 half-plate, +4 shield); Atk +27/+22/+17 melee (1d8+8, +4 warhammer); SQ defensive stance 3/day, defensive awareness, health of iron, strength of iron, bond of fealty; AL LN; SV Fort +19, Ref +6, Will +13; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Appraise +2, Craft +2, Hide +1, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Search +7, Sense Motive +3, Spot +5, Swim +9.

**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (warhammer), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Toughness.

**Possessions:** +3 half-plate, +2 large steel shield, +4 warhammer of thundering.

**Jarsen Corenshale:** Jarsen sees the dark elves as a menace, but one that might somehow be coerced into serving the dwarven nation again someday. He



does not seek allies, however. Seeing the damage the dark elven assaults now do, he would turn this anger against Burok Torn's enemies — namely, Calastia and King Virduk — and use the drendali as suicide troops to retake Irontooth Pass. Jarsen believes some well-placed overtures to the dark elves might soothe the two races' antipathy — and make the dark elves ripe for conquest. Jarsen wears a smile to Conclave meetings, but his outward jollity conceals a dark heart. Jarsen and his family likely will be forced to outer regions of Burok Torn when he leaves the Conclave in coming years. The dwarves will not exile him from the citadel, but they can move him as quickly and quietly as possible to reduce his threat. Already, rumors are circulating that a magical vein of gold ore lies somewhere near the Corenshale chambers — ore that might save the dwarven people if the family living atop it moved and the gold was mined.

**Jarsen Corenshale, Male Dwarf, Clr10/RnM 4:** CR 14; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 14d8; hp 73; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 *bracers of armor*); Atk +13/+8 melee; SQ turn undead, runecasting, design of faith, runic shield 1/day, craft rune; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Alchemy +1, Appraise +3, Craft +3, Gather Information +1, Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Intuit Direction +5, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +8, Perform +1, Pick Pocket +4, Ride +6, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2.

*Feats:* Combat Casting, Extra Turning, Improved Initiative, Inscribe Rune, Lightning Reflexes.

*Possessions:* +3 *warhammer*, +3 *bracers of armor*. Cleric Domains: Earth, Strength.

*Cleric Spells Per Day:* 6/7+1/7+1/4+1/3+1/2+1.

## Silver and Black Robes

**Crale Arvinstone:** Crale is nearing the middle of his term on the Conclave, but he has grave doubts as to the council's effectiveness. He sees the Conclave as a crowd of old dwarves trying to force the younger generation to obey ancient and outdated rules. While he sincerely believes this, however, he cannot help but notice that the young dwarves of today lack the spirit that he remembers in his own youth. Crale believes that Burok Torn needs better relations with the outside world and even supports the presence of foreign troops from Vesh and Mithril to help the citadel fight the dark elves and Calastians. So far, his views are not popular, but he continues to argue them and hopes that one day the Conclave will come around to his point of view.

**Crale Arvinstone, Male Dwarf, Wiz13/Ftr5:** CR 18; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 13d4+5d10+54; hp 116; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 *bracers of armor*); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+6, +3 *short sword*), +14/+9/+4 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); AL NG; SV Fort +11, Ref

+9, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Appraise +11, Balance +5, Bluff +1, Climb +10, Concentration +6, Craft +6, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist +6, Heal +8, Hide +3, Intimidate +7, Knowledge +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +5, Perform +6, Ride +11, Search +6, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language +2, Spot +2, Use Rope +7.

*Feats:* Brew Potion, Craft Staff, Enlarge Spell, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (transmutation), Still Spell, Weapon Focus (crossbow), Weapon Focus (short sword).

*Possessions:* +3 *short sword*, +5 *bracers of armor*, *rod of lordly might*, *ring of the ram*.

*Wizard Spells Known* (4/5/5/5/3/2/1).

**Borl Claybreaker:** Borl is a tough dwarf — in mind as well as body. He fought the dark elves for many years and has the scars to prove it, pale against his forge-darkened skin. The most noticeable scar runs from ear to ear across his neck, the result of being left for dead by a dark elf raiding party. Unfortunately for the elves, he did not die, but instead found the energy to bind his throat with the rag of a dead dwarf's robe until help arrived. When he recovered, Borl set off into the tunnels on his own. Many never expected to see him again, but when he returned, carrying six dark elf heads, no one was terribly surprised. Borl favors charging headlong into the drendali, and after they are wiped from the depths, retaking Irontooth Pass. Ultimately, he would enjoy nothing more than riding into Calastia at the head of a dwarven occupation force.

**Borl Claybreaker, Male Dwarf, Ftr11:** CR 11; Medium-size humanoid (3 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 11d10+33; hp 86; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 15 ft.; AC 19 (+2 Dex, +5 chainmail, +2 *ring of protection*); Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+5 or 1d6+5, +2 *dwarven urgrosh*); AL CG; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Appraise +3, Climb +11, Craft +13, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Ride +14, Spot +1, Swim +11.

*Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven urgrosh), Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (dwarven urgrosh), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (dwarven urgrosh), Weapon Finesse (dwarven urgrosh).

*Possessions:* +2 *dwarven urgrosh*, +2 *ring of protection*, *helm of teleportation*, masterwork chainmail.

**Angar Mastefell:** Angar is a devout priest of Goran and brings Goran's decrees to many meetings of the Conclave. He always wears a warhammer at his side and sometimes waves it around his head as he incites the dwarves against the drendali. When Goran

finally decides Burok Torn should march against Dier Drendal, many expect Angar to be at the head of the dwarven army. Angar's position is also hereditary, but he has no children since his sons were slaughtered by the gorgons. Many feel his post should go to his top acolyte, the accomplished runic priestess Temerta Yashas.

**Angar Mastefell, Male Dwarf, Clr14:** CR 14; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 14d8+14; hp 84; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +7 chainmail); Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+4, +3 warhammer); SQ turn undead; AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +14; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 11.

*Skills:* Appraise +3, Bluff +3, Gather Information +2, Hide +1, Listen +3, Move Silently +1, Profession +12, Spot +3.

*Feats:* Great Fortitude, Heighten Spell, Improved Critical (warhammer), Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

*Possessions:* +3 warhammer, +2 chainmail, belt of dwarvenkind.

Cleric Domains: Earth, Strength.

Cleric Spells Per Day: 6/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/3+1.

**Eshella Mirrenmell:** Eshella took the place of her husband when he was killed in a titanspawn attack from Baereth Marn 32 years ago. She has proven a popular Conclave member and is likely to be promoted to the position by King Thain when the next vote rolls around. An accomplished rune master, Eshella is a driving force behind finishing the runic pennants to protect Burok Torn. Eshella is known to be a fortuneteller, so many of the rune masters working on the runic pennants take notice when she urges them to hurry.

**Eshella Mirrenmell, Female Dwarf, Wiz10/RnM6:** CR 16; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 16d4+32; hp 77; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (+1 ring of protection); Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4+5, +3 dagger); SQ runecasting, design of faith, runic shield 2/day, craft rune, runic healing; AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Alchemy +5, Appraise +6, Bluff +5, Craft +6, Disguise +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (runes) +14, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +1, Perform +4, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +15, Spot +7, Tumble +5.

*Feats:* Empower Spell, Inscribe Rune, Maximize Spell, Permanent Rune, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (divination), Spell Penetration.

*Possessions:* +1 dagger, +1 ring of protection, amulet of proof against detection and location.

Wizard Spells Known (4/5/5/5/4/4/3/3/2).

## Silver Robes

**Eken the Stonebreaker:** Eken was taken by surprise when he was nominated to the Conclave. A reclusive dwarf, Eken spent much of his time in the forges, creating fine weapons for the Iron and Stone Guard. An accomplished sorcerer, Eken fought the hags during the latter days of the Divine War and still has nightmares about its horrors, even 150 years later. Eken is nevertheless a faithful servant of Goran and takes his posting very seriously. He still desires vengeance against the hags, but endeavors to keep this hatred—and the memories of horror that still plague him—from interfering with his duties to the Conclave.

**Eken the Stonebreaker, Male Dwarf, Exp6/Sor8:** CR 13; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 6d6+8d4+28; hp 79; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 amulet of natural armor); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+1 mace), or +11/+6 (1d8, light crossbow); SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +13; AL LG; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 17.

*Skills:* Appraise +13, Concentration +13, Craft (blacksmithing) +10, Craft (weaponsmithing) +12, Hide +3, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Listen +2, Move Silently +14, Perform +12, Profession (miner) +8, Scry +12, Search +3, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +16, Spot +2, Tumble +4.

*Feats:* Alertness, Brew Potion, Empower Spell, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Move Silently), Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]).

*Possessions:* +4 amulet of natural armor, periapt of wound closure, staff of earth and stone, heavy mace, light crossbow.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/6/3).

**Mrisha Evermelt:** Mrisha rose to prominence in Burok Torn when she single-handedly stopped a Calastian assault force scaling the walls of Burok Torn by setting off a rockfall that buried the attackers. She returned to the citadel battered and scarred but a hero to the dwarven nation, and the king gladly appointed her to the Conclave when the next position became open. Mrisha is somewhat uncomfortable in the role, but has grown into her position, speaking for the common dwarves rather than the elite and tempering her decisions with mercy and wisdom. This, coupled with her wartime status, has made her a popular Conclave member among the lower echelon dwarves of Burok Torn.

**Mrisha Evermelt, Female Dwarf, Ftr8:** CR 8; Medium-size humanoid (3 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 8d10+16; hp 62; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 21 (+2 Dex, +7 chainmail, +2 shield); Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+4, +1 heavy mace) or +10/+5 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); AL CG; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Appraise +2, Climb +16, Craft +2, Gather Information +2, Hide +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Perform +2, Spellcraft +2, Spot +2.

*Feats:* Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Climb), Weapon Focus (heavy mace), Weapon Focus (crossbow), Weapon Specialization (heavy mace).

*Possessions:* +2 *chainmail*, +1 *heavy mace*, heavy crossbow, masterwork chainmail, +1 *small steel shield*.

**Oskar Unilf:** Oskar Unilf is a dwarf with big dreams. He looks around the Kelders and sees open territory that the dwarves should be claiming, land that he feels might make up for the loss of Irontooth Pass. His ideas for the Conclave are expansionistic, with a goal of taking over the Kelders as the private domain of the dwarven people. How the dark elves fit into his scheme has never been made clear, but Oskar is strong-willed and willing to put his broad shoulders to work at retaking what the dwarves have lost. Yet even though he looks to expand and reinvigorate Burok Torn, Oskar does not have any plans for the rulership of the new nation of which he dreams. Yet.

**Oskar Unilf, Male Dwarf, Clr10:** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 10d8+30; hp 75; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 21 (+1 Dex, +10 full plate); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+3, heavy mace) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +11; SQ turn undead; AL LN; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Appraise +5, Climb +5, Craft +4, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +6, Hide +4, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Scry +15, Spot +4.

*Feats:* Brew potion, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Leadership.

*Possessions:* +2 *full plate*, heavy mace, light crossbow.

Cleric Domains: Earth, Strength.

Cleric Spells Per Day: 6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1.

**Flynn the Stonefisted:** Flynn, a descendant of Noraim Diamondfist, recently uncovered a secret path into Irontooth Pass that bypasses its spiked defenses and hopes to lead the dwarves in a raid to take back their former territory. Devoted to Goran, Flynn is often unyielding, demanding perfection from his followers and those who profess to serve Goran. Despite this, he is well-liked by the Shield Arms under his command and is prepared to lay down his life for any of the royal family. Flynn saved the lady Krylara from a steam vent explosion that scalded a number of dwarves by throwing himself atop her and shielding her with his massive body. He spent months recovering, and now serves as Second Shield, reporting directly to First Shield Garrit, in addition to his duties in the Conclave.

**Flynn the Stonefisted, Male Dwarf, Pal15:** CR 15; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 15d10+60; hp 144; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 15 ft.; AC 26 (+2 Dex, +10 half-plate, +4 shield); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+5, adamantite battleaxe); SA smite evil; SQ remove disease 5/week, turn undead, detect evil, divine grace, lay on hands, divine health, aura of courage; AL LG; SV Fort +15, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 14.

*Skills:* Appraise +2, Concentration +19, Craft (weaponsmith) +2, Diplomacy +10, Heal +15, Hide +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Spot +2.

*Feats:* Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack.

*Possessions:* Adamantine battleaxe, +3 *half-plate*, *helm of brilliance*, +2 *large steel shield*.

Paladin Spells Per Day: 3/2/1/1.

## Defenders of the Realm

The dwarves of Burok Torn are born to fight, from the most elderly matron to the greenest adolescent. Hard times have bred hard people. A standing army of 50,000 dwarves can be called to service inside Burok Torn with but 3 days notice, and over 100,000 will be able to fight within a week.

The city's standing army includes approximately 30,000 trained warriors and fighters, dwarves who abandon their forges during time of war for the overall protection of Burok Torn. These warriors come bearing their own weapons and armor, many of which have been passed down through generations of the family.

The next 20,000 troops are elite Iron and Stone Guardsmen. These veteran fighters serve as the backup to the regular army, the Guardsmen often acting as officers for the less experienced dwarves.

When the entire nation is called up, the other 50,000 combatants are irregulars, ranging from retired warriors to simple dwarven laborers fighting with improvised weapons. Despite this, even irregular dwarf soldiers make a good accounting of themselves in combat.

### The Iron Guard

Originally created over 15 centuries ago by King Kelder, the Iron Guard form the backbone of the dwarven army. Each of the original 100 Iron Guardsmen were hand picked from among Kelder's most trusted defenders during a civil war, and they proved extraordinarily faithful.

Time and again, Kelder's foes attempted to depose him — at one point a large portion of the regular dwarven army even stood against the king. Outnum-



bered, his supporters were forced to give ground, and finally fell back on the fortified royal quarters. At last, Kelder decided to surrender rather than shed any more dwarven blood. Legend has it that, on the eve of his surrender, Goran visited Kelder in a dream and whispered into his ear. When Kelder awoke, he called his twenty most loyal defenders, asking that each swear upon their honor to guard him to the last. All twenty did as the king asked, but one of their number, Brengre, was secretly loyal to the rebels and swore falsely.

During the ensuing battle, the Iron Guard proved invincible. Time and again, the enemy came against them, and time and again they were driven back. Of the Guardsmen, only Brengre fell. The survivors held their ground for two entire days, neither eating nor sleeping.

At the end of the second day, decimated and disheartened, the rebels withdrew and, soon after, sent Kelder word of their capitulation. The nineteen surviving Guardsmen were completely unwounded, though their axes were notched, their shields destroyed and their armor rent by hundreds of blows. Since that day, the Iron Guard, now over 1,000 strong, has defended the king of Burok Torn with their hearts, souls, and lives, and their bravery has become legendary in Burok Torn and beyond.

## The Stone Guard

*Iron is strong, iron is sharp, iron is powerful. Yet, iron can be bent, dulled, and weakened. Iron can be reforged to work against its wielder. Stone serves its master or shatters.*

- Ancient Dwarven Proverb

In the months following the insurrection against King Kelder, the surviving Iron Guardsmen were the heroes of the dwarven nation. Within a year, their ranks had almost quadrupled as dwarves from throughout dwarven lands applied for membership.

One hundred and thirty nine years later, the Iron Guardsmen were still considered the elite of the elite, but since only so many guards could be appointed, Hroth the Judge, upon his coronation as king, made his first official act the creation of the Stone Guard.

Made up of worthy dwarves from across the realm who do not qualify as Iron Guardsmen, the members of the Stone Guard actively search out and destroy threats to Burok Torn's security. It was the Stone Guardsmen who first met the advancing Charduni army. Stone Guardsmen led the foray against the gorgon Masetex, and were the last to fall alongside King Dragh. And it was Stone Guardsmen whose surprise attack helped to drive the Calastians from the very gates of Burok Torn.

Selected only from existing dwarven defenders, the Stone Guardsmen are the Scarn dwarves most often encountered outside of Burok Torn. Whenever they are encountered, know that they are on a mission for the king of Burok Torn and will not stop until

they succeed or are killed in the attempt. A Stone Guardsman is the exemplar of a dwarven warrior; all others look up to these incredible dwarves.

## The Shield Arms

The king's personal bodyguard, known as the Shield Arms, also serve as the garrison of Goran's Fane. Shield Arms are drawn from a wide range of classes and backgrounds, and all are given their position as a reward for especially brave or resourceful service to Burok Torn. The Shield Arms also receive the best quarters, provisions, weapons, and armor, and dwarven healers give them top priority in combat.

Thain and his family are accompanied by a squad of Shield Arms wherever they go, and every member of the unit is known to be willing to die a thousand painful deaths rather than see a member of the royal family come to harm. Under the able command of First Shield Garrit, the Arms are known as one of the finest military units on all of Scarn.

The unit currently includes about 500 members, and the tough standards for admission keep the unit small. New members can only be admitted at the personal command of the king, and even then many fail the rigorous training that requires the candidate show skill in a wide range of weapons and fighting techniques, as well as display intelligence and resourcefulness.

## The Future of Burok Torn

For the moment, the full force of Burok Torn's fury is focused upon the raiding dark elves, those strange creatures from deep underground who were once friends to the dwarves. Goran himself has called for Dier Drendal's annihilation, but so far that task has proven easier said than done, as the mysterious settlement never seems to be in the same place twice, and on several occasions armed parties of dwarves who thought they had found the city ended up ambushed and wiped out instead.

The search for the city goes on unabated, and the dwarves have finally been forced to admit that, as legend has held for years, Dier Drendal actually moves from place to place underground. The dwarves hope, however, that the pace of its movement is slow enough that they can eventually catch up. Dwarven scouts frequently patrol beneath the Kelder Mountains, searching for signs of the city, but to no avail. Some of these parties have vanished altogether, but on occasion a survivor or two has returned to Burok Torn with the dark elves' location. Once the dwarves arrive in force, however, the city is always gone.

The dark elves' attacks have grown more desperate of late, and Goran knows it is because Nalthalos' time is almost up. The golem-imprisoned god may not survive much longer, and the dwarves' deity who was once a paragon of mercy and compassion now

## Leading the Shield Arms

**First Shield Captain Umar Garrit, Male Dwarf, Pal14:** CR 14; Size Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 14d10+42; hp 138; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 26 (+2 Dex, +11 full plate, +3 shield); Atk +22/+17/+12 melee, +27/+22/+17 vs. constructs (1d8+7, 1d8+12 vs. constructs, *mace of smiting*), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +5; SA smite evil; SQ remove disease 4/week, turn undead, detect evil, divine grace, lay on hands, divine health, aura of courage; AL LG; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +6, Appraise +2, Craft (blacksmith) +8, Craft (weaponsmith) +9, Diplomacy +8, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Search +4, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +2, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Skill Focus (listen), Weapon Focus (mace), Weapon Focus (crossbow).

**Possessions:** +3 full plate of heavy fortification, +2 large steel shield, *mace of smiting*, heavy crossbow. Paladin Spells Per Day: 3/1.

First Shield Garrit commands the Shield Arms of Burok Torn, a military elite whose sole purpose is to protect the royal family and the king from attack. Garrit has led the group for 23 years now and is still as focused on his duty as the day he attained his current rank.

While exploring the mountains around Burok Torn nearly a half-century ago, Garrit came upon a young dwarven couple cornered on a ledge by a ferocious troll. Heedless of his own safety, Garrit charged the troll, shoving it off the ledge to fall on the jagged rocks below. He then turned to see if the two dwarves were all right, only to be informed that the dwarven woman was the princess of Burok Torn, the daughter of King Dragnor, and the male who had been so fiercely defending her was a captain of the Shield Arms. He was immediately invited to join the unit, an invitation that he accepted with gratitude. Today, he commands the entire regiment, and his reputation remains untarnished.

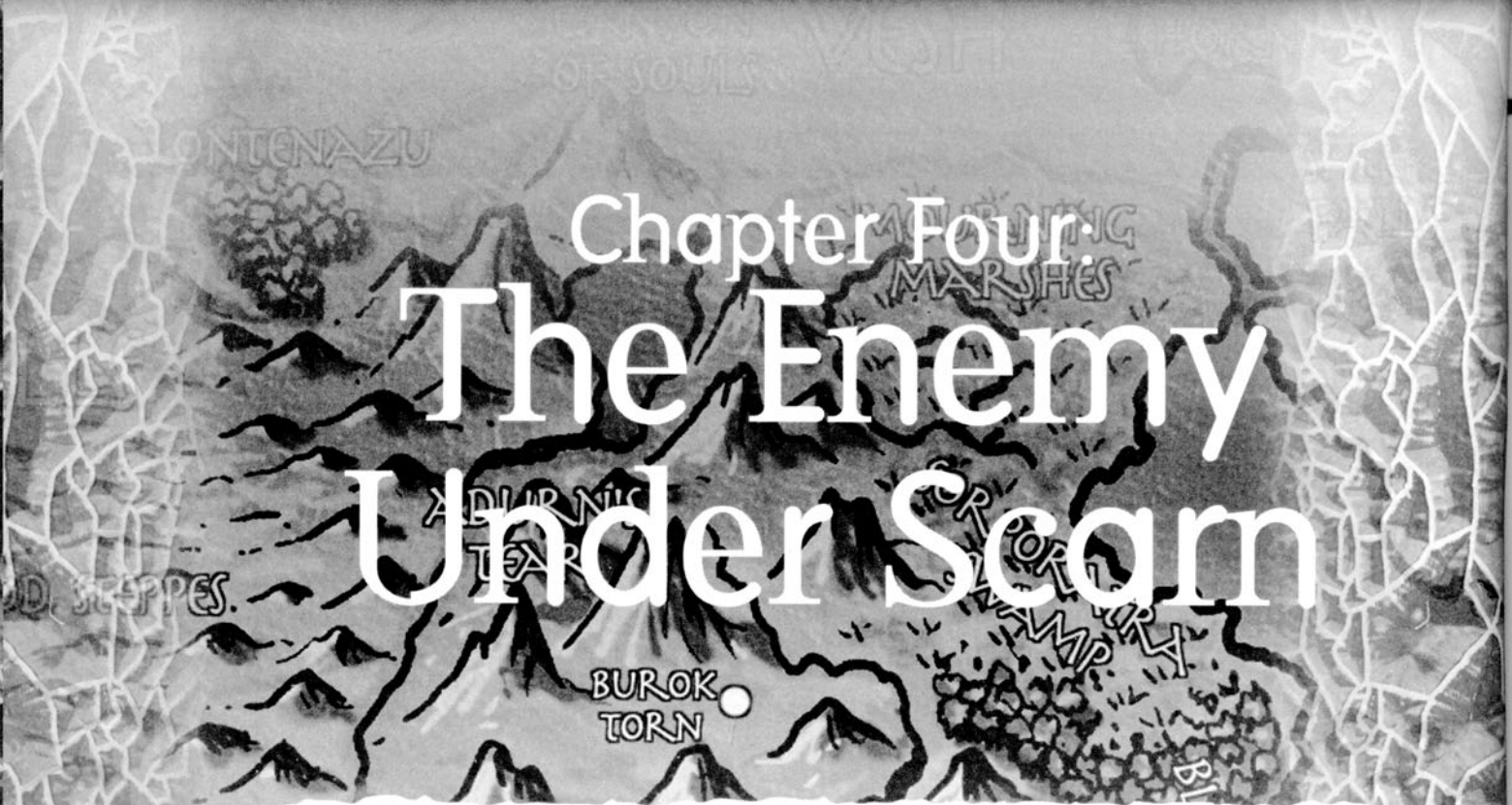
Garrit is a dour dwarf who thinks of the Shield Arms as his family. He has never married and has few friends outside of the military, though he is an especially devout dwarf and gives much of his pay to the church of Goran. He is a fearsome sight, clad in steel plate armor and wielding a great mace. He sometimes chafes at garrison duty and longs for the thrill of battle, but his unflinching loyalty to Burok Torn prevents him from acting upon these desires.

feels only a fierce, grim-hearted joy at the prospect of Nalthalos' destruction. Chern may well have corrupted the soul of a god, as he so often corrupted the souls of mortals.

Many feel that King Thain should be focusing his attention on retaking Irontooth Pass, for the loss of the place was a terrible blow from which Burok Torn has yet to recover. The truth is that Thain would like to attack and recapture the pass, and has even sent emissaries to Vesh to appeal for aid — a very difficult thing for a dwarf to do. So far, Vesh's aid has been limited due to that nation's own difficulties, but Thain hopes that when the time comes a combined army of humans and dwarves will smash the Calastians and once more take back what rightfully belongs to Burok Torn.

In the meantime, rune priests and wizards, artificers and weaponsmiths work together to make the armor, magic, and weapons needed to return Burok Torn to greatness. In a few years, the first of a new series of *runic pennants* will grace the peak, further strengthening the citadel's defenses, and many dwarves hope that the sack of Dier Drendal will yield new treasures and secrets that can be turned to their.

Some dwarves, particularly the aged stonemasons, dream of a day when the mighty images of their leaders once more grace the slopes of the mountain above, signaling to the world that the dwarves cannot be beaten, that their realm is eternal. So far, these dreams are just that — dreams. But who can say what the future holds?



# Chapter Four: The Enemy Under Seam

Sire:

At your request, I convened the Conclave, regarding that which we spoke about in private. We have heard the testimony from two dwarven spies, as well as a captured Calastian. The Vigilant with whom we requested an audience met an unfortunate end by an assassin's blade. Be that as it may, the testimony presented paints a grim picture indeed. Conclaves Corenshale, Claybreaker, and Glayroc (especially in light of recent events) voiced their opinion that we should garner all the knowledge possible on our enemy, especially if they are seeking to ally with the Dragon King. Conclaves Mirrenmell, Evermelt, and, surprisingly, Mastefell, voiced their opinion against the motion, fearing that we may not want to reopen wounds that are still fresh. Conclave Stonebreaker sided with Mirrenmell and the like, but was more fearful that we would become like the enemy we studied if we were to go ahead with our plan.

I could bore you with Conclave proceedings for a tenday, Sire, but I know you are a busy dwarf. After two days of debate and weighing the options, the proposal was put to the vote. The result was seven to four in favor of unsealing the heretical scrolls. As we agreed, I abstained, since I was the dwarf who brought the proposal to the Conclave. If you wish it, I can give a more detailed breakdown of the vote. For now, however, suffice it to say that the knowledge and history garnered by our ancestors regarding the dark elves will not carry the mark of heresy for those wishing to study it. To these documents I have added some more recent information, gleaned by our spies, allies, and friends throughout Ghiespad. I hope that your majesty finds the following enlightening, though the full import of the information so revealed is yet to be known. Until we decide who will have access to this information, only you and our Conclave members have access.

Ever Your Humble Servant,

*Avvertal Jor, Black Robe of the Conclave*



## The Dark Elves of Dier Drendal

Deep beneath the peaks of the Kelder mountain range dwells a malignant race of elves known only for hate and treachery. No one knows why the elves choose to live underground, not even the dwarves who constantly do battle with them. What is known is that the drendali are malicious and cruel, hating everything about their neighbors and surface brethren. They use massive tunnel networks, centered on a great city dubbed Dier Drendal, to strike at travelers and settlements in and around the Kelders, sowing fear in all they encounter. The reasons for their powerful hatred are unknown, and in truth it is something about which the vigils of Vesh are not particularly concerned; what does concern them is what might happen should the dark elves ally themselves with any of Ghelspad's more aggressive people, such as the slitheren or the humans of Calastia or Dunahnae.

The dark elves call themselves the drendali (or "people of the walls"). They dress in the resplendent leathers so common among the wood elves of Vera-Tre, as well as resized armors stolen from their dwarven neighbors. The result is a cold, bewitching beauty, one that suits their cruel natures well. They also wear a variety of tattoos. Though these are purely decorative, some are nonetheless faintly luminescent and magical, a fact the elves use to frighten their prey when surprise is judged to be less important than sheer terror.

Dark elves tend to be fighters and rogues, and often sorcerers as well. The druidic paths so favored by their woodland kin are almost completely unknown among the dark elves, abandoned long ago in favor of more arcane pursuits.

**Regions:** Dark elves are found exclusively in their underground homes beneath the Kelder Mountains. They have no known trade patterns with other above-ground races, and as such, are not found in other parts of Ghelspad. Relations with other titanspawn, however, are a definite possibility.

**Racial Abilities:** Dark elves have the following racial traits:

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma. Dark elves are quick and willful, and are powerful spellcasters.
- Medium-size.
- Dark Elven base speed is 30 feet.
- *Darkvision:* Dark elves can see in the dark up to 120 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and dark elves can function just fine with no light at all.
- Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects.
- +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. A dark 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 the door. Elven senses are finely honed.

- +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities. The blood of sorcerers is strong in the dark elves' veins, and most spells are a trivial matter for them.

- *Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day – *blur*, *mirror image*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a sorcerer of the dark elf's character level. Dark elves are known for using these abilities before entering battle, swelling their ranks with illusions and confusing the enemy's eyes. These tactics often gain them the upper hand in battle against those who are unprepared for them.

- *Automatic Languages:* Elven, common.

- *Bonus Languages:* Dwarven, any titanspawn language.

- *Favored Class:* Rogue or Sorcerer. A multiclass dark elf's rogue or sorcerer class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 in *Core Rulebook I*). Some dark elves have mastered their innate magical abilities; others find the stealth for which their folk are known more natural. The choice of rogue or sorcerer as a character's preferred class must be selected as soon as the character acquires a level in either the rogue or sorcerer class and does not change thereafter.

- *Level Adjustment:* +1. Dark elves are more powerful and gain levels more slowly than most of the other common races of Ghelspad. When creating a character of this race, add this level adjustment to class levels to determine character level: thus, a dark elven character with four levels in sorcerer (Sor4) and two in rogue (Rog2) is a 7<sup>th</sup>-level character.

## After Victory

Many races lost much in the Titanswar. Whole populations were wiped out, geography was greatly changed, gods and titans alike were slain and dismembered. While they did not have it as hard as their forsaken elven cousins, the dark elves of Dier Drendal were nonetheless deeply scarred by the ravages of the Titan of Plagues. Their god lost his connection with the Astral plane and became effectively trapped in a lead body. Most of his powers vanished, and for a time, even his clerics could not discover a connection with him. Slowly, though, the healing began.

The demigod became accustomed to his new body, and, gradually, his fractured mind healed. Within six months, the majority of dark elven clerics were able to reforge a connection with their god. Although Nalthalos had lost power over his old domains, he learned that his artificial body afforded him a new one.

As if this was not bad enough, the great city of Dier Drendal was severely damaged by the war. Unprotected by walls of granite, as was Burok Torn, the city of the dark elves was broken, its huge edifices, hundreds of years old, smashed to rubble. Throughout the city and the surrounding mountains lay decomposing bodies of titanspawn and elves, as well as the broken shards of countless golems. And no one is sure how many drendali died fighting Chern during the Battle of Baereth's Passing.

Since the battle, the drendali have had but one all-encompassing goal — reclaiming the remaining Devanal Arch, under heavy guard near the center of Burok Torn. Nothing else matters to the leader of the dark elves, the demigod Nalthalos. If he can access the Arch, he will be able to heal himself and regain much of his lost former power.

However, Goran and the dwarven kings swore to never again cooperate with the dark elves. The drendali knew they would never agree to grant Nalthalos access to the arch, and felt they had no choice save open warfare. Dier Drendal prepared for two years before launching its first attack on the citadel of the dwarves.

The clash was horrific for both sides: two nations that were once partners and friends, now fighting like the most savage of enemies. Terrible losses were inflicted when the dark elves commanded their golems to collapse a tunnel, crushing more than 1,000 dwarves in the rubble. The entire elven war party was subsequently wiped out in a dwarven counteroffensive involving stone guardsmen and rune masters. The elves were taken by surprise and never stood a chance.

Failing with large-scale assaults, the dark elves, under the guidance of Nalthalos, began small reconnaissance raids on Burok Torn, gauging numbers of defenders, the composition and layout of dwarven tunnels. Their mission: find the quickest, easiest route to the Devanal Arch.

After more than 50 years of conflicts and skirmishes with the dwarves, with no resolution in sight, the elves have become increasingly desperate. Their plight is fueled by the sense of helplessness that they occasionally see in their god. This only serves to increase the animosity most elves feel toward the dwarves of Burok Torn. With this hatred in mind, and knowing that it is, perhaps, the only way to reach the remaining Devanal Arch, diplomatic overtures have





been extended to King Virduk of the Calastian Hegemony.

While many elves, including the former king, feel that pursuing this avenue is a mistake, no elf can deny that they desperately need help taking Burok Torn, whatever form such help may come in. Some of the high priests think that by allying with the Dragon King, Chardun, who was wronged by the dwarves of Burok Torn in the past, will come to their stricken god's aid.

Whatever the case may be, the objective of the elves has been, and always will be, to secure the Devanal Arch in Burok Torn for Nalthalos' use. With it, they hope to recoup both their way of life and the sphere of influence they once enjoyed.

— *Excerpt from dwarven modern history text regarding current relations with the dark elves.*

## City of the Dark Ones

The great city of Dier Drendal. Every time I see her, I still marvel that the elves were able to carve such a beautiful city out of the harsh environs of the Kelders. It's a wonder that their city does without the thick walls that Burok Torn enjoys. I am particularly interested in their system of gates. These portals appear fragile and light, laden with latticework and symbolic carvings. I asked about this and received a demonstration instead of a straight answer. The elves escorted me outside with my retinue and signaled that the gates be closed. The elven ruler then smiled and calmly asked me to try and open the gates. Amused and more than a bit curious, I obliged him. I pushed on the seemingly fragile main gate and thought I felt it yield. Encouraged, I pushed harder and felt it yield a bit more. Finally, I pushed with all my might, and realized, to my shock and amazement, that the gate had not been moving, *I* had. I was concentrating so hard on pushing the gate open that I did not even realize that I had been pushing myself backwards. After I started laughing at my own stubbornness, we *all* had a good laugh. The elven king then took me on a detailed inspection tour of the gates.

Later, over their equivalent of evedine, the elf king showed me the material that the gates were made of: a remarkable mithril-granite composite, held together by magic and elven ingenuity. The combination is almost as strong as adamantine. It is beautiful to behold — and just as expensive as it looks. My hopes for purchasing some to rebuild our own main gates were quickly dashed when he told me how much three tons would cost. Perhaps we can work out some kind of trade.

Whatever the case, it was good to forget the tensions of the past several years and just enjoy the elves' hospitality. After dinner, the king expressed his eagerness to show me the blueprints for the 'floating' hinges, as he called them, which allowed

one single elf to open or close the main gate. Needless to say, I was much impressed by the visit and will be employing at least some dark elven technology upon my return. I cannot wait to see the look on Brol's face when I show him and his engineers the new hinge designs. It will turn his beard white! I must remind myself to stop by the Irontooth Pass on my return journey to give the dwarves there a visit and inquire into their clans. I forgot them the last time and was told by the heads of two of their families that they felt slighted. Ah, the travails of kingship.

— *Personal entry from journal of King Dragh.*

## Reaching Out

One hundred and fifty years after the Titanswar, the elves of Dier Drendal live an isolated existence beneath the Kelder Mountains. Much that they took for granted was robbed from them during the Titanswar: their god's immortality, their beautiful city, and their trade and friendship with the stout folk of Burok Torn. Hearing drendali humming the refrain to the "Ballad of Betrayer's Bridge" softly to themselves while they work is not an uncommon experience.

Elves have long lives and even longer memories. The scars left by years of war will not soon heal. The elves blame the dwarves not only for the loss of their god's power, but also for the loss of their beautiful surface city. Shortly after Nalthalos fled the battlefield at Baereth Marn, the gorgon hordes of Mormo attacked Dier Drendal. Having lost most of their standing army to the Scourge, and having committed most of the reserve forces to guard Nalthalos while he recuperated, the elves had no choice but to watch as the gorgons destroyed most of their beautiful city. Only the central keep was protected, guarded by the reservists. This was where the new line of the city was drawn, and it is this central keep that formed the foundation for the new city of Dier Drendal.

Dozens of elves, whose typical lifespan is almost 1,500 years, are firsthand veterans of the battles and ravages of the Divine War. What saddens and angers them more than the memories of the war is that they can remember times before the war, when they roamed above the Kelders and were not considered merely fictional monsters in children's fairy tales.

Despite these hardships, however, the dark elven way of life remains almost unchanged. True, their god now resides among them; true, they live underground in a moving city; and true, they have declared war on their longtime trade partners. Regardless, everyday life goes on as it has for millennia.

Recently, as it has become increasingly apparent that Burok Torn is unbreachable without aid, the elves have broken their isolationist stance and have begun to look for help. While no elf ever admits this out loud, they know in their hearts that their god is dying. This has led them to the brink of despair:



without the guidance and power that their god provides, the dark elves would be nothing more than their Termanan cousins. Desperation of this sort always breeds the strangest of bedfellows. One needs look no further than the Divine War to find proof of this statement. Keeping all of this in mind, let us venture into the 'city of the living walls.' There we may find the weapon we need to destroy Burok Torn once and for all.

— *Excerpt from speech given by Anteas, Royal Grand Vizier to King Virduk on the subject of possibly allying with the dark elves.*

## A Mysterious Past

We dwarves don't like to admit it, but we have no idea where the dark elves came from or when they came to the Kelders. Elves are something of a mystery race for all the people of Scarn. Certainly, they were created by the titans and later adopted by the gods, but no one exactly knows why they were adopted by their particular demigod.

What we do know is that when we 'discovered' those damn elves some 50 years after we settled the Kelders, they were already well established. Back when we used to visit and trade with them, I remember seeing relics and building styles that date from thousands of years before the Divine War. And I don't give a damn what the historians nowadays say, those elves were living on these mountains for centuries before we got here.

From what my elven friends used to tell me, Dier Drendal translates to "the city of living walls." But to them it means much more. It's a home, security, keeper of life. That's the concept that no one remembers. That's the kind of thing that makes it hard to hate them. Gods, they had beautiful crafters. There were some that were better than the dwarves, I'll admit it. Hell, Goran knows they were better than me, and I'm the best there is. They could cut granite like it was butter. And those golem servitors, have you ever seen a creature the size of a dwarf lift a granite slab four times bigger than it over its head? Damn right you haven't.

It's a pity the city's gone now. Sunk under the mountain, she is. The rest of her destroyed by those *kherget* gorgons. Beautiful city. Lots of history. All gone. Sunk under the rock, I hear tell. But I'll believe it when I see it. Young dwarves telling of a city that walks around underground like some kinda creature. They've got that weakened god now, so you can't blame them for wanting to hide.

I suppose it's just payback for surviving Kadum's tantrum unscathed. He was mighty powerful and, thank Goran, mighty in a rush someplace. If he had spent a second longer here, we'd all be dead.

... dead ... Say, did I ever tell you the one about the dead Vengaurak ...

— *Deathbed rantings of Orgar Splinterstone, two days before his cremation in his own forge, 51 AV.*

## Location

Master Yugman:

You want to know where Dier Drendal is? Don't you think if we *knew* where the damnable city was located, we'd have already wiped it out? I'm sorry, please forgive my rudeness; your letter simply hit a nerve. I understand how important your research is. Enclosed, you will find what little we know of our enemy's present location and numbers, although King Thain has forbidden me to give even *you* some information. It is not a slight against you, nor against humans. Thain just feels that the rest of the races can hardly afford to deal with a uniquely dwarven problem. And while you have said that the luxury of pride is one we can ill afford, we do not see it as pride, but rather preventive medicine. Virduk hasn't been able to capture the citadel in almost 60 years of war. No need to alarm the rest of the world on our behalf; that may open up other avenues for Virduk to expand Calastia's grip on Ghelspad. But I digress.

Currently, no one but the elves know where Dier Drendal is located. We know that their city is not in the areas immediately occupied by Baereth Marn, Adurn's Tear, or the citadel itself. This accounts for almost forty square miles of underground terrain. We know that the city is large, but precisely how large, again, only the elves or our ancestral scrolls can tell you. The chances that either source will be available for questioning anytime soon are about the same as Virduk giving up the Irontooth Pass and apologizing to the world. I share your frustration in the cloistering of the ancestral scrolls. But they have been labeled as heresy and, as such, there is no way for me to access them legally. And do not ask — I will not break in or steal anything; I value my life, my home, and my clan too much. Population estimates place the city of the dark elves at roughly the same as our own citadel. Thus, it is logical to assume that the city is of an equal size to Burok Torn, although I suspect that it sprawls rather than climbs, as our citadel does.

I hope what I have been able to send you is helpful. If not, then please correspond again and I will see what else I can research for you.

Respectfully,

Tored Fenex, Chief Historian

— *Copy of written reply to Yugman the Sage's request for information about Dier Drendal, 143 AV.*

*I don't know how you knew he would say yes, Yugman, and I don't want to know. Suffice to say, I was able to visit the former site of Dier Drendal. I have included my surveys and thoughts in the documents brought by courier. Good luck.*

— TF

The elven city of Dier Drendal can be said to exist in two places: atop a peak in the Kelder Mountains and below the mountain range itself. The former city is nothing more than the twisted wreck of an age long past. No one who is not a dark elf has ever seen the new city, but rumors abound that it is full of horrors and is unspeakably ugly to look upon.

From the site of the ruined city, one can see a number of marvels. Fifty miles to the north is the Irontooth Pass, currently under Calastian control. To the west is the nation of Lageni. To the east lies besieged Durrover. South of the city lies the peak of its mountain home, as well as the rest of the undemolished Kelder Mountain chain. The view from the ruined city is spectacular. Corean's Cleft is visible from this altitude, and the horizon tinges with red in those spots where the Blood Sea comes into view. Further west than Lageni is a huge forest that can only be Geleeda's Grove. And looking north, past the Irontooth Pass, it is possible just barely to make out the outline of Adurn's Tear.

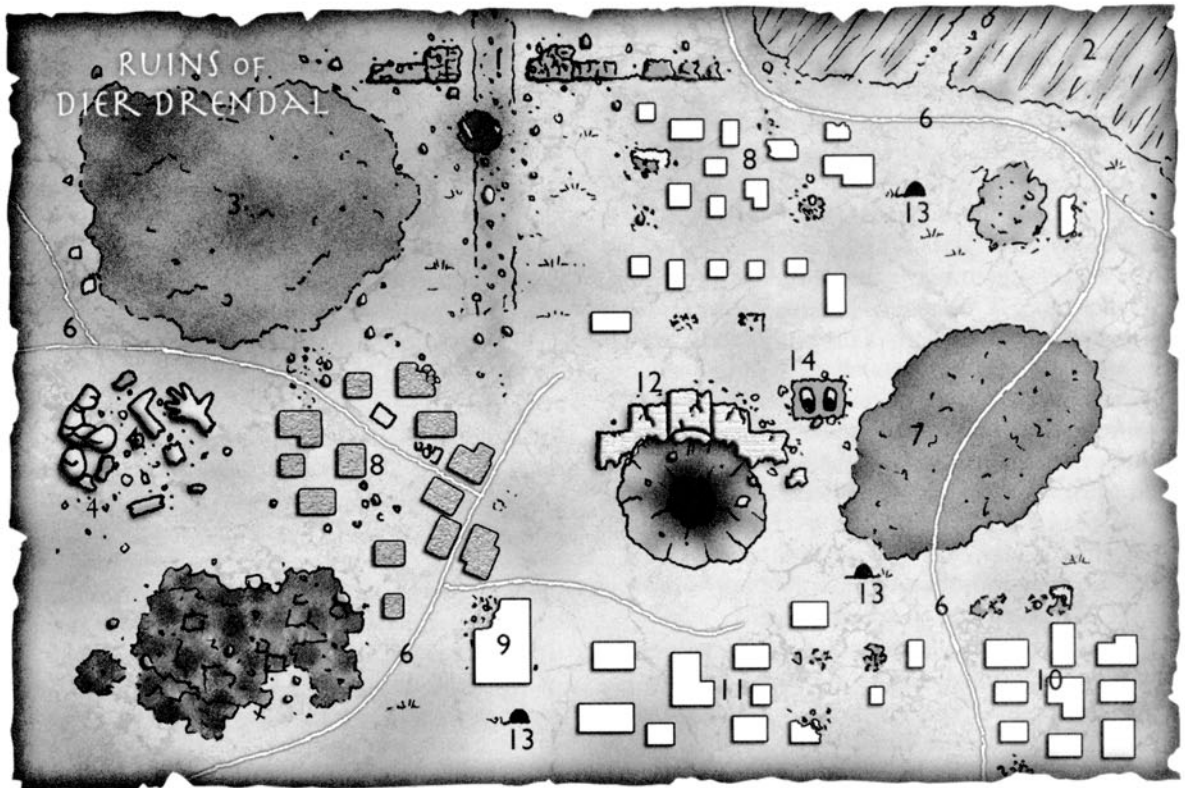
Numerous game trails lie in and around the city — titanspawn must use the place as a hunting or breeding ground. For some reason, Virduk has not extended his influence into the ruins. Soldiers of the Calastian Hegemony abound a mere fifty miles from the ruins, and Durrover is constantly besieged by the forces of the Dragon King. Yet there is no Calastian presence in the old city. This may be simply due to the

ruins' lack of strategic importance, or there may be a darker reason.

Where the main gates would have been is a cobblestone road (or what's left of it) that leads north. This was the trade road used before the Titanswar. In its heyday it stretched from Burok Torn all the way to Dier Drendal, stopping at the Irontooth pass and branching off from there to Durrover. This road is now largely overgrown, the cobbles pushed up by weeds and undergrowth.

In the center of the ruins is a gigantic sinkhole. It appears to be the size and shape of the original keep of Dier Drendal rumored to have housed Nalthalos when he was nearly slain in his battle with Chern, the Scourge. Determining what happened to the keep or how it was able literally to sink through yards of granite is impossible. Obviously, magic was used, but on a scale not seen on Scarn since Mesos roamed free. There is no trace of the keep, or of any dark elven bodies or skeletons. This is particularly odd because there are skeletal remains of at least four types of titanspawn nearby, and upon testing it was determined that all the creatures died around the same time. By rights, there should be dark elven remains or artifacts, but there are none. It is as if the whole race, including their dead, disappeared beneath the Kelders, materializing only long enough to attack Burok Torn.





## The Ruined City

The ruins of Dier Drendal lie where the aboveground city once stood. Only titanspawn lurk here today. Vines and creepers have overrun the remains of the old structures.

**1. Gates:** The gates of the old city are rent and twisted wreckage, with just a few stones from the wall to which they were attached remaining. Thousands of old cobblestones litter the area, pushed out of the way by plants or bloodied and scorched by fire or magic.

**2. Farmers' Last Stand:** The skeletal remains of hundreds of gorgons, both high and low, litter the weed-infested place where the city's fields once stood. Bodies of drendali are nowhere to be found, although there is much evidence that the farmers were totally overrun. Various undead occasionally shamble through this area.

**3. Burned Land:** Charred and blackened, nothing grows here, and even the wind seems to avoid this area. This is where the elves slain by Chern were buried and where the gorgons tried to set fire to the city. Plague wretches abound here, as do diseased charfiends, who thought the burned corpses interred here were too good a meal to pass up. Anyone who spends more than 10 minutes here must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or contract a disease of the GM's choice.

**4. Broken Statues:** This is where the last lead golems made their stand against Mormo's forces. They were overrun and almost totally destroyed, and

various parts of them lie scattered around — limbs, heads, and other body parts projecting out of the ground. Charfiends, low gorgons, and coal goblins are sometimes encountered here.

**5. Gorgon Nests:** Almost 200 gorgons live in the ruins. Of this number, 10-15 are high gorgons. At any time, there are up to 50 low gorgons in these nests.

**6. Game Trails:** Numerous paths are worn through the undergrowth throughout the ruins. Most were created by mundane animals, but the gorgons also use these trails to hunt prey.

**7. Rubble Field:** Something happened here that reduced everything in a 100-yard radius to charred rubble. Nothing larger than a pebble exists here, where there were once buildings, statues, and streets.

**8. Ruined Buildings:** Since the end of the Titanswar, adventurers have ventured into the ruined city seeking treasure. The city, however, has proven largely devoid of riches, already picked clean by its former inhabitants and the titanspawn. Any treasure that remains might be located in these structures, but the chance of this is slim at best.

**9. The Resting Place:** This is a makeshift mausoleum for Nalthalos' mortal body. A wall collapsed recently, allowing access, and a few foolhardy souls have entered — but so far none have emerged. The dark elves almost certainly left guardians behind, although none have yet discovered their identity and lived.

**10. Warrior's Row:** These nine buildings are where the warriors of Dier Drendal finally surrounded



and wiped out the gorgons. These buildings are in good condition, littered with the bones of the slain gorgons. Any treasure remaining in these buildings is probably well hidden, and the buildings are sometimes inhabited by titanspawn or destitute humans or dwarves from the Kelders.

**11. Survivors' Row:** These seven buildings are the makeshift hovels that the dark elves used in the months following their god's near-destruction. They are shoddily made, and many have collapsed. They are inhabited primarily by titanspawn, bandits, or the truly desperate.

**12. Royal Palace:** This used to be the seat of power in the city, but much of it has fallen into the giant sinkhole in the center of the city. Dark elven treasures and secrets can still be found here, but they are few and far between, and there is a constant danger of collapse or attack by the 3 - 6 high gorgons who normally dwell here.

**13. Tunnels:** These winding passages vanish underground, and rumor has it that they eventually lead to Dier Drendal. No one who has entered them has ever returned to confirm the truth of these rumors, however, and it is more likely that they harbor gorgons, vengaurak, and other titanspawn.

**14. Statue:** Only the legs of this great statue of Nalthalos remain.

**15. Sinkhole:** In the center of the city, this hole plunges directly into the heart of the Kelders. It extends down into the granite bowels of the mountains for over a mile. It is said that the entire city vanished into this hole, but no one has ever fully explored it.

Sire,

It should be noted that the following information is derived from magical scrying. Our rune priests placed several runes on a dark elven prisoner and then 'allowed' him to escape. What follows was recorded by listening to them describe what they saw. Therefore, be aware that there may be gross inaccuracies. It should also be noted that the scrying attempt was interrupted when the elf in question was slain. It is unknown if his fellows had discovered the magic on his body or not.

— TF

— Copy of surveying report filed by Tored Fenex for Yugman the Sage, AV 145.

## A Tour of the City

The most notable feature of the dark elves' city is the fact that it moves. It does not appear to move, it is not an illusion, creatures are not constantly tearing down and rebuilding the city: the actual bricks and building materials of the city move.

### First Impressions

Let me start at the beginning. Upon approaching the city, one is first struck by its size. The city is

easily a mile and a half square. This is comparable to our own Burok Torn, but as I hypothesized, the dark elves have spread the city out, where we allowed ours to grow toward the sky and the center of Denev.

The next thing one notices are the huge golems. There are literally hundreds of them, mostly lead, standing like sentries around the city. At first I assumed they were for defense. Then I realized that they were very different from the lead golem warriors that had assaulted our citadel in the past. These golems were almost three times as tall as their normal counterparts. They were colossal, barely able to stand up straight in the tunnel. The other odd thing about

### The Golem Excavators

After carefully reviewing my notes on the matter, and discussing any experiences with our rune masters and engineers, I believe I have stumbled onto the true purpose for the colossal golems that ring the city of Dier Drendal. They are not giant automated sentries, as I initially thought. They are a means of excavating tunnels! I cannot believe that I missed this in my initial review of my notes. I can only attribute this horrendous oversight to the excitement of firsthand (well, almost firsthand) information on the city of the dark elves.

The colossal golems that ring the city are exactly the same height as the central spire of the keep in the center of the city. I can only conclude, therefore, that the golems must excavate in the direction that the city moves so that it can continuously evade our searches for it. This would also explain the rough-hewn bedrock that we have found recently just north of Adurn's Tear.

The golems use their scooped hands as shovels to carve a passage into the bedrock. These giant scooped hands can hold tons of bedrock, perhaps even more than that, given golem construction. I am not entirely sure what they do with the material that they excavate, but I am sure that it is put to good use. I theorize that they do not need to mine for any sort of resources; they have all they need from the constant excavation under the Kelders.

It should be noted that these golems would have no trouble collapsing the tunnels leading to Dier Drendal. If we were able to find the city and decided to mount a full-scale assault, the result would be disastrous. In addition to being able to seal off the city in seconds, I am also equally sure that their bucket hands can be used as cover for those fleeing our attack, or as giant mallets, smashing our troops into pulp. If we are to take Dier Drendal, it will not be through a direct assault.

— TF



them is their hands. They do not have fingers, per se. Rather, the hands are fused into large, almost bucket-like contrivances. The leading edge, however, was still sharpened to a razor's point. Their exact purpose is a mystery to me. I can only assume that they are a part of some sort of massive city defense system.

While I did not see this myself, Rune Master Glayroc assures me that he was able to view bricks in the buildings moving about of their own accord. He said it was one of the most fascinating sights he has ever seen. I would have to agree with him. If we were not at war, I would have loved the opportunity to study these fascinating creatures. This, then, is what allows the city of Dier Drendal to escape our searches. The entire city, block by block, moves! What is even more impressive is that when the blocks settle in their new locale, they settle in such a way that only the city has moved. The individual blocks and the buildings they form do not change spatially or directionally with regard to each other. The end result, again, is that the city seems to slide in a specific direction.

## Layout

The city, being mobile, does not have walls. Instead, it is divided into something akin to sections, only slightly less organized. The outermost section of the city comprises the farmlands and slave quarters. These areas contain mostly open ground and three-sided buildings where slaves and dark elven *drachni*, or untouchables, reside. The farmers' crops are not actually planted in the ground. Instead, soil is imported from some other region. This imported soil is

then used to fill huge raised tracts, with walls about three feet high, mounted on wheels. When the city moves, the farms move with them, without uprooting the plants, which cuts down on trauma to the crops and ensures a bountiful harvest. Slave quarters (the three-sided buildings) are each guarded by two dark-sided elven warriors. I believe this is for the safety of the slaves more than it is for the farmers. Drendali as a rule are a cruel and malicious bunch; the guards may be in place to ensure that farmers do not inflict debasing and unusual punishments on their slave charges for no good reason. Slaves or untouchables are not allowed deeper into the city than their living sector.

Moving in from the *drachni*, we have an area, or section, populated by the actual farmers. Their homes are only yards from their farmland, and they interact on a daily basis with the slaves and *drachni* that live in the farmlands. Farmer's houses are simple affairs with two rooms: a bedroom and a common area. Families usually consist of a mother, father, and anywhere from 6 to 10 children and relatives. Both rooms of the farmhouse are spacious and, for the most part, open.

Farmers lead only marginally better lives than the slaves and untouchables, having to interact with them on a daily basis. In the years after the Titanswar, however, farmers have been accorded more respect. Without them, there would be no way to feed the dark elven population; the city would die out. Farmers make it possible for many crops to flourish despite the dark, dismal conditions of the areas under the Kelders. It should be noted that farmers are also



responsible for finding and transporting water from its source to the beleaguered crops as well as the rest of the city.

From what I observed, water was not an exclusive luxury item, but it was not wasted in any way. Farmers employ beasts of burden, enslaved titanspawn, and, rarely, constructs to till their fields. Crops are then harvested and brought into the mercantile sector. Farmers were allowed a much greater range of movement within the city than the slaves. They could go from the slave sector all the way through to the warrior sector. Areas beyond that, however, were off limits.

## Crops

It should be noted that dark elven crops bear little or no resemblance to anything found in a surface farm, or that of our own, artificially lit gardens. All crops are grown in complete darkness; many of their crops produce a faint luminescence of their own. This is not to say that the elves subsist on a diet of lichen and fungi. Well, perhaps they do, but not in the forms with which we are familiar. They appear to have some sort of underground equivalent of grain. It grows in vine form rather than on a stalk and is therefore much easier to harvest, the pods containing the grain sagging directly off the vine, requiring little or no threshing. I believe, from what little the diviners saw of the gardens, that they have the equivalents of wheat, rice, and possibly barley. They also have a variety of fungi that mimics our more common vegetables. I was told of mushrooms the size of a dwarf that bore fruit resembling tomatoes. (This makes me extraordinarily jealous, especially in light of the difficulties we have growing them. They are my favorite fruit. But that really has nothing to do with the information at hand. — TF)

I am sure what they cannot grow themselves they either trade for (although with whom I have *no* idea) or do without, much the same as us. While they have more extensive vegetables than we do, the elves seem to be seriously lacking in fruits, which I can only assume is due to the fact that it is difficult, if not impossible, to grow and transport trees under the earth. We were unable to determine whether the dark elves raise livestock, or whether they were exclusively vegetarian.

Moving from the farmer's living quarters, we encountered the merchant and laborer shops. These portions of the city are larger buildings, but still one-story affairs, from what we could tell of the outside set-up. It would seem that the merchants live behind or adjacent to their shops. Wares included food, weapons, and armor, an apothecary's guild, bakeries, a pleasure den, and other shops common to large cities.

Intermingled with the shops were many mills, forges, several schools, and facilities for the refinement of raw material. We were unable to see the signs

on many of the buildings in this area, so we can only guess at their purpose. Strangely, we did not see any temples dedicated to Nalthalos, nor did we see any war schools or training facilities in this area. Merchants were afforded the largest range of the city so far, being allowed to travel from its outskirts all the way to the area inhabited by wizards and those damnable skin devils.

The next section that we passed into housed the warriors of the elven city. Here we encountered the most dark elves — hardy, haughty, and quick with a sword. Almost all were armed and armored. The strange thing about this was that they seemed to be armed and in a state of readiness, yet no one was actually guarding the city. Buildings were, not surprisingly, bigger and better appointed than those we had seen elsewhere. I say this was not surprising because if the warriors are not happy and comfortable, then the city's defense is seriously compromised — then, of course, no one is happy.

The warriors appear to live in communal barracks, the lowest ranking packed the tightest. Each barracks seems to have some sort of ranking officer who oversees the daily lives and behavior of those elves under him. Whether or not these officers have to report to a higher authority, we could not ascertain, but I would be hard pressed to explain the need for them otherwise. In this area we found the training grounds that were so conspicuously missing from the mercantile district. There seems always to be a contingent of elven warriors training, which does not bode well for the citadel if the elves decide to attack us en masse again. Whereas we have a regular, professional defensive force, it appears that any elf that wields a sword in Dier Drendal is part of the dark elven military. These military personnel were given the broadest range of traveling permissions we had yet encountered. They are allowed free passage through any part of the city up to the clerical sector. Past that point, they must be invited or summoned to travel deeper.

The next sector in from the warriors' living and training grounds contains Dier Drendal's various wizards' and sorcerers' guilds. These arcane spellcasters are divided into two distinct communities. The first group is that of the 'conventional' wizards and sorcerers. They cast arcane magic like most of the other races of Scarn — from their own minds or out of big moldy tomes, utilizing lots of fancy words and somatic gestures. These individuals seem to be the least respected of the two groups.

More respected than conventional spellcasters are the dark elven tattoo adepts. These wizards and sorcerers use tattoo ink to become living vessels for the magic that they channel. Some of this magic is *very* impressive. A single tattoo mage could, unfortunately, go toe to toe with a dwarven rune master, if not best him, using their spells and their magical tattoos. As of this scribing, we have no way of neutral-



## Dier Drendal's Military

As near as I could tell, our escaped spy was a fairly high-ranking elf in the structure of the Dier Drendal military force. For our edification, I have reviewed my notes several times and believe that I have puzzled out the military structure of the dark elves. What follows, then, is a listing of the ranks of the dark elven army from lowest to highest, and the translation (or as near as we could manage) to what the position would equate in dwarven society.

— TF

Dark Elven Rank	Dwarven Rank
N'gee	Private
N'gee da	Private First Class
Nuguth/unglor	Corporal/Specialist
So-chok	Sergeant
La so-chok	Staff Sergeant
So-chok da	Sergeant First Class
La'da so-chok/so-chok'li	First Sergeant/Master Sergeant
Chebu'so-chok	Sergeant Major
Gli chebu'so-chok	Command Sergeant Major
Plabh'do	Second Lieutenant
Plabh'di	First Lieutenant
Nugunthor	Captain
Clu'bluith	Major
Doplo plabh	Lieutenant Colonel
Doplo	Colonel
Ngathi-Ka	Brigadier General
Ka clu'bluith	Major General
Plabh'Ka	Lieutenant General
Ka	General
Ka'che	High General

As an additional note, it would seem that there is only one *Ka'che* and that he is very powerful, almost equivalent to the king. Any military decision he makes is immediately followed. This is due to the fact that he rose up the ranks, beginning Goran knows how many years ago, as a *n'gee*. The above progression is by no means a suggestion. The dark elves follow it to the letter; the only way to advance is to prove oneself on the field of battle.

Their methods of acknowledging one another are also highly structured. Each elf of lower office or stature crosses his arms over his chest, fists knuckles out, making a hollow thumping noise as the fists strike the chest. The elf of lower rank then bows. The depth of this bow depends on the disparity in ranks — the more disparate the two elves, the lower the bow. I assume at some point the difference must be so great that groveling is involved. (The thought of hundreds of drendali lying prostrate because someone much more powerful than they passes by is one that can make me laugh, despite the evil and hurt that they cause our people. It is truly a delightfully ridiculous image. — TF)

## The Problem of Height

It comes to my attention that at this point in my description, you are probably wondering, as did I, why all of the buildings thus far encountered are only one story tall. I figured at first this was because the constructs could not climb one another. I dismissed that theory as idiocy, after one of the rune masters scrying on our charge informed me that he saw 'living' blocks completing the upper row of a building. It was about this time that the answer hit me like a ton of granite, excuse the pun. Had the drendali built multiple story buildings, when the living blocks mobilized to move the city, anyone on the second floor, along with any furniture or other accoutrements, would come tumbling down on the unsuspecting people on the floor below. There is a good possibility that if one group was not crushed by falling debris, the other group would be injured from a sudden fall onto unyielding granite. This explains the sprawl of the city as opposed to its height. — T. Fenex

izing these devils. The fact that Master Glayroc recently found one among his pupils attests to their debased art's power. The tattoo mages live in small academies separate from the other types of wizards and sorcerers, practicing their art and inking new tattoos.

Now we come to a bit of a conundrum. I was fully expecting to meet clerics in the next city sector. Instead, I found the royalty of the dark elves. This surprised me. Was it a mistake in our translation of the language? Did the dark elves no longer have healers to speak of? Why would the royalty not be at the center of what I assume is a rigid social structure?

The answer, which I did not discover until later, lies in the current state of the dark elven god. Nalthalos is trapped on the Material Plane. As such, I assume that he is given undisputed rulership over the city of Dier Drendal and all of her denizens. It may be because of this that the royalty is of a lower rank. I believe that, now, King of Dier Drendal, or more aptly, King of the Dark Elves, is nothing more than a title. The true king is the demigod of the dark elves. I am sure that the irony of the situation is not wasted on its recipients.

The next sector, and the one closest to the only structure that is more than one story tall, is the clerical quarters. I can only assume that the 'keep' is some sort of huge temple dedicated to their dark god. Clerical structures are the finest built structures I have seen so far, rivaling even buildings that we ourselves have designed. The opulence of the clerics' section leads me to believe that they have only recently inherited their position. They seem to be the highest ranking of all the elves, able to go anywhere in the city of Dier Drendal with an almost impudent air. They treat the royalty extremely badly, perhaps because with the destruction of Nalthalos' physical body, they have been given more power. Whatever the case, the priests are an elite, privileged class.

Finally, our charge was admitted into the keep and brought before a gigantic golem I can only assume was Nalthalos. Then, our runemasters cried out and the scrying failed. It must be assumed that Nalthalos smote the elf for some reason. I hope it is not because he suspected the elf was under the influence of our divination magics, but I cannot say.

## The Royalty of Dier Drendal

*Excerpted from recovered dark elven historical text, date unknown. Assumed penned after the Divine War.*

As the royal bloodline may very well end with my rule, I have decided to chronicle my family's history so that we may be remembered in days to come as the mortal rulers of Dier Drendal. My name is Cherith Matlosz, King of Dier Drendal and sovereign to His Lordship Nalthalos. What follows is the history of the dark elven monarchy, along with the years of each king's reign. I regret that the highly inaccurate so-called Old Calendar (OC)/After Vic-

tory (AV) dating of the surface folk has come into such common usage among our people, but in deference to this unfortunate fact, and for the convenience of those of our people who cannot be bothered to respect the old ways of keeping time, the following entries utilize the OC/AV dating system.

### King Eniamust Matlosz (?- 817 OC)

Our first king emerged from the mists of time. We know not from whence he came, nor why. We only know that he did come, and it was he who first showed us the light of Nalthalos. These were good times for the drendali. For the first time, we were united under a common ruler, and we were shown that there was magic to be learned that was not of a druidic nature. We no longer had to rely upon Denev or Mesos to give us power. By supplicating ourselves to Nalthalos, we were given powers that we were never granted under the titans. And, under the tutelage of King Eniamust, we were guided to the Kelder Mountains on the continent of Ghelspad. There, the king instructed us, there we were to build our great capitol city and branch out over the entirety of Scarn. Such was the will of our king, whose wishes were a physical manifestation of Nalthalos' will.

So began construction on our glorious city, far away from the attention of the world at large, but most importantly, away from the whims of the majority of the titans. While much of the world was constantly embroiled in catastrophic change, our little region remained largely untouched. True, Kadum would occasionally rampage, and true, we would occasionally need to weather a plague instigated by Chern, but we were largely unaffected due to both the intervention of our demigod and because of our elven heritage. In fact, we were left alone to develop our own culture and pursue our own particular interests.

This is not to say that we did not clash with other races from time to time. Gorgons constantly roamed the Kelders and we were often forced to do battle. Yet our elven magic, weapons, and superior organization almost always brought us victory. And while this was true in the beginning, as we grew as a people and a race, we discovered that we had an incredible longevity, even beyond that of the other elven races. With centuries of experience, our leaders, scholars, mages, and generals were able to move our nation in new directions. We expanded our sphere of influence and increased our ability to craft stone and metal. And through it all, we were guided by the leadership of our king.

Elves have long memories, and while no one alive now can remember my grandfather's wedding ceremony, it was a glorious occasion, recorded in the history of our people. Even His Lordship Nalthalos attended (which was rare at the time because He could still travel the planes) and history recorded it as a gala event, worthy of much praise.

The year 624 OC was one that the people would not soon forget; the wedding was the talk of the city for years to come. Queen Felosin stepped into her role admirably and was able to give Eniamust a son and a daughter—my father Himoos, and his younger sister, Ielephia, who passed on during the Titanswar. Felosin, along with King Eniamust, died over a millennium ago. His legacy, however, lived on through his son, my father, Himoos, who took the throne when King Eniamust was called to the next life.

### Former King Himoos Matlosz (817-2920 OC)

My father is something of a special case, primarily because he is more than 2,000 years old. The powers of chronomancy and necromancy are powerful when applied to a race as long-lived as we are. He is still enjoying his extended stay on Scarn, but I truly feel that he misses his friends and his queen terribly. I also believe that he greatly misses the power once accorded to the ruling class.

My father's story is a fantastic one. Blessed with an especially strong connection to our god, Himoos took the mantle of a priest at an early age, and he has continued as a cleric, even to this day.

One might say King Himoos only dabbled in rulership, although under him, the dark elves experienced a golden age of peace and prosperity. He was so concerned about our people that he would constantly consult the temple of Nalthalos for guidance. Wishing to serve his people for as long as possible, my father began to experiment with necromancy. At first he was only able to draw small amounts of power and life force from this practice. It was not until he was over 1,000 years old that my father discovered the lost art of chronomancy. Using what he had learned as a necromancer and a chronomancer, King Himoos found a way to slow drastically the ravages of age.

He has outlived his queen and could possibly outlive even me, although he and I do not truly wish that. I do not remember much of my mother, because despite all of father's efforts, she was destined to die in childbirth. Although he mourned the loss greatly, the mourning was never directed at his people or at his son.

We both know that he is tiring of existence—he misses mother terribly, he has experienced enough war, bloodshed, and tragedy to last him many lifetimes. And, he has been alive long enough to see the rise and fall of our relations with the dwarves. Father insisted upon being in the front lines during the stand against Chern. It was partly due to his vast healing powers that our god, Nalthalos, was saved. Father and three others that I know of (although Himoos tells me there are six who survived the true ritual) participated in the true ritual that saved the demigod and lived to tell about it.

Himoos is best remembered for this act and for establishing relationships with the dwarven empire.

At the time, it greatly benefited both races, and although father *never* admits it publicly, he has told me that there are times he misses the companionship provided by the dwarven nation. Despite their cowardice and their refusal to aid us, father still holds an affectionate soft spot for some of them, especially the king and the royal family.

I doubt that the dwarves know that Himoos is the only elf alive to have lived through the entire dynasty of the dwarven kings. As incredible as it sounds, I think there are days when father regrets not having befriended that pig-headed Thain. But I should caution you not to mistake this soft spot for weakness to the elven way of life. Father, against everyone's wishes, has participated in numerous raids on Buruk Torn since Thain turned away Farazon's attempt at

**Himoos Matlosz, Former King of Dier Drendal, Male Dark Elf, Clr17/Ari3:** CR 19; Medium-size humanoid (5 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 17d8 + 3d8 -20; hp 75; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 31 (+2 Dex, +7 shield, +12 full plate); Atk +17/+12/+7/+2 melee, or +16/+11/+6 ranged; SQ rebuke undead; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +17; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 22, Cha 11.

*Skills:* Alchemy +5, Balance +11, Concentration +1, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +6, Heal +23, Hide +5, Jump +5, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +4, Perform +6, Profession +19, Search +8, Spot +12, Tumble +2.5, Use Rope +4.

*Feats:* Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Extra Turning, Improved Critical (morningstar), Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), Skill Focus (Perform), Still Spell.

*Possessions:* +5 morningstar, bane (dwarves); +5 animated large steel shield; demon armor (Core Rulebook II, page 182); *periapt of wisdom* (+6).

Cleric Domains: Construct, Law.

Cleric Spells Per Day: 6/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1.

garnering aid. He has felled many a dwarf, and any who think him to harbor traitorous thoughts, often find themselves on the receiving end of his morningstar.

After serving as king of the dark elves for over a millennium, father thought it best to step down and allow his son to rule.

### King Cherith Matlosz (2920 OC-Present)

Now comes the challenge of speaking objectively about myself. Where to begin? I am probably



the only ruler in all of Scarn with the experience of almost three millennia behind him. I am also the only ruler whose title is purely that: a title. Since Betrayer's Bridge, there could be no one to rule us *but* Nalthalos. The people would not have stood for it otherwise, and, although he does not like to admit it, neither would he. So I have been deposed by the clerical caste; the ruling caste now no longer wields any real power. Yet we are crucially important as figureheads.

I do not mind this, because my life has been fraught with difficulties. I just see this as another difficulty to overcome or adapt to. When I was born, I drew tremendous life energies from my mother, possibly killing her in the process of childbirth. I cannot remember these events, and my father seems reluctant ever to talk about my mother.

At an early age, I realized that I was perhaps blessed by Mesos, in addition to Nalthalos, for I learned I could control powerful magics without studying musty tomes or praying to our demigod. Of course, this did not sit well with my father, who wanted me to follow in his footsteps and become a priest of Nalthalos. I could not, however, let my newfound talents go to waste, so I declined, much to his dismay. Despite his lack of support, I have become a powerful sorcerer in my own right.

When I turned 401, my father relinquished the throne and I became king. Shortly after this, I married my wife, Xanastrian. We experienced centuries of peace and prosperity under my rule. It seemed that the golden age of our people would continue indefinitely.

The Divine War changed our lives irrevocably. In the first year of the war, our city was besieged by Mormo's hags and gorgons. Countless dark elves lost their lives defending our city, including my wife, who was pregnant with our child. I do not know if she was killed outright or dragged off and forced to become a hag. Whatever the case, her body was never recovered.

Then to make matters worse, the Battle of Betrayer's Bridge was fought against Chern and his minions, without the aid of our 'allies,' the dwarven nation. I was not at the battle; I was advised against attending by Nalthalos himself. Instead, I warded off attack from other titanspawn and was able to prepare the healers for the massive amounts of diseased survivors that Nalthalos brought back with him. It was in His temple that the priests and wizards performed the true ritual that saved His life and changed the way we lived.

After the war, our relations with the dwarves quickly deteriorated. I had no choice but to give up my responsibilities as king and pass them to our god; this decision had the added 'benefit' of altering the

**Cherith Matlosz, King of Dier Drendal, Male Dark Elf, Sor12/Ari7:** CR 19; Medium-size humanoid (5 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 12d4 + 7d8; hp 67; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (+1 Dex, +8 bracers, +2 amulet); Attack +13/+8/+3 melee (1d4+2 and poison, *dancing dagger of venom*) or +15/+10/+5 melee (1d2+4 and subdual+1d6, +3 *whip of shock*); SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +17; AL LE; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 21, Wis 13, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Alchemy +20, Appraise +13, Balance +3, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +5, Forgery +11, Gather Information +11, Handle Animal +12, Hide +1, Intuit Direction +6, Knowledge (constructs) +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +13, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Perform +10, Ride +11, Scry +20, Search +7, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +20, Spot +3, Swim +4, Use Rope +8.

**Feats:** Craft Staff, Enlarge Spell, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment).

**Possessions:** *Dancing dagger of venom*, +3 *whip of shock*, +8 bracers of armor, major circlet of blasting, +3 cloak of resistance, ioun stone (lavender and green ellipsoid), +2 amulet of natural armor, wand of cure serious wounds, rod of frost.

Sorcerer Spells Known (9/5/5/4/3/2/1).

caste system. I cannot be bitter about my station in life. Although the clerics are now of higher rank, I am still the figurehead the people turn to when they have conflicts or questions about laws and regulations. I just must accept my answers from our god and his emissaries, the clerics, directly. It is my lot in life, and I will not shirk it.

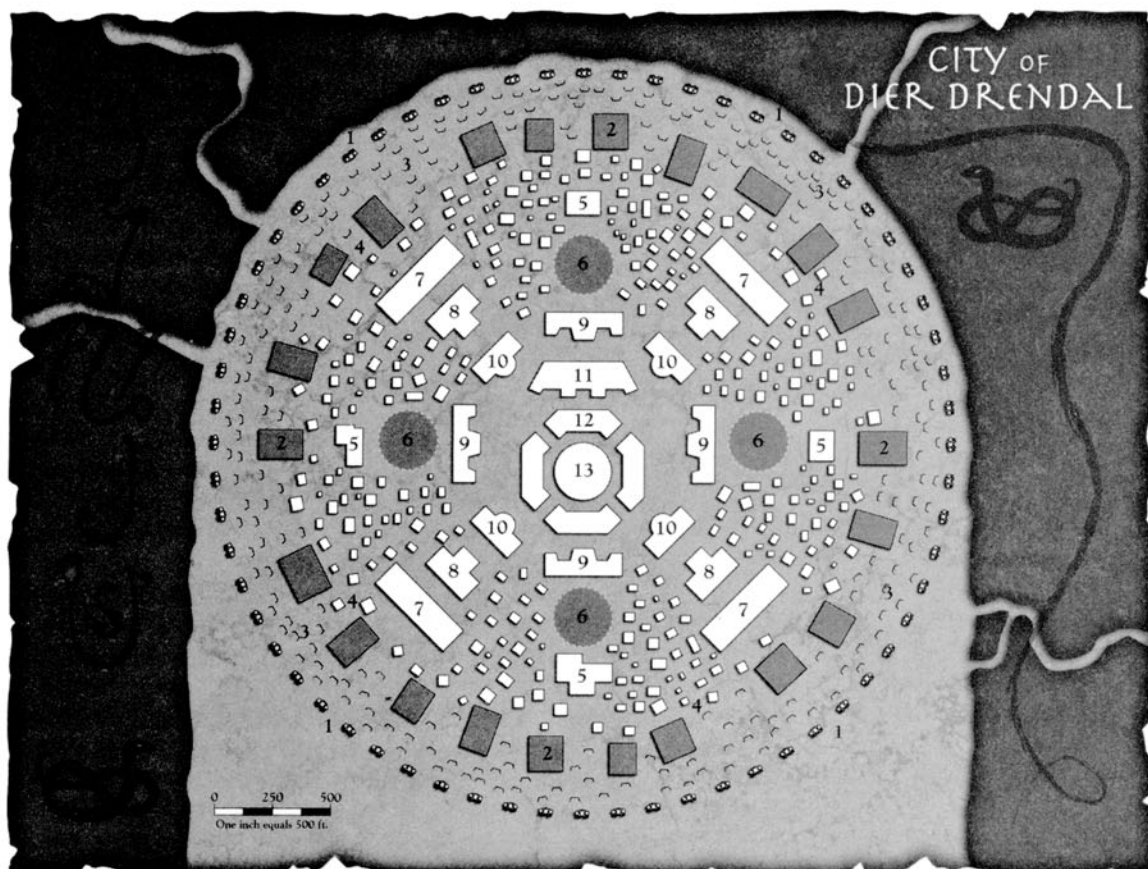
## The Buried City

The City of Dier Drendal as it exists today.

**1. Lead Golem Excavators:** These constructs are identical to the lead golems described in *Creature Collection*. There are about 300 of them. Normally, the golems excavate ahead of the city as it moves, but they are easily employed in Dier Drendal's defense.

**2. Farm Flats:** These are the food producing areas of the city. These large tracts of soil, imported from the surface, are seeded with underground variants of fruit and vegetables. The tracts are on wheels so they can be moved along with the city.

**3. Slave Quarters:** These three-sided huts are little more than glorified lean-tos. They house the



slaves and untouchables of Dier Drendal, who number in the thousands but are usually unarmed and not terribly interested in fighting to defend the city.

**4. Farmer Housing:** These buildings are always close to a field and each house three farming families, who each tend one farm flat. The farmers have simple tools that can be employed as weapons in times of war. There are nearly 2,000 farmers all told.

**5. Mercantile Shops:** These are the merchant shops of Dier Drendal. Here, all manner of goods can be purchased. The merchants live off their shops and also maintain schools, forges, and apothecaries for their own use.

**6. Open Air Training Grounds:** These vast spaces are used to help hone warriors' battle skills, tactics, and close combat abilities. The arenas most commonly host mock combat between warriors, but slaves or prisoners are often sent here to be the subject of live demonstrations of killing techniques.

**7. Barracks:** This is where the warrior caste lives and works. Armories contain all of the arms and armor that the soldiers require, ready for use at a moment's notice. Each barrack holds two brigades, or about 2,000 individuals. Unlike most other regions, the dark elves' soldiers are mostly fighters, rather than warriors. This is due to the city's stringent caste system and its martial culture that demands the realm be defended at all costs.

**8. Enclosed Training Grounds:** This is where dark elf soldiers practice their tactical fighting skills and combat in close quarters. Numerous hostile conditions can be created here, either with magic or elaborate obstacles and scenery.

**9. Magic Libraries:** There are four libraries, one for wizards, one for sorcerers, one for tattoo adepts, and one containing general magical texts. These libraries contain almost 30 centuries of information, including history and details about the world prior to the Divine War, but much of it is considered inaccurate, archaic, or, at worst, blasphemous.

**10. Magic Colleges:** There are also four separate magical colleges, with curricula geared toward wizards, sorcerers, tattoo adepts, and general spellcasting. The schools contain classrooms, laboratories, and dormitories for students. All told, there are close to 10,000 spellcasters of various level and class in Dier Drendal.

**11. Royal Palace:** Easily the largest and most opulent structure in Dier Drendal, this building houses about 20 members of the royal family and over 200 servants. The palace also serves as lodging for visiting dignitaries — rare until recently, when both the gorgons and the Calastian king sent representatives to negotiate treaties with the drendali.

**12. Clerical Circle:** These buildings house the priestly caste and also serve as the center of healing and worship. Clerics occupy the highest caste and are considered closest to Nalthalos both spiritually and physically. Their numbers are also the greatest of any

caste save the slaves and untouchables, totaling over 25,000. They are widely respected and feared, for they literally have the power of their god behind them.

**13. Nalthalos' Spire:** The only multifloored structure in the city, this huge glossy black edifice rises over 80 feet into the air, with a circumference of almost 300 feet. It houses the god of the drendali, but it can also animate and defend the city in time of need.

## The Caste System

Dark elves are, at their heart, creatures of law. As such, they have developed a rigid caste system that has only changed once since its inception millennia ago. Upon birth, every elf is tattooed with the mark of his caste, something that cannot change, under any circumstance, no matter what happens. The only elves allowed to pursue the professions from the other castes are those considered to be royalty. This allows them to bond better with the different members of the castes and makes them seem more approachable.

Untouchables comprise those elves who have greatly shamed themselves, sons and daughters of those who have greatly shamed themselves, and enslaved titanspawn races. Being an untouchable is a horrifying prospect because they have no rights whatsoever. They are not even acknowledged as living, sentient beings. Untouchables can be killed or ordered about by any other caste; can be killed, sacrificed, or otherwise disposed of, and no one gives a second thought. They truly are the lowest form of dark elven life. The tattoo of an untouchable resembles a diagonal scar. It runs across any other caste tattoo that the untouchable may have worn before receiving his new status.

The farmers' caste, one could argue, should be the most important caste, for without the farmers, the entire population of Dier Drendal would starve. This fact has not been lost on the farmers, who once tried to stage a coup for more respect and status. Almost every farmer was brutally slaughtered by the warrior caste for even attempting to rebel. Since the failed rebellion, the farmers of Dier Drendal have gone about their daily routine without grumbling overmuch, lest there be another purge of their ranks. They are not treated badly, just not accorded the respect that they feel their position and responsibilities deserve. The tattoo of the farmer caste is a horizontal furrowed line with three vertical slashes rising from it. With a little imagination, it resembles a field of wheat.

Merchants and Laborers are grouped under one caste. Those who were able to establish trade with other races were most often given membership into this caste. Since then, as in all the castes, those who are born to parents in the caste become members of the caste themselves. As of late, the merchant arm of this caste has atrophied, due to the events of the Divine War and what transpired after its conclusion. In the past four years, however, trade has started up

again, albeit with a longtime enemy. The laborers, on the other hand, have adapted, as they always do, turning out wartime products (especially golem husks) in massive quantities, as opposed to many amenities that are normally required. This has put a strain on the city, but once the dwarves are dealt with, life should return to a more normal vein, at least in terms of goods production. The tattoo of the merchant/laborer caste is a circle with lines radiating out at all angles. This symbolizes the far-reaching effects of trade and labor.

The warrior caste is the caste of soldiers, generals, and heroes of war. Every major engagement, military or otherwise, has been fought by the elves of this caste. When inducted or born into the caste, the elf begins as a *n'gee*. He or she must then work up through the ranks of the elven army. While it is true that any warrior accords respect from the lower castes, the *Ka*'s of the warrior caste are those who interact the most with the upper castes and, by extrapolation, those who garner the most respect from their own caste and the lower castes.

Warriors are the only 'lower' caste that is allowed unlimited access to most of Dier Drendal. They can travel anywhere in the city but the clerical sector or Nalthalos' temple without being stopped and asked to present documentation as to why they are in a particular sector. The tattoo marking of the warrior caste is a series of four diagonal slashes across the forehead, signifying their acceptance into war by Nalthalos.

The caste of arcane spellcasters consists of two guilds (one for wizards and one for sorcerers) and comprises half of the magical force behind Dier Drendal. It is the arcane spellcasters who are responsible for crafting the huge war constructs used in the elves' battles against their enemies. Without this caste, it is very likely that the drendali would not have a god to worship, and would not have the clerical magics that make them so powerful. The arcane spellcaster caste is also partially responsible for the growth of some of the underground variants of crops that the dark elves use. The libraries of the caste are constructed in such a way that they do not have to be emptied of books every time the city relocates. This would cause undue consternation in the wizards who have a hard enough time performing research as it is. The caste's tattoo looks a bit like a jagged lightning bolt striking the center of the forehead.

The royal caste has undergone some drastic changes since 1 AV, most notably a decline in stature. Royalty used to be, understandably, the highest dark elven caste. Yet with the ramifications of the Divine War, the royal caste was forced to give up their power in favor of having Nalthalos rule as undisputed god-king. They were relegated to figurehead status, kings in name only. They are still accorded much respect, but the priestly caste has begun to embrace its new status as the highest power in Dier Drendal, after



Nalthalos. As such, they have started to bully the royal caste; being a structured society, the rest of the castes can do nothing but accept the whims of the clerical cast.

Members of the royal caste hope one day to be able to regain their former power. This is a two-fold hope. They are already growing tired of the clerics' arrogance, and regaining their stature would mean that Nalthalos has found his way back into the planes. The royal caste's tattoo is a small teardrop in the center of the forehead.

The clerical caste has become the highest-ranking caste since the end of the Divine War. With the priests' contributions to saving their stricken god and the fact that the clerics labored to heal and cure the sick for months after the battle with the Scourge, it seemed like the only logical step. The clerics work to heal the injured of Dier Drendal as well as collaborate with the wizards and sorcerers about possible ways to send Nalthalos back to the Astral plane. Although they have the same governing power as the current royal caste, which is to say none, the clerics nonetheless carry themselves through the city as if they are the undisputed masters of Dier Drendal. The tattoo of the clerical caste looks much like their holy symbol, a lump of lead on a gold chain.

Outside all of these castes is the strange cult of the Nalthalites, dark elves who have voluntarily surrendered a portion of their flesh and transformed themselves into golem-like creatures in imitation of their god. There are but a few of these bizarre and frightening creatures, but Nalthalites form an important part of the city's defense. They act in accordance with their own strange symbiotic relationship with Nalthalos, and interact with the other drendali only on rare occasions.

## Nalthalos' Spire

At the center of Dier Drendal is the only building that contains multiple stories. Called Nalthalos' Spire, it is an engineering marvel. Carved out of what seems to be a solid piece of black granite, the spire stands 70 feet tall, 250 feet wide at its base, and about 100 feet wide at its apex. The structure serves as living quarters for the king and god of the dark elves. It is also the site of the only Nalthalos temple in all of Scarn. Here, priests pray and lead services to worship their god, who often stands at attention at the very back of the service room on the first floor.

Nalthalos would talk to the people himself, but most are so fearful of their god that they would run screaming if he moved or opened his mouth. This is





not to say that he remains quiet throughout the sermon — far from it. He will often boom or harrumph at appropriate times, scaring everyone, including, occasionally, the priests.

The second floor of the spire contains the living quarters of the god's priestly and wizardly attendants. They are constantly researching ways, other than passage through the Devanal Arch in Burok Torn, to heal the injuries that Chern inflicted on Nalthalos' divine spirit. They also serve as runners for the god, conveying messages or goods to and from the god.

The third and fourth floors are specially designed to repel physical and magical attacks respectively. These floors comprise Nalthalos' personal living quarters. Here, on these floors, Nalthalos holds private audience with his herald, the imp Farazon.

The fifth floor comprises a "safe house," where Nalthalos goes when he does not want to be bothered by his duties as King or God. He will typically disappear from sight for a day or two to compose his thoughts and take a much needed break from the rigorous demands placed on him by himself and his people.

The sixth floor of the Spire is Farazon's guest quarters. The little imp comes and goes as he pleases. When he is on the Material Plane and in Dier Drendal, this is where he stays.

The seventh and final floor is where attempts are made to replicate a Devanal Arch to heal Nalthalos and return him to the astral plane. So far, these attempts have proven unsuccessful if not disastrously so. Nonetheless, Nalthalos and Farazon attempt a new experiment at least once a week. Worshippers all over Dier Drendal can see when an experiment is being conducted — purple and white lights normally emanate from the top of the spire and arc out, striking buildings and houses in Dier Drendal and bathing them in eerie magical light.

What no one knows is that the tower itself is actually a unique sentinel drendal created by Nalthalos to be the last line of defense for his people if he is ever slain. This colossal construct is intelligent and fully aware of its surroundings. Currently, however, it is dormant, awaiting the will of its creator. Should the need ever arise, the creature would lash out and destroy anything in its path. The sentinel is fiercely loyal to Nalthalos and will protect him at all costs.

Because it is intelligent, the creature can differentiate between friend and foe, whether they be titanspawn, dwarf, or, even in extreme cases, dark elf. It only carries out orders given to it by the demigod, and it cannot be controlled by any means because it has its own intelligence. Its tactics in combat are not subtle, but how can a seventy-foot tall construct be

subtle? It can pretty much destroy anything it strikes in one hit, and anything smaller than a huge sized creature is assured a quick death at its hands.

## Supplicating Nalthalos

Living with a god, even a crippled one, is an experience that no race would soon want to share. Even the paladins of Corean, the Avenger, would be hard pressed to stay in the Avenger's good graces day in, day out for time immemorial. This has been the experience of the dark elves in the past 150 years. With their god stranded among them, everything that is done throughout the day is done with the blessing of a god.

This can cause some consternation, due mostly to the fact that the dark elven society follows the rigid tenets of an absolute monarchy. Before the Divine War, nothing was done without the express permission of the king. This is still true, but today the king is also a god. This can be extremely annoying for the god and extremely harrowing for the worshipper/bureaucrat.

There are days when Nalthalos is in a *foul* mood. Anyone with even an ounce of common sense knows that it is not wise to antagonize a god in a foul mood. As their king, however, Nalthalos has no choice but to listen to the petty squabbling of mortals, even if he is in bad temper. Stories abound of messengers and bureaucrats alike being smitten by the god only to be resurrected seconds later and dismissed. These elves normally do not bother the demigod again.

This is not to say that Nalthalos is a mindlessly wicked god. He is evil, but he does not take pleasure in senseless destruction as do Vangal or Belsameth. He prefers to inspire and lead through rigid order and fear. His approach seems to work, too, for the elves are slowly making a comeback. The fact that a god dwells among the dark elves alone deters most attacks on the city. For those creatures foolhardy enough to press the attack anyway, the excavator golems and drendals are usually enough to defeat any foe. Those that are somehow able to make it past these defenders would more than likely incur the wrath of the god, a terrible consequence indeed.

Despite his frequent bouts of anger, Nalthalos is an excellent ruler, fair and always adhering to the principles of the law. Since he is now among his people, when rebuilding his city under the earth he chose to take only one temple with him, Nalthalos' Spire. It is here that commoners may seek a direct audience with their god, which no other temple can boast. Despite this fact, few requests are ever brought to the Spire, worshippers still preferring to pray for

assistance from afar. Even in a weakened state, something about a deity is so awe inspiring that the few times entreaties were brought before him, the person seeking an audience was taken away spouting gibberish or simply rocking back and forth. Such is the presence of a god among the elves.

## The Sacred Day

The dark elves only have one day that is truly sacred. It is celebrated on the first Charday of Chardot. Called the Remembrance of the Betrayed, it is a four-day dramatic reenactment of the destruction of the dark elven way of life and the near death of their god. The first day of the celebration involves torturing dwarven prisoners of war, if any are available. If not, then untouchables are dressed to play the part and are sacrificed to appease the dark elf god.

The second day retells the conflict between Nalthalos and the craven dwarf god Goran. Nalthalos is always made to seem larger than life and the actor portraying Goran usually does so in such a way that the deity of the dwarves is seen as a bumbling fool. The third day of the celebration is the actual battle against Chern. The warrior caste, one arm tied behind their backs (literally), engage undead created by the clerics, reenacting the dramatic battle. The only historical difference from the actual events is that in the reenactment, to please the crowd, the elves eventually overwhelm and destroy the 'actor' playing Chern. The battle usually takes all day and is extraordinarily well choreographed.

The fourth and final day of the Remembrance involves an all-day feast, started at midnight on the night before. The feast is kicked off as priests and wizards use illusion magic to reenact Nalthalos' rescue from certain death. This one day out of the whole year is the only time that the castes mingle freely and enjoy each others' company. Even then, the untouchables are not allowed to attend or to come within two city sectors of the merriment.

During the festival and the reenactments, Nalthalos will sit and watch. Occasionally, if he is feeling in a particularly good humor, or if the people pray and cheer enough, he will participate, albeit briefly. He usually does this during the battle against Chern, pulverizing hundreds of undead to dust with blows from his powerful fists. This sacred festival renews the people of Dier Drendal and reminds them that, although the Divine War crippled them, they do not have to accept their suffering. They can fight back against it, day by day, as they did in the Divine War — and, eventually, they must triumph.



## Dark Alliances

### Calastia

*The following documents are part of the Calastian Historical Royal Library Archive. No one but the royalty, myself, and a few others have been given access to this store of knowledge. I know that bitch of a queen, Geleeda, is up to something. So, for the upcoming celebration of Virduk's ascent to the Calastian throne, I have decided to compile a history of his greatest accomplishments. I hope that by stroking his massive ego, I can focus his attention on the plea made by the dark elves some two years ago. It would be much wiser to have them as friends than as enemies, although I do not know if the king even cares anymore. More I must not write, for even I am not above charges of treason.*

— Anteas, Royal Grand Vizier to the Calastian Hegemony King.

Life since the Divine War has become increasingly hard for some races of Scarn. The Forsaken Elves of Termana are left bereft of a god. The titanspawn races, even the good aligned ones, are hunted like dogs. Worshipers of the titan Denev find themselves inheriting a world that is torn and deeply damaged by war.

Life is no different for the dark elves. Grievously wounded by both Chern and their betrayal by the obstinate dwarves of Burok Torn, the drendali are left with a sundered nation, a hidden city, and a broken leader. Is it any wonder, then, that they seek vengeance on those who wronged them? Is it any wonder that, after over fifty years of trying to take the citadel themselves, the elves are running out of options? Low on resources, short on time, the elves are turning to other races for help. I believe it would be in our best interest to help these kindred spirits, whose god once stood for many of the same virtues that we, even now, hold dear. I am not in a position to endorse this humble request for alliance, however. That, I leave to your capable hands. May I now present the representative from the dark elven city of Dier Drendal.

— *Copy of the diplomat introduction speech given to the royal house of Calastia by Anteas, Royal Grand Vizier to King Virduk.*

Your Royal highness, Representatives of the Hegemony,

Since Victory, we, as a people, have lived extraordinarily hard lives. I know some of you have heard the rumors that we are bloodthirsty savages, capable of twisting the head off of a man's shoulders. I know that reports of us being cannibalistic abound. I know that I scare some of you right now. But, good people of Calastia, I come here to tell you that we, the drendali, are *not* the evil race we are portrayed to be. We can be monsters, yes, but so can any race.

As you may or may not know, the dwarves possess an artifact that we desperately desire. It was stolen from us when we were attacking the titan Chern during a battle in a dwarven citadel called Baereth Marn. We had planned to use this device to imprison the titan so the gods could destroy him. Yet before we could use it, the craven dwarves ran off with it, secreting it away somewhere deep in their citadel.

I can see the looks on some of your faces, and I believe I may know what you are thinking. You are thinking, "If this artifact is so powerful, why haven't the dwarves used it for themselves?" The answer to that question is simple. We alone have the magics required to activate the artifact, and only a dark elf can access the powers contained within.

Let me also say now that some of you are probably thinking that we had an alliance with your enemies, the dwarves, for over two thousand years. For humans, I understand that is an extremely long time. But understand that in that time there have only been two dark elven kings. I was alive for most of that alliance. I can vouch for the rest of the dark elven nation of Dier Drendal when I say that we no longer have anything in common with the dwarves.

We have tried to forgive them for their treachery, and we were greeted with axes when we bore banners of peace. Our own god's herald was attacked and nearly killed by that cowardly king of the dwarves, the bastard Thain. I did not know him, but I did know his father, his grandfather, and his great grandfather. At one time I had thought them noble, but now I know that only cowardice flows through their veins.

Mighty King Virduk, I beseech you. Allow our peoples to forge an alliance to destroy the evil stain on the Kelder Mountains that is the dwarven nation of Burok Torn. Let us also help you finally defeat the valley kingdom of Durrover. Together, our two peoples can become greater than the sum of our parts.

We know that alliances do not come without trust and understanding, so we, the dark elves, have come willing to trade. In exchange for your aid in wiping out the dwarven nation and allowing us to reclaim our stolen artifact, we are willing to give you the secrets of lead golem construction, as well as access to some of our powerful tattoo magics.

I thank you kindly, great Dragon King. I pray you think on our offer and arrive at a solution that is as equitable to our people as it is deadly to the dwarven nation.

— *Speech given by Cherith Matlosz, King of Dier Drendal, to King Virduk and the assemblage of representatives from the Calastian Hegemony, 147AV.*

## The Gorgons

### Good Anteas:

The following texts were stolen by a Cult of Ancients spy employed by me. You, Seleeda, and myself are now the only three people outside of Dier Drendal to have ever seen these documents. It is doubtful that the elves even know that their information was stolen. Once again, I am impressed and pleased with the Cult's handiwork. Their price is truly deserved. No one who is not a dark elf or a very special invited guest has ever gone to the city of Dier Drendal and left alive.

— Virduk

I would never have thought that in my lifetime I would be subjected to losing the powers of my title or be forced to beg for help and alliance from that viper Virduk. I believe that if he does not help us, he may instead try to hunt us down. I have spoken with Nalthalos at length on this and have now reached a conclusion that I should have made centuries ago: you are not our enemies.

Please forgive us for our impudence during the 'Gorgon Wars,' as our people call them. While I did not have a hand in slaying high gorgon Masetex, I was the one who assigned the dark elven contingent to find and destroy him.

I come to you today not to open the wounds of the past. I come instead to examine those wounds and offer succor to those that are festering from neglect and abuse. We, the dark elven nation of Dier Drendal, have not been kind, considerate neighbors. We coexisted with you for millennia; when the dwarves came and cleared you from your ancestral homes, we should have given you a place to stay in our walls. We were warned by our god, however, that you served the titan Mormo and that we should be wary of you.

I come before you today to tell you that even a god can be mistaken. You were never our enemies, the dwarves of Burok Torn were. Having said that, we would like the chance to make amends to your people. Yet to do this, we will need your help. We offer you a place in the highest caste of our fair city of Dier Drendal. We will house you and protect you as if you were dark elves. We will allow you to learn our arts and customs. We cannot, however, offer you aid in finding the pieces of your slain parent. If we did that, we would bring down the full wrath of the gods, and then no alliance, however strong, could save our peoples.

In exchange for our aid, we only ask one thing in return: help us take Burok Torn and destroy the dwarves once and for all. They have ruined both of our ways of life, have taken your ancestral home, and stolen one of our most priceless artifacts. We want vengeance and I know that you do, as well. We offer you a chance at that vengeance and a return to normalcy that has not been experienced since before the dwarven nation existed in the peaks of the Kelders.

I am not asking for an immediate response; I am merely asking for you to consider what I have said. I will understand if the answer to my request is no: we harmed your people deeply and gravely in the years before the Divine War. But, I profoundly hope you agree and help us forge an alliance that can destroy the scourge that is the dwarves, once and for all.

*Speech given by Cherith Matlosz, King of Dier Drendal, to the Gorgon Brood Leaders, 147 AV.*

## A New Alliance

Shortly after meeting with the Gorgon Brood Leaders, a high gorgon representative requested escort to the city. He spent a month living as an honored guest. Many wounds between our two cultures were healed in that time. Suffice to say that since his departure, a tenuous alliance has been forged between 'divine' and 'titanspawn' races.

I cannot help but feel pity for this race. Doomed to imitate human culture (which is laughable when compared to our own elven culture), they have no place to fit in, much like our own people. And the dwarves betrayed us both. It was really no surprise, when six months later we signed a treaty that now allows our people to coexist peacefully together while we pursue our common goal — the destruction of the dwarven citadel of Burok Torn. What follows are the main points of the treaty and its ramifications.

- No dark elf shall willingly enter into combat with any member of the gorgon species unless an unprovoked attack is first visited upon him.

- No gorgon shall willingly harm a dark elf unless harmed first.

- Gorgons and dark elves shall become trade partners, exchanging goods at the current rate decided upon by each race's merchant class (see merchant treaty for more detailed description).

- Aid shall be offered by one race for the other if requested. Aid shall not be so extravagant that either race cannot protect their holdings.

- Neither race, once promising aid, shall deny that aid without nullifying the entire treaty.

- The two races shall work together to destroy the dwarven citadel and reclaim the land and the artifact, the Devanal Arch.

- Any elf found guilty of breaking this treaty shall answer directly to our Lord and Master Nalthalos. His word, as in all things, is final.

— *Excerpt from scroll stolen by Cult of Ancients spy, dated 147 AV.*

# Chapter Five: The Mysteries of the Mountains

## Runic and Tattoo Magic

Runic magic is the preferred form of dwarven spellcasting in Burok Torn, although more conventional spellcasters exist. Collectively called rune masters, these priests and wizards (and very rarely, sorcerers) can inscribe magical runes on people or objects, and are also skilled in runecasting, an unusual form of spellcraft that creates glowing runes that hover in the air and can be discharged at will.

Rune masters — whether they are rune wizards or rune priests — each follow different paths, one arcane, one divine, but they cast their spells in similar fashion. The runic priests, however, share more with the dark elven practice of tattoo magic than many would like to admit.

Among the dark elves of Dier Drendal, tattoo magic reigns supreme. The dwarves of Burok Torn know of this practice but are wary of spreading this knowledge. They fear if word spread, many of their enemies would seek to ally themselves with the drendali, in return for learning this ancient secret.

When a dark elf is born, she is tattooed on the forehead with a mark of caste, which will stay with her until she dies. Dark elven tattoos are, like most other tattoos found in Scarn, of a geometric nature. Occasionally, however, an elf may have a tattoo drawn on his body that depicts a particular incident or animal. These rare tattoos usually contain powerful magics.

Due to their living underground and their dark, obsidian pigmentation, all dark elf tattoos are faintly luminescent. This unique ink is made from a type of fungi mixed with bits of ooze that glow a soft blue in the dark, accenting the fierceness of the dark elves. The tattooing process is extraordinarily painful, but the elves embrace the pain; it is the way their tattoo adepts learn to overcome the frailty of their bodies. The pain of the tattooing is also a way of sharing the pain that their god suffers daily.

Almost every dark elf possesses at least one magical tattoo. Tattoos that augment strength are popular among warriors, while wizards prefer tattoos that keep them from bodily harm. Tattoo adepts, the masters of the art, combine both types of tattoos, along with magic, making them formidable adversaries in combat, employing skin magic found nowhere else in Scarn. More than one dwarf has thought he won the day, only to discover that his adversary was merely toying with him.



## Prestige Classes

### Rune Master (RnM)

Although Burok Torn harbors many “ordinary” clerics and wizards, all are familiar with the power of runes, and all aspire to one day serve Goran as this elite class of spellcaster. Collectively called rune masters, these individuals are divided into rune priests and rune wizards, depending on their original class. Sorcerers are rare among the dwarves of Burok Torn and can also become rune masters, but no rune sorcerers have been seen in decades. Rune paladins, druids, and rangers are also possible, but no one has ever seen one.

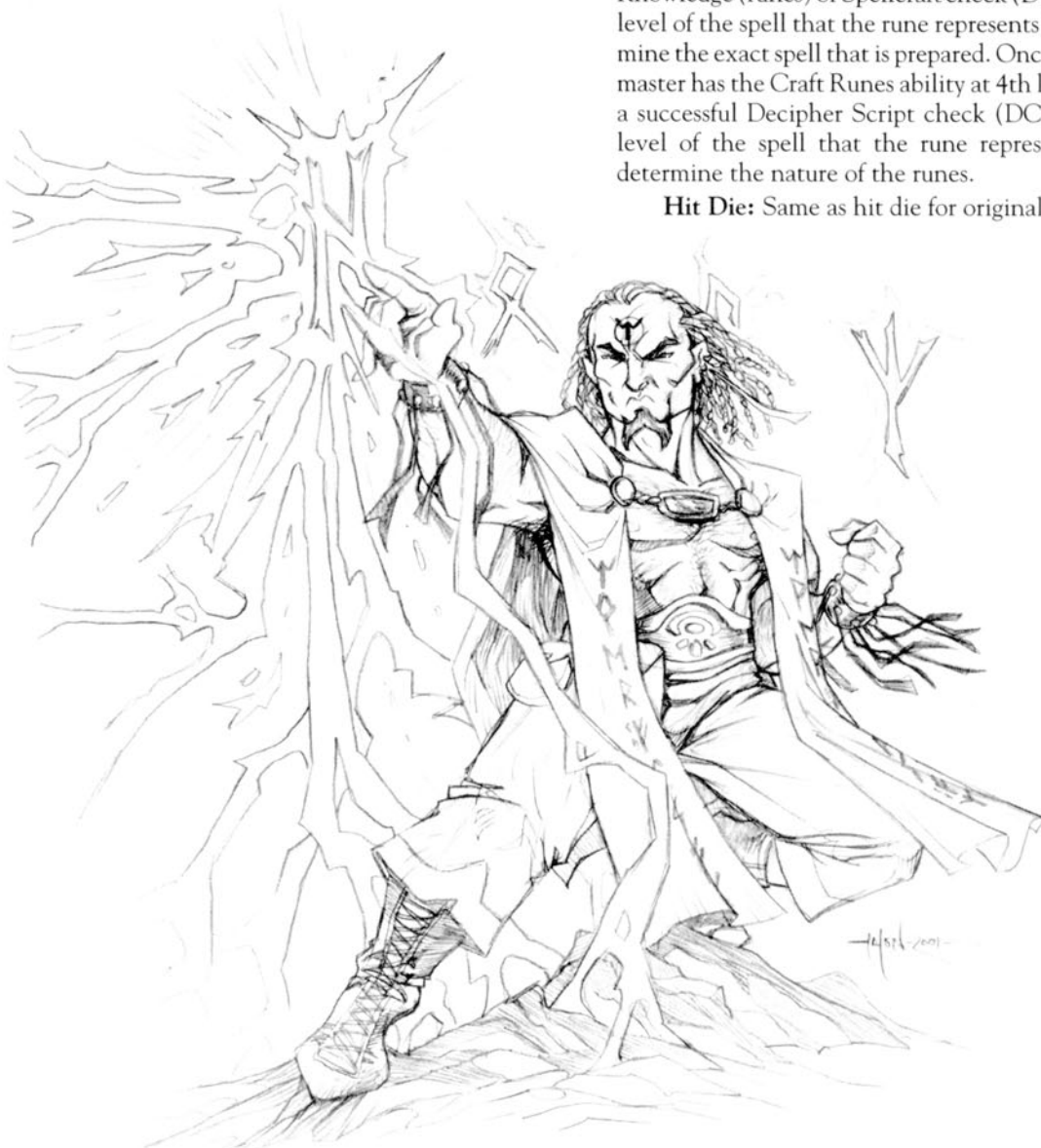
Rune masters are highly respected among the dwarves, but much is demanded of them as well. Those who have sworn fealty to Goran and the king must answer any call to service without question, using their runecasting techniques to the best of their ability, whether in accomplishing a task for the king or in

defending Burok Torn itself. Some rune masters practice their trade outside of Burok Torn, but they guard their secrets jealously and rarely if ever share them with outsiders.

Members of the rune master prestige class share many unusual abilities, but the best known is that of runecasting — the ability to draw runes in the air and discharge them at will. Runecasting is both a blessing and a curse. It allows the user to cast multiple spells in a single round and improves the ability to ready spells in advance. Unfortunately, the runes are easy to see, glowing as brightly as a torch, and dwarf rune masters with prepared spells often find themselves the target of numerous magical and missile attacks while in combat.

In addition, until the rune master has the Craft Rune ability (see below), the runes for many spells are known, and an observer who knows his runes will be able to determine which spells a rune master has stored. An observer can make a Decipher Script, Knowledge (runes) or Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the level of the spell that the rune represents) to determine the exact spell that is prepared. Once the rune master has the Craft Runes ability at 4th level, only a successful Decipher Script check (DC 25 + the level of the spell that the rune represents) can determine the nature of the runes.

**Hit Die:** Same as hit die for original class.



## New Feats

### Inscribe Rune

You can inscribe runic spells on objects or individuals.

**Prerequisite:** Spellcaster level 1st+.

**Benefit:** Instead of casting a spell normally, you can inscribe it as a rune or symbol on an object or person. It takes one full action per spell level to inscribe a rune, but once it is inscribed the rune remains in place until triggered or dispelled. Once a rune is triggered, it vanishes and cannot be used again. A rune created in this fashion functions similarly to a scroll-based spell and is typically painted or chalked temporarily on its target. The caster can only inscribe prepared spells.

A runically-inscribed spell is cast when the person holding the object, or the person upon whom the rune is inscribed, triggers it. Triggering a rune is a standard action equivalent in virtually every way (except as noted below) to casting a spell from a scroll.

Individuals and objects can only hold runes inscribed by a single caster at any one time; multiple casters cannot inscribe runes on the same target. Furthermore, the caster can only inscribe a number of spell levels on a given object or individual equal to the caster's own caster level. Cantrips are considered .5 level spells for purposes of rune inscription.

Similar to the rules for scroll activation (see *Core Rulebook II*, p. 199), activating inscribed runes requires the person activating the rune to be able to identify it correctly. This can be accomplished by the caster telling the activator what the rune is or by a successful Decipher Script, Knowledge (runes) or Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the level of the spell that the rune represents). If the creator of the rune was a rune master of 4th level or higher who chose to conceal the nature of the rune, then only a Decipher Script check (DC 25 + the level of the spell that the rune represents) can determine the nature of the rune. Once a rune is correctly identified, it may be triggered exactly per the rules for activating a scroll, including meeting the requirements for the inscribed spell, or succeeding at a caster level check, or a successful use of the Use Magic Device skill as appropriate.

The material requirements for inscribing a rune are less than those needed to create a scroll, so creating a rune costs half of the expense listed for creating a scroll for the same spell, but it is more draining to the caster, so its XP cost is doubled (see *Core Rulebook II*, page 245). For example, a 10th-level wizard inscribing runes would pay 93 gp, 2 sp, and 30 XP for a *lightning bolt*.

### Permanent Rune

**Prerequisite:** Inscribe Rune, spellcaster level 10th+

**Benefit:** You can create a permanent runic spell as per the *permanency* spell. A permanent rune takes one full day per level to inscribe, and costs XP as described under *permanency*. The spells available for permanency are as described under the spell, and are subject to the same restrictions — i.e., some may be placed on objects or areas only, others on creatures, etc. As with the spell, the GM may allow other spells to be made permanent with this feat.

The rune always functions for as long as it exists. Permanent runes are typically chiseled into stone, carved into wood, etched into metal, or affixed to a living target as a tattoo or scar. A permanent rune can be dispelled, in which case it does not disappear, but its magical properties are gone. A dispelled rune need not be inscribed again, but it must be recharged with magical energies as if it was new.

### Requirements

To qualify as a rune master, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Lawful Good or Lawful Neutral.

**Feats:** Inscribe Rune.

**Knowledge (runes):** 5 ranks.

**Knowledge (religion):** 3 ranks.

### Class Skills

The rune master's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (stonemasonry) (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (runes), Perform (Cha), Scry (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Use Magic Device (Cha, exclusive skill). See Chapter 4: Skills in *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at each level:** 2 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Rune masters gain no proficiency in any weapon or armor.

**Spell Advancement:** Each time a character gains a level of rune master, he gains additional spell slots and casting ability as if going up a level in his original class. A rune master with more than one prior spellcasting class must select one as a "priority" class for advancement.

**Runecasting:** At 1st level, rune masters learn their unique means of casting spells. While a rune master can continue to cast spells in the traditional manner, he is taught this new technique and can use it freely.

Rune masters can store spells by tracing their corresponding runes in the air. This forms a glowing version of the rune that hovers over the caster's head and remains there until the spell is triggered. The runes also vanish if not cast within 24 hours, or if the caster goes to sleep or loses consciousness. Spells still must be prepared as normal for the caster's original class. A spell that is stored in this fashion counts against a rune sorcerer's spells per day or counts against the maximum number of spells a rune wizard or cleric can prepare until the rune is triggered and the preparation slot is "freed up". Rune stored spells can be discharged without effect as a partial action by their caster.

Storing a spell in this fashion takes twice as long as the normal casting time of the spell. Most spells have a casting time of 1 action, and thus become a full action to store. Spells with a casting time of one full round (such as *summon swarm*) take 2 full rounds instead. Metamagic feats can be used in combination with runecasting.

A rune caster can simultaneously maintain a number of spell runes equal to his Intelligence modifier (in the case of a rune wizard), Wisdom modifier (in the case of rune priests (clerics), paladins, druids, and rangers), or Charisma modifier (for rune sorcerers). A wizard with an Intelligence of 18, for example, can have a total of four runes prepared by runecasting at any one time. Once a rune has been triggered, another can be prepared, up to the maximum limit.

Triggering a runecast spell is a partial action that provokes attacks of opportunity exactly like normal spell casting. This means that a runecaster can normally trigger two runes per round, or trigger a rune and take another partial action. This can be increased through the use of spells and enhancements such as *haste*. Attacks on a caster do not affect runecast spells that have already been stored, but attacks on a round in which the caster wishes to trigger a rune may cause a Concentration check. Rune masters may trigger a rune while "casting defensively" (see *Core Rulebook I*, p. 152) if they pass the requisite Concentration check. A failed Concentration check means that the rune has been discharged without effect.

Prepared runes can be dispelled as per *dispel magic* (one targeted *dispel magic* could potentially eradicate all of the stored runes) and are suppressed and cannot be triggered while in an *antimagic field*. When triggered, a runecast spell can be counterspelled normally.

**Design of Faith:** At 2nd level, a rune master creates a personal protective rune. This small symbol (often also inscribed on medallions, shields, armor, etc.) can be drawn in the air by the rune master once per day, granting the effects of a *bless* spell. The rune lasts for one hour per caster level. Only one such rune can be active on a character per day, it cannot be cast on others, and its effects do not stack with the effects of a normal *bless* spell. Drawing the symbol is a spell-like ability.

**Runic Shield:** Beginning at 3rd level, the rune master can create, once per day, a floating runic shield that absorbs damage from all non-flanking attacks. This shield lasts for a number of rounds equal to the rune master's level, or until the shield absorbs 20 points of physical damage. At sixth level, the rune master can create the shield twice per day, and it absorbs up to 30 points of damage from the front. At ninth level, the shield can be created three times per day, absorbing up to 40 points of damage. A shield created by a 9th-level rune master is effective against flanking attacks as well. Creating the shield is a spell-like ability, and the shield itself is a force effect.

**Craft Rune:** At 4th level, the rune master can create his own unique runes for spells. This prevents others from identifying the runes that he has prepared. Only a successful Decipher Script check (DC 25 + the level of the spell that the rune represents) can determine the nature of the runes.

**Runic Healing:** At 5th level, the rune master can use spells prepared with runecasting to heal damage to himself. A prepared rune can be discharged and used for healing as a free action, healing 1d4 points of damage per spell level. Any number of prepared runes can be discharged in this fashion.

**Share Rune:** At 7th level, a rune master can store spells upon others using the runecasting ability described above. The rune master must touch the target, and the rune that is stored on the target him counts against the runecaster's maximum number of stored runes. The rune can be triggered by the rune master as a partial action as normal so long as the rune master is within long range (400 ft. + 40 ft. per caster level) of the target. Only targeted spells (as opposed to those with an area or effect) may be shared in this fashion and the triggered, shared rune only affects the target upon whom the rune was cast. For example, a rune master might place a shared rune for *bulls' strength* on a paladin companion and then trigger that rune in the midst of battle (even when the paladin is out of the normal touch range of *bulls' strength*) to strengthen the paladin's sword arm.

**Rune Collision:** At 8th level, a rune master can force spells stored by runecasting to collide, causing

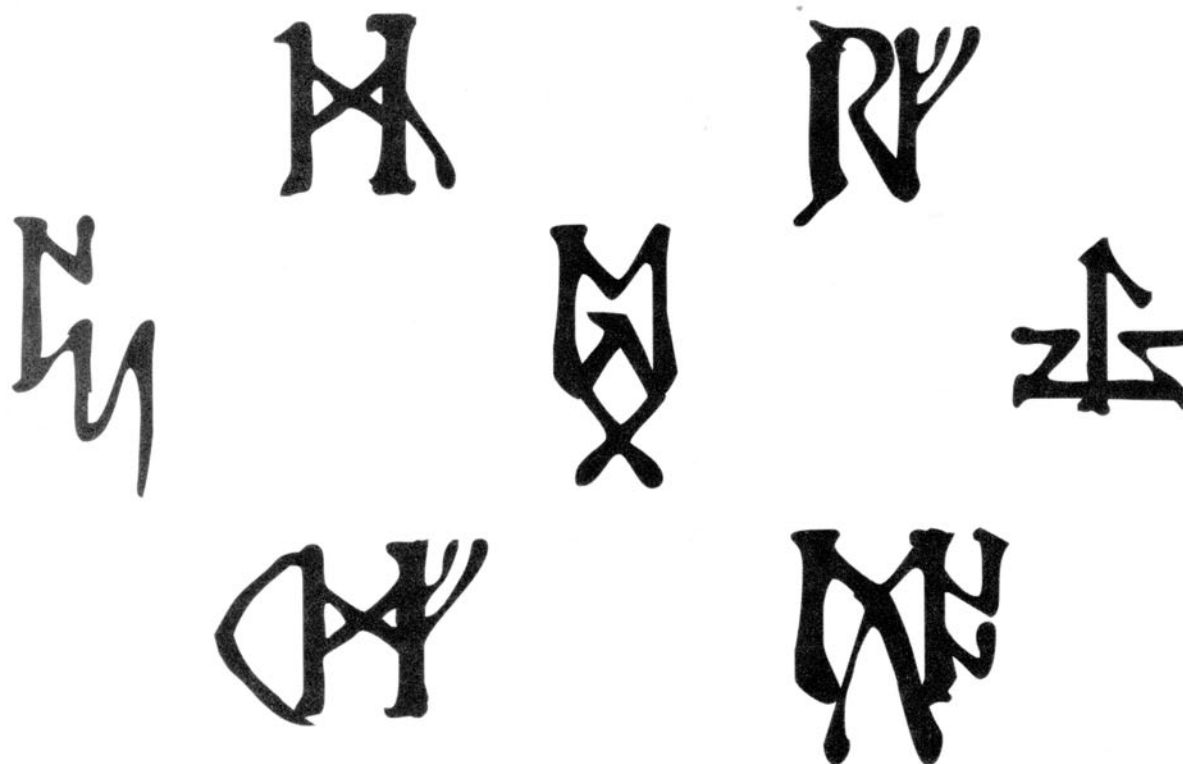


an explosion. This is a free action, and all stored runes must be utilized. The blast causes 1d6 points of damage per spell level (to a maximum of 10d6) to everything in a radius equal to one foot per caster level and centered on the caster, affecting friends and foes alike. The caster is unaffected. Those who succeed at a Reflex saving throw take only half damage. The DC for this roll is 10 + total spell levels + Intelligence modifier (rune wizard), Wisdom modifier (rune cleric, paladin, druid, or ranger) or Charisma modifier (rune sorcerer).

**Recall Rune:** At 10th level, the rune master can use this ability to retain spells created by runecasting after they have been triggered, allowing them to be used again. In order to recall a rune, the caster must

take a full round action the round after the rune is triggered. The rune master may take no other action; attacks or other distractions require a Concentration check as though the rune master were attempting to cast the spell being recalled. During the round that the recall is attempted, the rune master makes a Spellcraft check, with a DC equal to 15 + the level of the spell being recalled. If the recall attempt is successful, the spell reappears as a stored rune around the caster. If cast again, the spell may be recalled again, but the second attempt to recall it has a DC equal to 20 + twice the level of the spell. The third attempt has a DC of 25 + three times the level of the spell, and so on. Once a recall attempt fails, the rune is gone and no more recall attempts can be made.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Runecasting
2nd	+1	+1	+0	+1	Design of faith
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Runic shield 1/day
4th	+2	+2	+1	+2	Craft rune
5th	+2	+2	+1	+2	Runic healing
6th	+3	+2	+2	+2	Runic shield 2/day
7th	+3	+3	+2	+3	Share rune
8th	+4	+3	+2	+3	Rune collision
9th	+4	+3	+3	+3	Runic shield 3/day
10th	+5	+4	+3	+4	Recall rune



## Iron Guardsman (IGd)

Elite defenders of Burok Torn, iron guardsmen are members of a unit that numbers only about 1,000. Their abilities are believed to be blessings from Goran himself. These abilities are powerful, but must be used only in the defense of Burok Torn and its king. In all the history of the Iron Guard, no member has ever betrayed his homeland or failed to serve if called.

**Hit Die:** d12.

### Requirements

To qualify to become an iron guardsman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Any lawful.

**Feats:** Dodge, Endurance, Toughness, Power Attack, Cleave, Combat Reflexes.

**Class Requirement:** Must have at least 3 levels of dwarven defender (see *Core Rulebook II*, page 32).

**Special:** The guardsman must swear to protect and serve the current king of Burok Torn without question.

### Class Skills

The iron guardsman's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Craft (Int), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4: Skills in *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the iron guardsman prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Iron guardsmen are proficient with all types of weapons, armor, and shields.

**Special Training:** At 1st level, iron guardsmen gain special training in the use of dwarven waraxes and all forms of armor. Due to this training, the Guardsmen have become much more proficient than a typical dwarf with waraxes: they gain a +1 to attack with such weapons. After extensive training, iron guardsmen learn literally to live in their armor and take no encumbrance or movement penalties while wearing it.

**Bond of Fealty:** At 2nd level, the iron guardsman gains the supernatural ability to sense when any

dwarf of the Burok Torn royal family is in danger. The guardsman intuitively knows the precise location of the royal dwarf, no matter where they are (the range of this ability is unlimited, but effects that block scrying will also block this location ability). In game terms, this means that the GM will notify an iron guardsman any time a dwarf of royalty is being threatened. Royalty includes the king himself, his brothers and sisters, his wife, his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren (if any). The guardsman must immediately attempt to rescue any member of the royal family who is threatened, no matter what he is doing (save perhaps already rescuing another member of royalty). Any who ignore this requirement will temporarily or permanently lose their iron guardsman status (see below).

**Strength of Iron:** Beginning at 3rd level, iron guardsmen are supernaturally able to make their body as hard as iron once per day. This ability gives the dwarf's body a hardness of 10, for one round per iron guardsman level. When this power is invoked, the guardsman can only move one quarter his normal movement. For the duration of the ability, however, the dwarf is immune to critical hits and subdual damage; takes half damage from fire and lightning attacks; takes one-quarter damage from cold attacks; and can ignore the first 10 points of any attack that deals damage. At 6th level, the guardsman can use this ability 2/day, and at 9th, he can use it 3/day.

**Health of Iron:** At 4th level, iron guardsmen gain the durability of iron, represented as a permanent +1 enhancement bonus to their Constitution scores. At 7th level, the bonus rises to +2, and finally to +3 at 10th level.

**Eternal Vigilance:** At 5th level, the iron guardsman has become so vigilant in his desire to protect the royal family that he is able to go without normal amounts of food, drink, and sleep. The guardsman needs only one hour of sleep a night to become fully rested. Additionally, the guardsman can gain full nutrition and suffer no penalties by eating only one meal a day, or by eating normally once every three days. The guardsman does not need to drink at all and suffers no penalties from thirst.

**Heart of Iron:** At 8th level, an iron guardsman gains a +3 to all saving throws to resist ability damage, energy drain, and death from massive damage.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Special training
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Bond of fealty
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Strength of iron 1/day
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Health of iron +1
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Eternal vigilance
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Strength of iron 2/day
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Health of iron +2
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Heart of iron
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Strength of iron 3/day
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Health of iron +3





## Stone Guardsman (SGd)

While the Iron Guard defends Burok Torn from the inside, the Stone Guard patrols the mountains and passes outside the citadel. Made up of worthy dwarven defenders who do not yet qualify for membership in the Iron Guard, this unit numbers about 1,500, and its difficult mission — the location and elimination of specific threats to Burok Torn, and the safety of its outer perimeter — makes turnover high.

Only dwarven defenders can be stone guardsmen.

**Hit Die:** d10.

### Requirements

To qualify to become a stone guardsman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Class Requirement:** Must have at least 3 levels of dwarven defender (see *Core Rulebook II*, page 32).

**Special:** The defender must be given a special commission by the King of Burok Torn to slay a particular enemy of the dwarves. Upon completion of this task, the dwarf may advance as a stone guardsman. The enemy is usually a monster or other foe of a level and CR comparable to the defender.

### Class Skills

The stone guardsman's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Craft (Int), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Search (Int), Use Rope (Dex), Wilderness Lore (Wis). See Chapter 4: Skills in *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All of the following are class features of the stone guardsman prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Stone guardsmen, like their Iron counterparts, are proficient with all types of weapons, armor, and shields.

**Track:** Stone guardsmen gain Track as a bonus feat at 1st level (see *Core Rulebook I*, page 85).

**Target Prey:** At 2nd level a stone guardsman is given a specific enemy of Burok Torn to hunt down. This enemy is a powerful individual monster or other foe of the dwarven city and is called the 'target' among the stone guardsmen. Once one target is eliminated, a new one may be assigned to the guardsman by either the Dwarven Conclave or the King of

Burok Torn. Because they perform the work of Goran, these guardsmen gain supernatural insights into their enemy's nature. This grants the guardsmen a +1 competence bonus to their Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks regarding the target. This bonus stacks with a ranger's favored enemy bonus, but applies to an individual foe of Burok Torn, rather than an entire group of enemies.

**Favored Weapon:** Stone guardsmen receive intensive military and weapon training. At 3rd level, the guardsman must choose a favored weapon, receiving a +1 bonus to attack with this weapon. The bonus increases to +2 at 6th level and +3 at 9th.

**Dogged Pursuit:** Despite a stone guardsman's many abilities, targets are often very hard to locate and slay. It is not uncommon for a stone guardsman and his target to clash multiple times before one of them is ultimately victorious — many great dwarven epics describe such conflicts, in fact. This ability helps guardsmen to emerge victorious in most cases, however.

Beginning at 4th level, when a stone guardsman is given a target, he is granted divine insight into the target's weaknesses, gaining a +1 bonus to attack and damage against that particular target. Each time that a guardsman and his target engage in combat, and the target is not killed, the guardsman then gains a further +1 to hit and damage. This bonus is added every time the guardsman encounters his target and it escapes. There is no maximum to this ability. Once a new target is declared, of course, the guardsman must start from the base +1 bonus. If the guardsman is killed and resurrected or otherwise magically restored to life, he must also start again at the base +1 bonus.

**Enchanted Strike:** Beginning at 5th level, Goran grants the stone guardsmen the supernatural ability to strike their foes without error. Once per day, a stone guardsman can make a *true strike* attack as if the spell of the same name had been cast upon him (*Core Rulebook I*, page 267), receiving a +20 insight bonus to his next attack roll. At 7th level, the guardsman can make two enchanted strikes per day, and at 9th level he can make three.

**Fortification:** At 8th level, a stone guardsman gains the strength of stone and cannot be distracted from his mission in any way. The guardsman gains a +5 sacred bonus to saving throws against any mind-affecting spells or effects. Stone guardsmen also become unaffected by *geas* or *quest* spells.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Track
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Target prey
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Favored weapon +1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Dogged pursuit
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Enchanted strike 1/day
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Favored weapon +2
7th	+7	5	+2	+5	Enchanted strike 2/day
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Fortification
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Favored weapon +3
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Enchanted strike 3/day



## Tattoo Adept (TAd)

Scholars believe that the practice of ritual tattooing among the dark elves arose to enforce law and stability in the rigid caste system. Their long isolation from the outside world has led them to develop tattoo magic that is uniquely elven in nature. Dark elven tattoos are different from those of other races — they are shimmering violet images that at once enhance and contrast with their wearers' ebon skins. The inks used for these tattoos are derived from various subterranean creatures and outsiders, and are toxic in large quantities. As it is, the application of dark elven tattoos is excruciatingly painful, and only a few can tolerate experiencing it more than once.

The chosen few who can tolerate multiple inscriptions — the tattoo adepts — call the process the “Embrace of Pain,” and are considered especially blessed by Nalthalos.

**Hit Die:** d6

### Requirements

To qualify to become a tattoo adept, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Race:** Dark elf.

**Craft (tattoo):** 9 ranks.

**Heal:** 2 ranks.

**Knowledge (arcana):** 9 ranks.

**Special:** Must possess at least one magical tattoo of at least rank two.

### Class Skills

The tattoo adept's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Scry (Int), and Spellcraft (Int). See Chapter 4: Skills in *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

The following are class features of the tattoo adept prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Tattoo adepts gain no proficiency in any weapon or armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble.

Tattoo adepts who wear medium or heavy armor lose the following class abilities: instant access, tattoo armor, enduring markings and tattoo mastery.

**Spells per Day:** When not engaged in the Embrace of Pain (see below), tattoo adepts continue training in the magic arts. At first level (and again at 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th), the tattoo adept gains one additional level of spells as if gaining a level in the spellcasting class she belonged to before adding the prestige class. If the character has more than one spellcasting class before becoming a tattoo adept, she must decide to which class the additional spellcasting

level is added, for the purposes of determining spells per day, when a new spell level is earned.

**Inscribe Magical Tattoo:** If she does not already have it, the adept receives the Inscribe Magical Tattoo (see *Relics and Rituals*, page 198) feat at 1st level.

**Instant Access:** At 2nd level, a tattoo adept becomes familiar enough with the intricacies of tattoo magic to activate tattoos speedily. An adept can activate a tattoo as a free action rather than a standard action. The requisite Wisdom check (DC 5 + level of major spell effect) still applies.

**Tattoo Armor:** Beginning at 3rd level, the tattoo adept can channel the energies stored in her tattoos to protect her from damage. The tattoo adept receives a bonus to AC equal to one-half the total number of tattoo ranks that she bears. A tattoo adept with a Constitution of 18 would, for example, be able to bear a total of 8 ranks of tattoos and, if she has the maximum number of tattoo ranks available, would receive a total AC bonus of +4 (if she had fewer ranks than the maximum, however, her AC bonus would be proportionally lower). Once the adept has achieved the embrace of pain (see below), the total ranks rise to 12, increasing her AC bonus to +6.

**Embrace of Pain:** When a tattoo adept reaches 4th level, she has conditioned her body to embrace and channel the pain that receiving the tattoos causes. As a result, the tattoo adept can bear a number of tattoo ranks equal to 3 times her Constitution modifier. At 9th level, the adept can bear tattoo ranks equal to 4 times her Constitution modifier.

**Ink Augmentation:** At 6th level, tattoo adepts learn to transform the energy of their tattoos into permanent body enhancements. In order to take advantage of this ability, the tattoo adept must have obtained the maximum number of tattoos available (including those allowed by the embrace of pain ability). If this requirement is satisfied, the adept may increase any ability score other than Constitution by +2. If the adept has less than the maximum number of ranks in tattoos, she may not increase her ability score until she does.

**Tattoo Transcendence:** Once a tattoo adept reaches 5th level, she has become so familiar with tattoo magic and the pain involved in receiving tattoos that she can condition her body to support more powerful spells. She can now receive individual tattoos that exceed her Constitution modifier by +1. At 8th level, individual tattoos can exceed her Constitution modifier by +2. Note that these tattoos still count against the adept's maximum number of ranks allowed.

**Enduring Markings:** When reaching 7th level, tattoo adepts have become so accustomed to the way specific tattoos work with their body that they gain the ability to activate certain tattoos more often. The adept gains one extra use of any tattoo that has a limited number of uses per day. *Eyes of the Medusa*, for



example, has only one use per day. An adept with this ability can use it twice per day instead. The tattoo's side effects work normally.

**Tattoo Mastery:** Upon reaching 10th level, a tattoo adept learns to shake off the harmful side effects of the magic more quickly than other tattoo users. The duration of any tattoo side effect that lasts more than one round is halved.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Inscribe magical tattoo	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+0	+0	+0	+3	Instant access	
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Tattoo armor 1/2 ranks	+1 level of existing class
4th	+1	+1	+1	+4	Embrace of pain 1	
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Tattoo transcendence +1	+1 level of existing class
6th	+2	+2	+2	+5	Ink augmentation	
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Enduring markings	+1 level of existing class
8th	+3	+3	+2	+6	Tattoo transcendence +2	
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Embrace of pain 2	+1 level of existing class
10th	+4	+3	+3	+7	Tattoo mastery	



## New Spells

### Damashar's Force Rune

*Runic pattern sends out shockwave that causes damage, knocks victims unconscious.*

Evocation [Force]

**Level:** Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 4

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5ft./2 levels)

**Area:** 20-foot radius spread centered on caster.

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

#### Description

The *force rune* was designed by the wizard Damashar of the Twisted Tunnels to protect himself if he ever became separated and needed protection from titanspawn races in the mountains. Damashar was unfortunately killed not by a titanspawn, but by a student to whom he had taught the use of *force rune*. The student ignited the spell while Damashar stood unaware nearby, and the resulting shock wave tossed the aged dwarf off a tall cliff. The student, Ertok Golnast, redeemed himself by spreading the word of his master's spell and establishing the basis for the rune masters.

#### Spell Effect

The caster traces a runic symbol in the air. The rune then explodes, sending out a wave of force in a 20-foot radius. The shockwave affects everyone in its path, friend or foe, and causes 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d6). All creatures struck by the expanding force wave who fail their Reflex saving throw are also thrown to the ground and considered *prone* (see *Core Rulebook II*, page 85).

**Material Components:** A piece of sandstone held aloft, used to "write" the rune in air.

### Rock Storm

*Creates a whirlwind of rocks and debris that batters opponents.*

Transmutation

**Level:** Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5ft./2 levels)

**Area:** 20-foot radius spread centered on caster.

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

#### Description

A spell developed by the rune masters to defend themselves from a group of enemies, *rock storm* allows the caster to create a swirling cloud of debris from stones, gravel, and small rocks.

#### Spell Effect

*Rock storm* must be cast in a place with loose rock, gravel, and stones, such as an underground tunnel, a desert, mountains, and the like. The spell creates a swirling cloud of rocky debris that hinders anyone trying to pass through it, friend or foe. In the center of the whirlwind, the caster remains in a calm "eye" and is unharmed. The caster can move while the spell is active, but can only move at one quarter his normal rate. Casting this spell in a restricted area smaller than its radius of effect (in a dungeon corridor, for example) has no negative consequences.

Creatures caught in the battering stones must make a Reflex save or take 1d4 points of damage per caster level (10d4 maximum). A successful save halves this damage. Movement rates while within the *rock storm's* area of effect is halved.

**Material Components:** A small stone carved with a runic symbol for the spell. The stone is tossed into the air and crumbles as the spell is cast.

### Runic Weave

*Imbues garments with magical protections and runes.*

Transmutation

**Level:** Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 3

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Effect:** Clothing or armor touched by caster gains magical protections

**Duration:** 1 hour/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

#### Description

The rune masters and runic priests of Burok Torn devised *runic weave* to decorate themselves with protective symbols. *Runic weave* is still taught to the younger rune masters and priests to help create runically-enhanced armor and clothing, and dwarven warriors often have this spell cast upon them before battle.

#### Spell Effect

When cast, *runic weave* creates elaborate symbols upon a person's clothing or armor. The weave starts where the caster touches the garment or armor, then spreads quickly to cover the item with an elabo-

rate design. *Runic weave* adds a +1 deflection bonus to the wearer's AC and absorbs 20 points of physical damage before the pattern is destroyed. Damage from spells affect the wearer normally. No more than one *runic weave* spell can be active on a person or object at one time.

**Material Components:** The garment to be enchanted.

## Stone Window

*Creates a one-way "window" through rock walls.*

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 1

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Effect:** Any on caster's side of wall.

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

## Description

Developed by Rune Master Juroy during the reign of King Noraim Diamondfist, *stone window* was put to good use as the dwarves watched dignitaries and the suspicious through secret "one-way glass." The thief Brokenthumbs was nabbed by a wary rune master using this spell to spy through a rock wall into his own chambers, which the enterprising thief had recently discovered.

## Spell Effect

To cast *stone window*, a rune master draws a chalk outline of a "window" up to three feet square upon the stone surface where he wants the spell to materialize. As the spell is cast, the stone dissolves until the caster and anyone standing near him can see clearly through the "glass" into whatever lies beyond. Usually, this spell is cast to see through rock walls into rooms beyond or at intersections in the dwarven mines where dark elves might be lurking.

The "window" is still stone, however, and cannot be broken simply because it can be seen through. The window can penetrate through up to 10 feet of solid stone before the magic falters. At 15 feet, the window appears hazy, and at 20 feet, nothing can be seen. The window cannot be seen on the other side, but can be detected with the proper spells or powers.

**Material Components:** A piece of chalk that is used to draw a window upon a wall while the spell is cast.

## Elven Tattoos

The tattoos described below are specific to the dark elves of Dier Drendal. To date, no other race has duplicated or knows of any of these tattoos. The dark elves, on the other hand, have limited knowledge of some of the tattoos listed in *Relics and Rituals*; however, the names and specific designs may be greatly altered.

## Deceptive Identity

**Tattoo Ranks:** 4

**Powers:** The bearer of this tattoo is granted the ability to masquerade as a member of another race. This tattoo is primarily employed by dark elves seeking to infiltrate Burok Torn in search of the remaining Devanal Arch. It functions in all ways like the spell *polymorph self*, with one exception. The power lasts for a number of days equal to the caster level of the individual who created the tattoo, after which the bearer reverts to her normal form.

**Side Effects:** Once the tattoo's duration has expired, it may not be activated for 24 hours. Also during this time, the tattoo's bearer incurs a -3 penalty to all Disguise, Hide and Move Silently rolls.

**Caster Level:** 7th; **Prerequisites:** Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *polymorph self*; **Market Price:** 16,800 gp.

## Eyes of the Medusa

**Tattoo Ranks:** 6

**Powers:** This tattoo, normally placed around the left eye, grants the bearer the gaze attack of a medusa. For a number of rounds equal to the bearer's Constitution modifier, the bearer can gaze at anyone in a 30-foot radius and permanently turn them to stone. The victim can resist this effect with a Fortitude save (DC 15). A gaze attack is a partial action. This tattoo can be used once per day.

**Side Effects:** When the effects of the tattoo expire, the bearer loses any augmentation to sight (*true seeing*, *darkvision*, and the like) for a number of hours equal to his bearer's Constitution modifier. The bearer also suffers a -2 penalty to all attack, Search and Spot rolls during this period due to blurred vision.

**Caster Level:** 11th; **Prerequisites:** Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *flesh to stone*; **Market Price:** 39,600 gp.

## Eyes of Nalthalos

**Tattoo Ranks:** 5

**Powers:** This tattoo, placed around the left eye, allows the bearer to see things as they truly are. When activated, the bearer of the tattoo benefits from the effects of a *true seeing* spell. The tattoo effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the level of the caster. The tattoo can be activated three times a day.

**Side Effects:** When the tattoo's duration expires, the bearer loses the ability to see for a number



of minutes equal to the time spent *true seeing*. At the end of this time, the bearer's vision returns to normal. During this time, all appropriate penalties for *blindness* are applied (*Core Rulebook II*, page 83).

*Caster Level:* 9th; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *true seeing*; *Market Price:* 16,200 gp.

## Fury of Nalthalos

**Tattoo Ranks:** 4

**Powers:** This mighty tattoo grants the bearer some of the strength and endurance of the dark elven god. The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to both Strength and Constitution for a number of hours equal to the level of the tattoo's caster. The tattoo can only be activated once per day.

**Side Effects:** When the tattoo's duration expires, the bearer suffers a temporary loss of two points of Strength and one point of Constitution, mimicking the god's loss of power at the hands of Chern.

*Caster Level:* 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *bull's strength, endurance*; *Market Price:* 3,600 gp.

## Mark of Vengeance

**Tattoo Ranks:** 1

**Powers:** This tattoo grants the bearer the ability to make unerring strikes against his opponents. When activated, the bearer may make a *true strike* as per the spell. The tattoo can be used three times per day.

**Side Effects:** After the tattoo has been used, the wearer suffers a -4 penalty to his next 1d6 attack rolls.

*Caster Level:* 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *true strike*; *Market Price:* 1,080 gp.

## Skin of Nalthalos

**Tattoo Ranks:** 4

**Powers:** This tattoo developed by the elves closely mimics the powers of the tattoo *Corean's forge* (*Relics & Rituals*, page 199). Upon activation, the benefactor gains all the protection afforded by a *stoneskin* spell. The *stoneskin* is treated as if cast at the caster level of the tattoo, so it normally will last 70 minutes and prevent 70 points of damage before dissipating. The tattoo can be activated twice per day.

**Side Effects:** Once the tattoo's duration has expired, the bearer is especially vulnerable to attacks. For the next hour, the character takes an extra point of damage per damage die rolled.

*Caster Level:* 7th; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *stoneskin*; *Market Price:* 6,720 gp.

## Speed of Nalthalos

**Tattoo Ranks:** 3

**Powers:** This small tattoo, usually placed on the ankle or wrist, allows the bearer to move with the speed the demigod had before he was imprisoned in a golem body. When activated, the bearer benefits from the effects of a *haste* spell for a number of rounds equal to the tattoo caster's level. The tattoo can be used twice a day.

**Side Effects:** When the tattoo duration expires, the bearer becomes affected as if by a *slow* spell for a number of rounds equal to the number of rounds that she was hastened. At the end of this time, the bearer's speed returns to normal. *Caster Level:* 5th; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *haste*; *Market Price:* 3,600 gp.

## Tattoo Familiar

**Tattoo Ranks:** 1

**Powers:** Many dark elven spellcasters prefer that their familiars be kept in the form of a tattoo. The creation of such a tattoo is a collaborative effort between the tattoo's recipient and its crafter. As with the summon familiar ability of ordinary spellcasters, the creation of this tattoo takes a full day, in which the caster calls upon the spiritual energy of the recipient's chosen familiar. The familiar functions as described in *Core Rulebook I*, page 51, save that it can reside on the bearer's skin as a two-dimensional tattoo until summoned, when it becomes a full-sized normal version of the animal. Summoning the tattoo familiar is a full-round action. While in tattoo form, the familiar bestows its special abilities on its bearer (for example, a cat tattoo familiar in tattoo form would still give its master a +2 bonus to Move Silently checks). The familiar can be turned back into a tattoo, but it must be touching its bearer. Transforming the familiar back is also a full-round action. The tattoo familiar behaves in all other ways as described on page 51 of *Core Rulebook I*.

**Side Effects:** None

*Caster Level:* 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *summon familiar*; *Market Price:* 2,500 gp.

## Touch of Betrayal

**Tattoo Ranks:** 7

**Powers:** This tattoo was created to symbolize the dark elves' hatred of the craven (and in their minds "serpentine") manner in which Goran and the dwarves left Nalthalos and the dark elves to die at the hands of Chern. Always placed on the wearer's sword arm,

this tattoo becomes a viper's head, which strikes an enemy in melee combat when activated. If a successful melee attack is scored by the bearer, then the snakehead automatically strikes as well. If the bearer misses his intended target, the snakehead can still attack at a -4 penalty. The viper deals 1d8 points of damage plus poison. The initial poison damage is 1d6 Con (Fort save DC 18 negates); secondary damage is 2d6 Con (Fort save DC 18 halves). This tattoo can be used once per day; the snake manifests for a number of rounds equal to the bearer's Constitution modifier.

**Side Effects:** When the tattoo's duration expires, the viper sinks its teeth into its bearer as it melts back into a tattoo. The bearer must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer the poison damage as if struck by the viper in combat. The price this tattoo exacts is high, as was the price for befriending the dwarven nation.

*Caster Level:* 13th; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *Mormo's serpent hands*; *Market Price:* 21,840 gp.

## Withering Touch

**Tattoo Ranks:** 4

**Powers:** When activated, this tattoo gives the bearer the ability to make touch attacks akin to those of a wight. When a successful touch attack is made, the victim gains one negative level. If the victim is killed in this manner, he rises as a true wight in 1d4 days. The caster, however, has no control over the newly created undead. This power allows for a number of touch attacks per day equal to the bearer's Constitution bonus.

**Side Effects:** The bearer suffers the temporary loss of one point of Charisma for every negative level inflicted with the tattoo's power.

*Caster Level:* 7th; *Prerequisites:* Inscribe Magical Tattoo, *enervation*; *Market Price:* 10,080 gp.



# Chapter Six: Adventures

Each of these adventures begins in Burok Torn or involves the mountain citadel in some manner. They are individual adventures, although they can be played as a linked campaign that leads the heroes from the interior of Burok Torn to the outer edges of Baereth Marn and finally to the depths of the Kelders in search of the elusive city of Dier Drendal — and the deadly dark elves who live there with the burning hatred of the dwarves above. If the heroes succeed, they have done what no group of adventures could do for over 150 years — earn the respect of the dwarven nation.

The Game Master (GM) can run the episodes in any order, with some slight alterations, although they are presented here in the most logical sequence. Each adventure is presented in outline form with guidelines for opponents and challenges, which the GM can adjust to fit the party's level and capabilities.



## Clawing at the Light

The great peak of Baereth Marn is the setting for this adventure, allowing the characters delve into the outer fringes of the second city of the dwarves that was corrupted by Chern's presence. The heroes will find themselves facing a legion of undead and discovering that these mindless beings are not so mindless after all, but actually controlled and directed by an ancient dwarven artifact corrupted by Chern's foul touch. Finally, the heroes relive the massive battle of Gamedel's Bridge, discovering the ugly truth of the split between the dwarves of Burok Torn and the elves of Dier Drendal, then they face an army of spirits conjured by the hate of the dying elves and the corruption of Chern in the chamber.

### Episode 1: Old Wounds Reopened

The adventure begins in or near Burok Torn. The party should include at least one dwarf player character to help get the heroes into the action more easily. A party without dwarves may require a little more finagling on the GM's part, but it should be able to carry out the adventure nonetheless.

The dwarves of Burok Torn have been alerted to strange goings-on near the cursed city of Baereth Marn. While traveling through the Kelders, the party encounters a massive column of armored dwarves marching along Galshain's Trail. The column is several hundred strong and includes Stone and Iron Guardsmen, and a squad of elite Shield Arms. The column is commanded by Captain Garrit of the Shield Arms. If asked what is going on, the PCs will get replies such as, "Join us and find out!" Any dwarves in the party will be urged to join their brethren, for a battle is brewing. Non-dwarves can follow the column as well to see what's happening, but might have to endure suspicious glances and occasional grumbles from the marching dwarves.

The most important aspect of this encounter is to get the party to join the dwarves, or at least to follow along to see what is going on. If the PCs seems reluctant, then the GM should have them show up in the middle of the battle and either observe or participate.

If the characters accompany the dwarves, their destination becomes clear—the cursed peak of Baereth Marn. Any dwarf in the party will know of the place's dire history, as will characters who succeed at Knowledge (history) checks (DC 15). The tragic story of Chern's attack on Baereth Marn is well known, though most only know the dwarves' side of things.

If the party strikes up a conversation with a dwarf or makes more detailed inquiries, the full story is revealed. Scouts have reported activity on the ancient peak, and the lone survivor of a scouting party returned, telling of attacks by undead dwarves. Alarmed, King Thain has sent his troops on a reconnaissance mission in force, hoping to discover what is happening

**Medium-Size Skeleton:** CR 1/3; SZ Medium Undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +0 melee (1d4x2, claws); SQ Undead, immunities; ALN; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Feats:* Improved Initiative.

*SQ—Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

*SQ—Immunities (Ex):* Skeletons have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

**Ghoul:** CR 1; SZ Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 and paralysis, bite), +0 melee (1d3 and paralysis x2, claws); SA paralysis, create spawn; SQ undead, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills:* Climb +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Search +7, Spot +7. *Feats:* Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (bite).

*SA—Paralysis (Ex):* Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

*SA—Create Spawn (Su):* In most cases, ghouls devour those they kill. From time to time, however, the bodies of their humanoid victims lie where they fell, to rise as ghouls themselves in 1d4 days. Casting *protection from evil* on a body before the end of that time averts the transformation.

*SQ—Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Wight:** CR 3; SZ Medium Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 and energy drain, slam); SA Energy drain, create spawn; SQ Undead; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

*Skills:* Climb +5, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Search +7, Spot +8. *Feat:* Blind-Fight.

*SA—Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a wight's slam attack receive one negative level. The Fortitude save to remove the negative level has a DC of 14.

*SA—Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*SQ—Undead:* Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.



and, if possible, to keep more evil creatures from leaving the cursed mountain. The taint of Chern remains strong there, and Thain has given strict orders that the dwarves not enter Baereth Marn itself.

As the dwarven army approaches the lower slopes of Baereth Marn, a terrible sight greets them—hundreds of shambling undead crawling among the rocks or rising up out of the rocky ground. There are many—skeltons, ghouls, and a few wights—and all were once dwarves. They move to attack, clad in the remnants of ancient armor and clutching rusty dwarven weapons.

The fight is fierce, and the characters will most likely be drawn into it, fighting alongside the dwarves. Once the battle is over, the dwarves will begin to pile up undead and burn them on pyres. At this point, Garrit approaches the party and offers grudging thanks for their help. He will be especially lavish with his praise for other dwarves and will acknowledge non-dwarves with comments such as, “Oh, yes . . . Thanks to you lot, as well.”

Yet apparently the fight is not over. A dwarf shouts “Look!” and points to the slopes of Baereth Marn, where a lone figure appears. Attempts to view the figure more closely will fail, and anyone who tries to get closer will have to deal with the treacherous mountain slopes and attacks by undead. As the dwarves and the PCs watch, a low bell tolls, and to the dwarves’ horror, the destroyed undead begin to reconstitute and drag themselves from the pyres!

Dispatching the undead should not prove too difficult, for they are weak, and apparently driven by some powerful necromantic magic. Once the remaining undead are smashed or hacked into pieces, the figure disappears back inside the mountain.

Garrit is on the horns of a dilemma, for clearly something terribly evil now dwells inside Baereth Marn, but his king gave strict orders against entering the diseased citadel. He must send back to Buruk Torn for orders—that will take hours, and the sun is already low. He asks the PCs, who are not bound by Thain’s orders, to scout out the interior and get as much information as they can.

If the party is reluctant, he appeals to the patriotism of any dwarves in the group—and to the greed and curiosity of other members. Once they have agreed to enter the citadel (if they do not agree, he will suggest they take up farming), Garrit warns them to be careful, since the taint of Chern still lingers in the fortress. If Thain consents, he will send his



warriors into the mountain, but for the moment the party is his only source of information.

The shelf where the lone figure stood is accessible only through a long and arduous climb, and Garrit tells that party that he only needs information about the lower levels of the fortress in order to make certain that no large forces are massing there that represent a threat to his expeditionary force. The PCs can enter through a rocky cleft, and in doing so they will notice that the ground has been disturbed as if something large passed along it recently. At the end of the cleft is an opening where magnificent gates once stood, but these have long since been destroyed. Beyond lie the tunnels of Baereth Marn.

The tunnels are cunningly carved from living rock, and the layout is labyrinthine. The heroes can wander through them for some time. Some ancient runes still glow, providing wan illumination, though in some places they have been chipped or — more alarmingly — clawed from the rock walls.

The characters should encounter titanspawn and undead in the cavern, and always have an uncomfortable feeling of “being watched.” Occasionally, dim lights flicker in the gloom ahead or distant sounds echo through the corridors, but the party cannot determine the source of either.

There are old living quarters and guard posts in the corridors, but there are no corpses, bones, or any other artifacts. The entire place has been swept clean, inhabited now by the animated bodies of dwarves and by various titanspawn. Appropriate titanspawn creatures include ratmen, goblins, low gorgons, spirits of the plague, arch lurkers, carrion hounds, Chern’s children, pestilites, skull worms, or touch corruptors, with power levels adjusted for the party’s abilities. Oozes, molds, and fungi are also common.

Finally, after exploring for several hours, the characters find a wood and stone framework that was once about six feet tall that has been smashed by great force. This is where the bell, *Goran’s Rebirth*, once hung, but it has since been removed and is being used against the dwarves.

The room is also the home of a skeletal host (see *Creature Collection II*, page 155) that wandered into Baereth Marn shortly after Chern’s departure. The creature covered itself in the flesh of dwarves and elves for a long time after the mountain was sealed, but the creature now is nothing but its metal casing. It does have a number of scrapes still evident on its torso, from when it attempted to “skin” the demon Xa’cravka (see below) and was rebuked. The GM can add more skeletal hosts depending upon the party’s level.

Once the skeletal host is defeated, the PCs can continue to explore for a time and to encounter monsters, but no obvious source of the evil is found. Eventually, a party of dwarves from outside will find them, urging them to leave and return to Burok Torn. Thain, they say, has forbidden an assault on Baereth

**Skeletal Host:** CR 5; SZ Medium Construct; HD 7d10+15 (skin); hp 53; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (+11 natural); Atk +9 melee (1d8+4x6, internal weapon); SA Internal weapons; SQ Absorb metal, skinsteal, darkvision 60 ft., magic immunity, construct, damage reduction 15/+1, fast healing 1 (skin only); AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 10, Con —, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Disable Device +6, Disguise +10, Listen +4, Open Lock +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Cleave, Power Attack.

**SQ—Absorb Metal (Su):** If the skinless host is struck with a metal weapon that does minimum damage (a natural 1 is rolled on each damage dice), the skeletal host and attacker immediately resolve a contested Strength check. If the skeletal host wins the check, it has drawn the weapon into itself and heals a number of hit points equal to the maximum damage of the weapon. Magic items receive a saving throw (see *Core Rulebook II*, page 176) to resist absorption. If the save is successful, the item is considered to have fallen to the ground at the skeletal host’s feet.

**SQ—Skinsteal (Su):** Skeletal hosts have the ability to flay the skin off a freshly killed humanoid, animal, or even magical beast of small to large size and place it on themselves. The first 15 points of damage affect (and destroy) only this exterior form and do not count against the skeletal host’s own hit point total. The skeletal host receives its damage reduction and fast healing against only these first 15 points of damage.

**SQ—Magic Immunity (Ex):** A skeletal host is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows: mind-affecting magical effects, *rusting grasp*, and electrical damage, which all affect it normally.

Marn, but he did allow Garrit to send in a squad to retrieve the adventurers. This squad will also show up to save the party if they are beset by monsters or other hazards.

## Episode 2: The Spirits’ Warning

Captain Garrit will greet the PCs when they emerge from the fortress, and he insist that his priests check them for disease. He will then escort them back to Burok Torn, where they can discuss what they found. This may be some PCs’ first exposure to Burok Torn, which can give them an opportunity to get a “guided tour.”

The characters are escorted into the central core, allowing them to see the dwarves using the *ascent* and *descent* stones, and observe the marvel of



the silent waterfall, Aquellet's Cascade. Garrit urges the characters to step into the waterfall. Some characters may take a little convincing, and anyone who outright refuses is left behind. Those who enter the Cascade are whisked to Goran's Fane, where a unit of Shield Arms escorts them to the presence of the king himself.

Thain sits upon a simple stone throne, along with several council members, with whom he quietly confers periodically. He asks that the party describe what it found in Baereth Marn. He is outraged at the tales of dwarven undead and titanspawn infesting his race's old city, but he is most interested in the description of the stone frame and the damage done to it. If the characters describe the tolling of the bell that seemed to bring the destroyed undead back to "life," Thain nods grimly and says, "Yes. We heard it here, too."

The characters are invited to dine with the king and his family. Thain, his wife and son, along with their escort of Shield Arms, leave the Fane and join their people in one of the city's great dining halls, where raucous dwarves constantly toast their health and even behave in a friendly manner toward the PCs. The royal family seems interested in the outside world, especially in the PCs' past adventures. At length, Thain tells them his suspicions about the bell.

Baereth Marn, he tells them, once housed a mithril bell called *Goran's Rebirth*, a bell with the power to raise the dead when it tolled. In the past, it was used to summon the spirits of ancient dwarven heroes to battle, after which they returned to Goran's realm, but now Thain confesses that the malign influence of Chern may have corrupted the bell's magic, allowing it to summon up the corpses of the dead.

As the meal comes to an end, a deep and resonant sound echoes throughout the hall — a sound that the PCs have heard before. It is the bell, ringing once more, and possibly summoning more undead! All across the hall, dwarves grab for weapons and prepare for battle. The Shield Arms form a protective ring around the king and his family.

In this case, however, the bell seems to have only awakened the ancient dwarven warrior spirits, as it was intended to. As the sound of the bell fades, characters see ghostly shapes emerging from the walls — the shapes of armored and robed dwarves. Unlike the dead on the battlefield, these ghosts are dedicated to Burok Torn's safety and approach the PCs.

"Seek ye Gamedel's Bridge," they say in soft, echoing voices. "There shall ye find the enemy." The spirits then fade from sight.

The words "Gamedel's Bridge" seem to disturb the dwarves, and even King Thain's eyes appear to sink into shadow at the phrase. If asked, the dwarves will be evasive and refuse to talk. Any dwarves in the party will know the story, though only from the dwarven perspective, as will characters who make a Knowledge (history) or similar check (DC 22).

Thain looks at Captain Garrit and speaks quietly. "You heard the spirits, Captain. You know where to go." He glances at the party. "And take this lot with you. It seems that their presence is requested."

Garrit salutes and motions for the party to follow him. A number of dwarven warriors and Guardsmen follow, while the remainder of the Shield Arms stays behind to guard the king. On the way, Garrit will explain the significance of Gamedel's Bridge to any party members who do not know about it. The passage to the bridge was sealed long ago, he says, but according to the spirits the enemy is using it to attack Burok Torn.

The lower tunnels are long and winding. The characters may see a few cairn hunters here and there, but these creatures will shy away from any light sources. At last, the party reaches a very old section of tunnels that appear to be natural, rather than the worked corridors of the city above. There they behold a terrible sight.

A handful of dwarven warriors is fighting a horde of bone lords and skeletal hosts. The undead have emerged from a fresh opening in the walls, and as the party watches, more begin to emerge. They are made up of dwarven and elvish bones, as well as the remains of various subterranean titanspawn and animals. The party and Garrit's dwarves have arrived just in time, for the undead seem about to finish off the last of the defenders.

**Bonelord:** CR 6; SZ Large Aberration; HD 12d8+36; hp 90; Init +0; Spd 60 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +9 natural); Atk +15 melee (1d8+4 bites/claws); SA Multiple natural weapons; SQ alter shape, cold resistance, immunity; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 20, Cha 5.

*Feats:* Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight.

*SA—Multiple Natural Weapons (Ex):* The bone lord is capable of manifesting numerous natural weapons to fight its enemies. In the first round of combat, the bone lord will manifest 1d4 fanged jaws, claws, or bladed ribs to attack its enemies in that round. Each subsequent round, the bone lord will manifest one additional natural weapon up to a maximum number of attacks equal to its hit dice.

*SQ—Alter Shape (Ex):* As a free action, the bone lord may alter its shape each round with a successful Dexterity check (DC 18) in order to take the best advantage of the surrounding terrain, perhaps allowing it to pass through small tunnels or expand outward to fill a cave mouth.

*SQA—Cold Resistance (Ex):* The bone lord takes half damage from cold attacks, but double damage from fire.

*Immunity:* Bone lords are immune to polymorphing effects.

The fight should be pretty brutal, with new undead emerging to take the place of those destroyed by the party. Eventually, however, the attacks slow and cease, and the tunnel beyond the opening seems empty of foes.

Garrit glances into the tunnel and shines his torch about. He turns, his face grim, and points.

"That way," he says. "That way lies Gamedel's Bridge." He steps into the gap and motions for the party to follow. "Let us see what terrors the past holds."

Garrit does not have to go with the PCs; they may simply volunteer to explore the passageway for him. If he does go, however, he will go out of a deep desire to see the matter to its conclusion and also actually to gaze upon a place known only to legend. The GM may allow some of the dwarves to accompany the party as back-up, but they are not required. Garrit is an exception — even the stern-hearted Guardsmen are reluctant to approach the place of sickness, ancient death, and betrayal.

The tunnel is long, and dwarves will note evidence of recent work — rubble clawed away by great skeletal hands. This was the old passage to Gamedel's Bridge, and it has not been traversed by a living creature in many years. Some undead may still lurk here and attack the party, but this is only a diversion for the adventure's conclusion.

At length, the party reaches the end of the passage, and beholds the place of ancient sorrow: Gamedel's Bridge.

### Episode 3: Gamedel's Ghosts

A vast cavern opens up, split down the middle by a great chasm. The chasm is impossibly deep, vanishing into darkness. A single stone span once crossed the chasm, but the center has fallen, leaving a 30-foot gap over the abyss. The remainder of the bridge appears to be in good repair, a testament to dwarven workmanship. The shelf leading to the bridge is perhaps 30 feet wide, with a similar shelf on the other side of the chasm. Ancient runes on the chamber walls still provide pale light.

The old spiritual and runic energy, combined with the forces unleashed in the great battle that took place here, have transformed Gamedel's Bridge into a power point (see *Relics and Rituals*). If you are not using optional rules for power points, then the only effect for the location is to enhance the powers of *Goran's Rebirth* (see below).

As the PCs gaze at the bridge, dark shadows seem to flicker across it, and a moment later, a host of dark elves appear, moving without sound, as if they do not even see the characters. Clerics and paladins will instinctively realize that these are shades — unthinking images of ancient events that cannot affect the mortal world (yet).



**Xa'cravka, Glabrezu Demon:** CR 15; SZ Huge Outsider; HD 10d8+40; hp 85; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 27 (-2 size, +19 natural); Atk +15 melee (2d6+7 x2, pincers); +13 melee (1d3+3 x2, claws), +13 melee (1d4+3 bite); SA Spell-like abilities, improved grab, summon tanar'ri; SQ DR 20/+2, SR 21, tanar'ri qualities, detect magic, true seeing; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +10; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Bluff +13, Concentration +14, Hide +2, Knowledge (Burok Torn) +13, Listen +21, Move Silently +10, Scry +13, Search +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +13, Spot +21.  
**Feats:** Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*burning hands*, *chaos hammer*, *charm person*, *confusion*, *death knell*, *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *dispel magic*, *enlarge*, *mirror image*, *reverse gravity*, *shatter*, and *unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 10th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

A glabrezu can also *teleport without error* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only) at will as the spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. Seven times per day it can cast *power word, stun* as a 15th-level sorcerer.

**SQ—Tanar'ri Qualities:** Tanar'ri are immune to poison and electricity. Tanar'ri have cold, fire, and acid resistance 20. Tanar'ri can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

**SA—Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the glabrezu must hit a Medium-size or smaller opponent with a pincer attack. If it gets a hold, it deals automatic pincer damage each round the hold is maintained.

**SQ—Summon Tanar'ri (Sp):** Once per day a glabrezu can attempt to summon 4d10 dretches or 1d2 vrocks with a 50% chance of success, or another glabrezu with a 20% chance of success.

**SQ—Detect Magic (Su):** Glabrezu continuously *detect magic* as the spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer.

**SQ—True Seeing (Su):** Glabrezu continuously use *true seeing* as the spell cast by a 12th-level cleric.

For the most part, the heroes are simple witnesses here. Even as they watch, an army of dwarves appears, led by the heroic figure of Goran. Garrit falls to his knees, praying silently. If the PCs watch long enough, they will see the entire battle play itself out, from the dark elves' arrival to Goran's "betrayal", and Nalthalos' "treacherous" attack on him. Yet they will

also feel the terrible hatred and bitterness that the battle created, and some may begin to understand the roots of the antipathy between the two races. Garrit will at first be angry and say that the images are false, and that the elves intended to betray the dwarves. Later on, however, he will have pause for thought, though the eventual outcome of these revelations on him is not certain.

As the battle concludes and the mourning drendali stand over the corpse of their god, another shadow flickers through the air, and a being appears—this one all too real.

The demon Xa'cravka stands at the foot of the bridge, holding *Goran's Rebirth* in its claws.

### Goran's Rebirth (minor artifact)

**Description:** This bell is crafted of pure mithril, inscribed with dwarven runes and images of Goran and ancient heroes. It is 24 inches tall, and weighs approximately 25 pounds. Once, it was used to resurrect the slain and call the spirits of ancient heroes to battle. When Chern took Baereth Marn, however, his very touch corrupted the bell, turning it into a tool of evil. Now, the demon Xa'cravka, a surviving servant of Chern, has taken the bell and is using it to summon undead to attack Burok Torn.

**Powers:** Before it was touched by the power of Chern, the bell had the power, when rung, to cast *true resurrection* once per day and also summon 3d10 ghosts to fight on behalf of Burok Torn or the forces of good.

Now, the bell functions only at the command of Chern or his servants. Thrice per day, it can be rung to summon 20d10 hit dice of undead. The undead can only be summoned if there are sufficient corpses in the area (in, for example, an ancient battlefield) and emerge anywhere within 1000 yards of the bell.

If the bell is used in a power point (see *Relics and Rituals*), such as Gambedel's Bridge, the bell can ring continuously, summoning more and more undead (see below).

"See the truth, you fools," it hisses. "And feel the anger of its victims."

With that, Xa'cravka rings the bell, and its sound reverberates throughout the chamber, echoing off the walls until the very stones take up its cry.

If the characters attack, Xa'cravka laughs and teleports to safety. The bell remains behind, however, and moves to hover in the air over the 30-foot gap in the center of the stone bridge. It continues to ring as the scene progresses.

Each time the bell rings, a number of the dark elven shades who had been kneeling and mourning



beside Nalthalos are transformed into wraiths, which scream horribly and attack the party. The number summoned by each ring should be determined by the party's number and experience level, but this should not be an easy fight. When one batch of wraiths has been dispatched, the bell rings again, summoning more.

**Wraith:** CR 5; SZ Medium Undead; HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection); Atk +5 melee (1d4 and 1d6 permanent Con drain, incorporeal touch); SA Con drain, create spawn; SQ undead, incorporeal, +2 turn resistance, unnatural aura, daylight powerlessness; ALLE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

**SA—Constitution Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1d6 points of permanent Constitution drain.

**SQ—Create Spawn (Su):** Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

**SQ—Unnatural Aura (Su):** Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

**SQ—Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**SQ—Incorporeal:** Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

**SQ—Daylight Powerlessness (Ex):** Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

If *Goran's Rebirth* is left alone, it will continue ringing, summoning hundreds or thousands of wraiths to attack Burok Torn.

The bell hangs in the air, about 15 feet above the bridge, in the center of the 30-foot gap. It is surrounded by an antimagic field (see *Core Rulebook II*, page 72) in a 20-foot radius in all directions. The bell itself is not affected by the field.

If someone can grab the bell and still its clapper, it will fall silent, the wraiths will once more turn back into shades and the entire tableau will fade from sight. How to grab the bell is up to the players, but a particularly acrobatic character can make a Jump check (DC 12), grab the bell (an unarmed attack against AC 20), then land on the other side of the broken span with a successful Tumble check (DC 20). The GM can adjust these difficulties up or down to reflect the character's skill levels, but the feat is not intended to be easy. If the character fails to grab the bell, he can still land successfully on the other side of the span with a Tumble check (DC 20) and try again. If the initial Jump or the Tumble checks fail, then the character falls into the chasm. Resourceful players may come up with any number of ways to avoid such perils, such as tying a rope to the character before he jumps.

Spells and magical attacks have no effect on the bell, but missile weapons can be shot at it, against AC 20. The bell will be jarred loose and fall into the chasm once these attacks total 100 hp or more.

If the party succeeds in recovering the bell, the priests of Goran ask for its return. It has been permanently corrupted by Chern's touch and can only create evil undead. Its sound summoned the spirits of Burok Torn, but that may well have been the last good it will do. The priests wish to destroy the bell so that it can never again be used.

If the bell fell into the chasm, it is considered lost, but may return again to plague the dwarves.

Once the fight is over and the characters have returned to Burok Torn, the dwarves collapse the tunnels again. They refuse to discuss what the characters saw, but rumors of the "truth" about the battle will begin to circulate, and one of the most important cornerstones of dwarven civilization may have been weakened as a result.

## Crystal in Twilight Tunnels

Scarcely have the heroes returned from the battle at the bridge than they face another challenge, and an enemy that is far more insidious than an army of wraiths.

### Episode 1: Sickness Ascending

Within a few days of returning to Burok Torn, the characters will be witness to a new crisis. A terrible sickness is spreading throughout the citadel, and among its victims are King Thain and his wife. So far the prince remains healthy, but many think it is only a matter of time. The citadel's best healers have been unable to discover what is wrong, and the sickness seems resistant even to healing magic. Victims suffer from high fever and chills, and can do little more than lie in bed. They can keep no food or water down and soon suffer from dehydration and malnutrition. Some think that the Cult of Ancients is behind the plague, others blame the slitheren, and still others whisper darkly that Chern's curse has finally caught up with the dwarves. A few older dwarves remember stories of a similar sickness that was visited upon Burok Torn by the demon Xa'cravka.

Some dwarves have even started to blame the party for the curse, for stories of their trip to Gambedel's Bridge have begun to circulate, along with wild rumors about armies of demons and conspiracies by evil undead. If the party questions older dwarves about the original plague, they receive more details.

**Chern's Disease:** Fortitude save (DC 16), incubation period one day; damage 1d6 temporary Constitution. The victim must succeed at another saving throw or 1 point of temporary ability damage is permanently lost instead. The victim must be healed magically. The version of Chern's Disease spread by the demon's crystal skull is particularly virulent, and anyone casting healing magic must make a successful caster level check (DC 25) in order to cure the disease.

The demon Xa'cravka was one of Chern's most favored lieutenants. He delighted in subterfuge and caused much chaos in Burok Torn, sending his minions to plague the dwarves, spreading rumors and turning the ruling nobles against one another. Eventually, he unleashed an incurable plague upon the city and took especial delight in killing Burok Torn's healers and priests. When Chern was destroyed, the demon continued to serve his master, visiting pain and woe upon the dwarves.

Finally, the dwarves acted, sending a legion against the demon. In 23 AV, the dwarves succeeded in cornering their prey, although at a fearful cost. According to the stories, the dwarves trapped the

demon in the crystallized skull of a dwarven hero named Ilketon.

Some decades ago, a foolish rune priest accidentally freed the demon. Before the priest could command the demon's recall, Xa'cravka gutted him and seized the skull. Since then, Xa'cravka has been working against Burok Torn, recently using *Goran's Rebirth* to summon an army of wraiths and now spreading plague throughout the citadel.

The legend is correct — the skull was used to trap Xa'cravka. Yet unknown to the dwarves, it is not a dwarven artifact. Chern, Lord of Plagues, transformed a dark elven traitor into demonic form, then created the skull to control him, and force him to serve the titans. The demon is now forever bound to the skull — its bearer can release the demon, and also recall him into the skull, by will alone. When Chern was destroyed, the skull was lost, eventually finding its way into the hands of the dwarves of Burok Torn, who used it to trap their foe.

### Crystal Skull of Ilketon (minor artifact)

**Description:** No one is entirely sure who Ilketon was, or whether this is truly his skull, but most believe that he was an ancient hero whose skull was preserved by arcane spells. Physically, it resembles an oversized dwarven skull, missing its jawbone, and hollowed out so that it can be worn as a helmet, its orbits fitting over the wearer's eyes.

**Powers:** The skull's wearer gains +1 insight bonus to his AC, and has the power of *true seeing* while wearing it. The wearer also has a constant sense of perfect direction, and can always discern true north. The wearer can also become *invisible* for one hour per day.

The relic has another ability. At the cost of 30 hp, the user can infect another being with Chern's disease simply by uttering his or her true name. The being named immediately falls ill and begins wasting away. The disease is highly contagious and resistant to magic. Anyone trying to cure the disease with *heal* or similar spells must make a caster level check (DC 25) or fail. A *wish* spell will cure the disease automatically.

Captain Garrit, who has come to think warmly of the adventurers and is so far unaffected by the sickness, asks that they accompany him and a squad of warriors into the lower depths of the citadel. The cairn hunters in the vicinity of the city's burial vaults, normally charged with protecting the citadel from dark elf incursions, have been attacking dwarves, something that they are never supposed to do. He is leading a party down to capture or destroy the errant hound-lizards and possibly find out if their behavior is related to the plague.

The route to the burial vaults goes through twisting passageways with high ledges and many openings that branch off the main path. It is, in other words, the perfect place for cairn hunters to ambush the heroes and their dwarven guide. The party will need to contend with a number of ferocious beasts, driven to attack their masters by the corrupting influence of the demon Xa'cravka.

**Cairn Hunter:** CR 5; SZ Medium Beast; HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., climb 25 ft.; AC 18 (+4 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +9 melee (1d6+3 x2, claws), +5 melee (2d6+1 and poison, bite), +5 melee (2d6+4, tail slap); SA Poison; SQ Darkvision, silent tread, light vulnerability; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills:* Jump +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +9. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility.

*SQ—Darkvision (Ex):* Cairn hunters have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

*SQ—Leap (Ex):* A cairn hunter can leap a great distance from a standstill, covering 30 feet in a single round. The speed of the leap prevents attacks of opportunity.

*SA—Poison (Ex):* Bite, Fortitude Save (DC 13); initial damage 1d6 temporary Strength, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Strength.

*SQ—Silent Tread (Ex):* A cairn hunter moves silently on padded feet, gaining a +5 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.

*SQ—Light Vulnerability (Ex):* Cairn hunters prefer total darkness. Torchlight causes them to suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to attacks, while bright light (such as sunlight or a daylight spell) causes a -3 penalty. A light spell causes a -2 penalty to their attack rolls.

*Skills:* Cairn hunters get a +4 racial bonus to Jump checks and a +6 racial bonus to Search, Spot, and Listen checks. These bonuses are included in the skill list above, indicated by asterisks.

In the depths of the tomb complex, guarded by the maddened cairn hunters, lies a special plague coffer put there by Xa'cravka (see sidebar). The heroes must fight through the cairn hunters' hit-and-run attacks, then face a horde of Chern's children unleashed by the plague coffer. If they manage to stopper the urn, the plague will end and the monsters will stop appearing.

### Plague Coffer (minor artifact)

**Description:** *Plague coffers* are created from the flesh and bone of Chern's body. Pieces of the titan were initially stored in metal coffers in case the scraps might some day resurrect the titan. Instead, plague insects grew inside these containers. Now, *plague coffers* are harbingers of disease, allowing the reconstituted vermin to continue Chern's bidding.

**Powers:** *Plague coffers* contain a portion of Chern, upon which thousands of insects grow. If disturbed, this coffer releases a swarm of Chern's children (see *Creature Collection II*, page 38) that immediately attacks the party. The insects never travel more than 500 yards from the coffer. Anyone bitten by the swarm suffers stinging red blisters and can spread Chern's disease. The variety of Chern's disease spread by this coffer can be healed magically without requiring any caster level checks. Once the swarm has been defeated, the coffer cannot create another swarm for six hours, and can then be destroyed.

**Chern's Children:** CR 6; SZ H Vermin; HD 14d8+14; hp 77; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 5 ft; AC 10 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +8 melee (2d6, x1 or x4 bite); SA swarm; SQ slime trail; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref (fails), Will +2; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 12, Int —, Wis 6, Cha 6.

*SA—Swarm (Ex):* A swarm of Chern's children may make one attack each round against any creature that comes within five feet of it. Any creature that actually enters the swarm suffers four attacks per round. Treat the swarm as a single individual for purposes of attack and damage; the swarm is destroyed if its hit points drop to zero. The swarm fails all Reflex saves automatically, as it is impossible for such a large group of creatures to avoid such effects.

*SQ—Slime Trail (Ex):* The slime left behind by the swarm is toxic and noisome. Anyone who steps in the slime must make a Fortitude save each round (DC 18) that he is in contact or take 1d4 damage. Anyone who attempts to move faster than half speed in the slime must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or fall into the slime. Falling causes no additional damage, but the foul stench of the slime adheres to the victim, causing a temporary loss of 1d6 Charisma. This effect lasts for 1d4 days, after which the character's Charisma returns with no chance of permanent loss.



As the PCs fight the hunters and titanspawn, Xa'cravka will appear, attacking the heroes from a distance, using *reverse gravity* and *deeper darkness* to keep the party off balance. If the demon is forced to flee, he will raise the *Crystal Skull of Ilketon* and call the name of Prince Turen, telling the party that the young dwarf is now infected with the plague. As the demon vanishes, the cairn hunters come to their senses, stop fighting, and return to their patrols as if nothing had happened.

## Episode 2: Demon Fever

The sadness in Burok Torn is even deeper now, for King Thain is at death's door, while his wife and son are both in the early stages of the disease. Few dwarves are capable of fighting, and as one of a handful of healthy citizens left, Garrit begs the characters to help him find and destroy Xa'cravka, or at least recapture the *Skull* and imprison him again. Even Garrit has begun to develop a cough and fever, and he knows that it is only a matter of time for him.

Now, a new horror arises. Several dwarves who succumbed to the disease have risen as spirits of the plague (see *Creature Collection I*, page 188), slaying their loved ones and roaming the halls of Burok Torn. The PCs may have to fight one of more of these beasts before they can continue with the adventure.

**Spirit of the Plague:** CR 4; SZ Medium Undead; HD 6d12; hp 39; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +6 melee (disease, touch); SA Plague; SQ DR 10/+1, incorporeal, undead; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con —, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Spot +6.

*SQ—Incorporeal (Ex):* This creature has no substance in its regular state. It can be seen as only a cloudy apparition. Because it has no form, it can pass through non-magical obstacles such as walls or ceilings. While incorporeal, the plague spirit is immune to all attacks except for purification and exorcism attempts, but it is likewise unable to harm any physical creature. The spirit of the plague can turn corporeal at will, though, at the expense of one attack action.

*SA—Plague (Su):* Any creature touched by a corporeal spirit of the plague must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 16) or contract an advanced form of whatever disease killed the spirit originally. GMs can tailor this disease to the epidemiological history of their campaigns, but assume as a default that the disease has an onset period of 1d10 days and that it causes 1d6 hit points of damage per day afterward until it is cured.

*SQ—Undead:* Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain or death from massive damage.

Garrit is determined to find the demon, but he too is beginning to suffer from the plague and suggests that the party venture to the Forgeworks to ask Graith Glayroc for aid. Once they arrive in the Forgeworks, the PCs find Glayroc fully engaged in battle with a horde of spirits of the plague. Once they have helped Glayroc dispatch the creatures, the PCs can talk to him.

Glayroc is surprised that the PCs are in this sensitive place without an escort of dwarves, but he knows that these are difficult times. When they tell him about the demon, he frowns in consternation.

"Curse Garrit for a fool," he barks. "He should have come to me long ago. But that is like Garrit, never asking for aid until it is too late." Glayroc conjures a rune in the air, and asks, "Where is Xa'cravka?"

The rune transforms into an image, hanging suspended in the burning air. There, the party sees an ornately decorated chamber, with a number of dwarven healers attending a sick or dying dwarf. Slowly, one of the healers begins to change, taking on the visage of the demon, although those in attendance do not seem to notice.

Glayroc again is shocked as the vision centers on one of the "healers" attending the dwarf. A flash shows the demon as it truly is, before the image is replaced by that of the dwarven disguise.

"By Goran!" Glayroc exclaims. "He's with the king!"

## Episode 3: The Crystal Skull's Curse

Glayroc urges the heroes to make quickly for Goran's Fane. If they played through the first adventure, they will understand how to enter the Fane through the waterfall (they do not know that they need another dwarf's permission to enter, but Glayroc provides it readily enough).

The entrance to the Fane is unguarded. Several slain Shield Arms lie about, their armor rent by terrible claws. Glayroc curses and leads the party into Thain's chambers. They burst in just as the disguised Xa'cravka is bending down to "heal" the king. The other healers lie about the chamber, unconscious or dead.

As soon as he sees the party, the demon takes on his true shape and attacks the party, while Glayroc casts runes to help the king escape. Once Thain is safely away, Glayroc returns, casting runes to prevent Xa'cravka from teleporting or otherwise escaping.

Xa'cravka is a powerful opponent, and likely more than a match for a low- to medium-level party. The characters' job is not necessarily to defeat him, however, and should they seem overwhelmed by the demon, a squad of Stone Guardsmen will enter the room to aid them. The fight should go on until the GM feels it is time for Xa'cravka to attempt to use the skull, at which time the next event takes place.



During the fighting, Xa'cravka attempts to curse a foe using the *Crystal Skull of Ilketon*. Preparing the skull is a full-round action, and if the characters are on their toes, one may be able to strike the skull and knock it from the demon's grasp (if the characters do not do it, one of the Stone Guardsmen or other dwarves in the room can do so). Xa'cravka will then scream and abandon the fight to chase after the skull. A character can attempt to grab it, and if he can get the skull onto his head, he will be able to recall the demon. He must make a Wisdom check (DC 17) to do this, however, as the demon fights the skull to the end. If the save fails, the character can try again on the next round.

Only when the demon is entrapped in the skull does the curse affecting Burok Torn finally lift. The unnatural qualities of the sickness vanish, as do the tormented spirits of the plague. The disease can be cured normally, and within a few days the populace is on the way back to full health.

Thain personally thanks the heroes for their aid in restoring the balance in Burok Torn, and for saving the lives of himself, his family, and his people. The heroes earn the gratitude of the dwarven people, and at least a 500 XP story bonus in addition to that gained in the adventure.

OF SOULS

ALONTENAZU

MORNING MARSHES

Appendix:

# Monsters from the Depths

ADURNIS TERN

D STEPPES

BURK TOP

TRONTOOTH PASS

BLOODRAIN WOOD

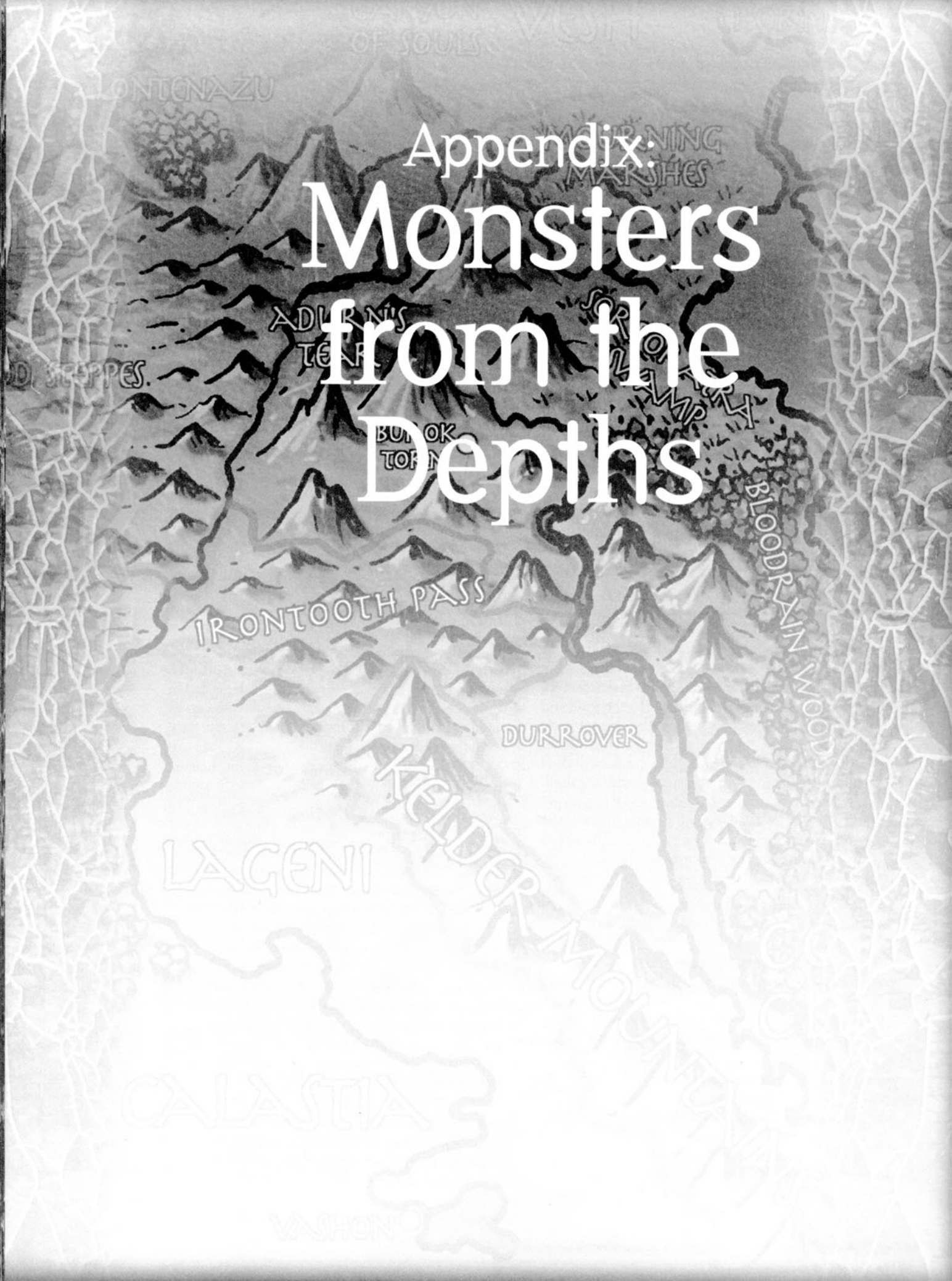
DURROVER

LAGENI

KELDER

CALASTIA

VASHONO





## Cairn Hunter

	<b>Medium-Size Magical Beast</b>
Hit Dice:	6d10+18 (51 hp)
Initiative:	+8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	30 ft., climb 25 ft.
AC:	18 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +7 melee, bite +5 melee, tail slap +5 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d6+3, bite 2d6+1 and poison, tail slap 2d6+4
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 10 ft. / 5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poison
Special Qualities:	Darkvision, silent tread, light vulnerability, leap
Saves:	Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6
Skills:	Jump +7*, Listen +10*, Move Silently +9*, Search +7*, Spot +9*
Feats:	Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility
Climate/Terrain:	Underground
Organization:	Pack (2-5)
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement Range:	7-12 HD (Medium-sized); 13-18 HD (Large)

### Description

An ugly combination of a dwarf hound and a monitor lizard, cairn hunters are pack-based predators that guard the deepest chambers and burial vaults of Burok Torn. Bred in darkness, cairn hunters are highly agitated by light sources of any kind and never go to the surface for any reason. Even starlight causes pain to their sensitive eyes. The drendali have learned to go equipped with magical light sources and spells when on raids, for the small advantage that these grant them over the creatures.

The cairn hunter has a long lizard tail where a dog's would be and a reptilian head with a long forked tongue. The cairn hunters' body is smooth fur, but some scale patterns show on the shoulders and belly. Thanks to their dwarf hound heritage, cairn hunters walk higher off the ground than normal lizards, but their feet are lizard-like, with long sharp claws. From snout to tail, cairn hunters are 8-10 feet in length.

Cairn hunters never travel alone. If one is lurking nearby, it is a safe assumption that three or four others are also in the vicinity, patrolling or lying in wait.

The cairn hunters' primary foes are the dark elves of Dier Drendal who raid Burok Torn through the pitch black deep tunnels. The cairn hunters have

proven to be perfect guardians against these lightless raids, as their keen hearing allows them to track and pick off members of raiding parties even before they reach the city proper.

### Combat

A cairn hunter attacks with its sharp fore claws and bite while slashing savagely with its long tail as it fights in close quarters. Venom sacks run along the upper snout of the cairn hunter and inject a debilitating poison into anything it bites.

Cairn Hunters are trained not to attack dwarves, but they will attack all other races on sight (or on scent). This includes humans, of course, but any human who complains of attack by cairn hunters will end up being asked what business he had in the deep caverns in the first place.

**Darkvision (Ex):** Cairn hunters have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

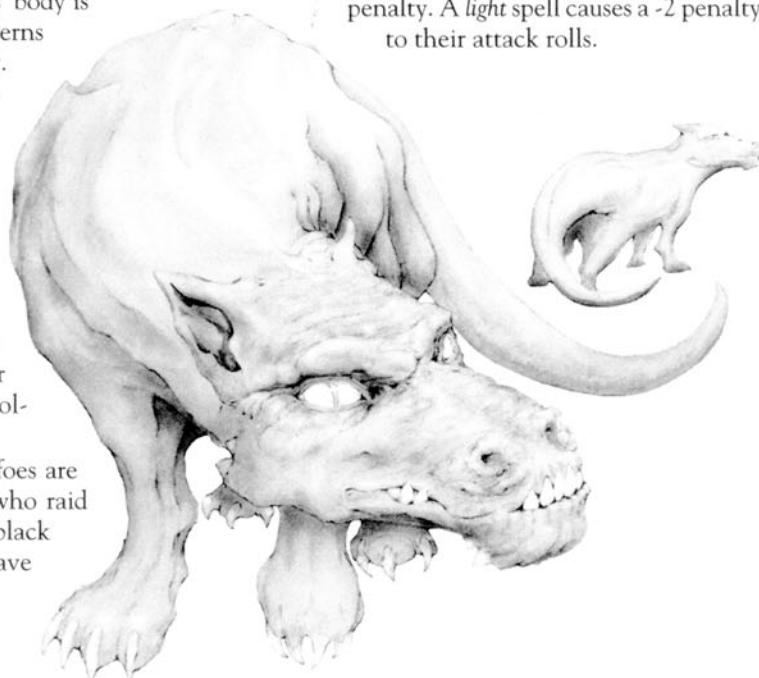
**Leap (Ex):** A cairn hunter can leap a great distance from a standstill, covering 30 feet in a single round. The speed of the leap prevents attacks of opportunity.

**Poison (Ex):** Bite, Fortitude Save (DC 13); initial damage 1d6 temporary Strength, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Strength.

**Silent Tread (Ex):** A cairn hunter moves silently on padded feet, gaining a +5 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.

**Skills:** Cairn hunters get a +4 racial bonus to Jump checks and a +6 racial bonus to Search, Spot, and Listen checks. These bonuses are included in the skill list above, indicated by asterisks.

**Light Vulnerability (Ex):** Cairn hunters prefer total darkness. Torchlight causes them to suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to attacks, while bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) causes a -3 penalty. A *light* spell causes a -2 penalty to their attack rolls.



## Sentinel Drendal

	<b>Large Sentinel Drendal</b>	<b>Huge Sentinel Drendal</b>	<b>Gargantuan Sentinel Drendal</b>
	Large Construct	Huge Construct	Gargantuan Construct
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	8d10 (40 hp)	16d10 (80 hp)	24d10 (120 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+0	+0	+0
<b>Speed:</b>	20 ft., climb 15 ft. (cannot run)	20 ft., climb 15 ft. (cannot run)	20 ft., climb 15 ft. (cannot run)
<b>AC:</b>	17 (-1 size, +8 natural)	20 (-2 size, +12 natural)	26 (-4 size, +20 natural)
<b>Attacks:</b>	Club +6 melee	Club +12 melee	Club +18 melee
<b>Damage:</b>	Club 1d10+7, crush 5d8	Club 3d10+10, crush 8d8	Club 5d10+12, crush 10d8
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.	10 ft. x 10 ft./15 ft.	20 ft. x 20 ft./20 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Crush	Crush	Crush
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Construct, damage reduction 10/+1, hardness, loyalty, coordinated attack, blindsight	Construct, damage reduction 20/+2, hardness, loyalty, coordinated attack, blindsight	Construct, damage reduction 30/+3, hardness, loyalty, coordinated attack, blindsight
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +2, Ref +3, Wil +3	Fort +5, Ref +6, Wil +6	Fort +8, Ref +7, Wil +9
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 25, Dex 11, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2	Str 30, Dex 11, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2	Str 35, Dex 11, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 2
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Underground		
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, gang (2-4), band (10-100)		
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	Large 4; Huge 7; Gargantuan 10		
<b>Treasure:</b>	None		
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always neutral		
<b>Advancement Range:</b>	None		

### Description

Drendal is roughly translated as “wall,” from which the dark elves of the city get their name, drendali (or “people of the wall”), and the city itself derives its own moniker, Dier Drendal (“City of Living Walls”). It is also the name of the semi-sentient constructs that form the city. These creatures range in size from normal bricks to huge granite slabs used in constructing castle walls. They have no eyes or other sensory organs, and move by themselves, slowly building and rebuilding the city as it moves from place to place.

This continuous relocation of an entire city is made possible solely through the lawful nature of the drendals. Each construct has a specific place in the city blueprint and no matter where it goes, it is able to coordinate itself with other drendals to rebuild the city exactly the same way every time. To an outside observer (if one could see the city and live) the resultant milling about of drendals would seem like chaos, but there is an underlying rigid order to the movements of the constructs that even bleeds into the constant relocation of the city. Even though it is always moving, Dier Drendal has yet to rebuild in a place that it previously occupied.

For the most part, drendals exist in their daily lives as the walls, floors, and ceilings of the dark elves. Because the dwarves of Bukrotorn are constantly hunting for the elven city, however, a number of drendals are imbued with the ability to defend the city should it ever come under direct attack.

Sentinel drendals range from large to gargantuan size, and outwardly resemble other drendals — featureless blocks of granite, without sensory organs of any kind. If the drendali are attacked, however, hundreds of these powerful constructs will immediately leave their normal duties and move against the invaders.

### Combat

Sentinel drendals move with surprising speed (for big pieces of granite, at any rate), and attack with club-like appendages. They will instinctively isolate and surround any attackers and attack with their clubs. Several sentinel drendals will try to attack each invader, but they will not hesitate to use their crush attacks if forced to fight one-on-one. Sentinel drendals that are close to destruction use this attack automatically, hoping to take any foes with them when they are destroyed.

**Crush (Ex):** Sentinel drendals are massive blocks of stone and often weigh four to five times more than a medium-sized humanoid. Their feared crush attack, quite simply, involves the sentinel toppling over onto its target. The sentinel drendal can use this attack against any opponent of its own size or smaller; larger sentinels can use the attack against multiple opponents — any that fall within the area defined by their height (10 ft. radius for a large, 15 ft. for a huge and 20 ft. for a gargantuan drendal) can be attacked in this manner.

Victims of the sentinel drendal's crush attack can avoid it with a successful Reflex save (DC 21). Those who fail are automatically hit and take damage based upon the size of the sentinel, as described above. The sentinel drendal then automatically continues to inflict crush damage every round that it remains atop its victim. It may take no other actions while crushing an opponent in this fashion. The victim can escape with a successful Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 16). The sentinel drendal must make a successful Reflex save (DC 20) in order to rise and attack again. Otherwise, it remains prone and unable to take any other action. It may make another attempt to rise on the following round.

**Construct:** Sentinel drendals are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

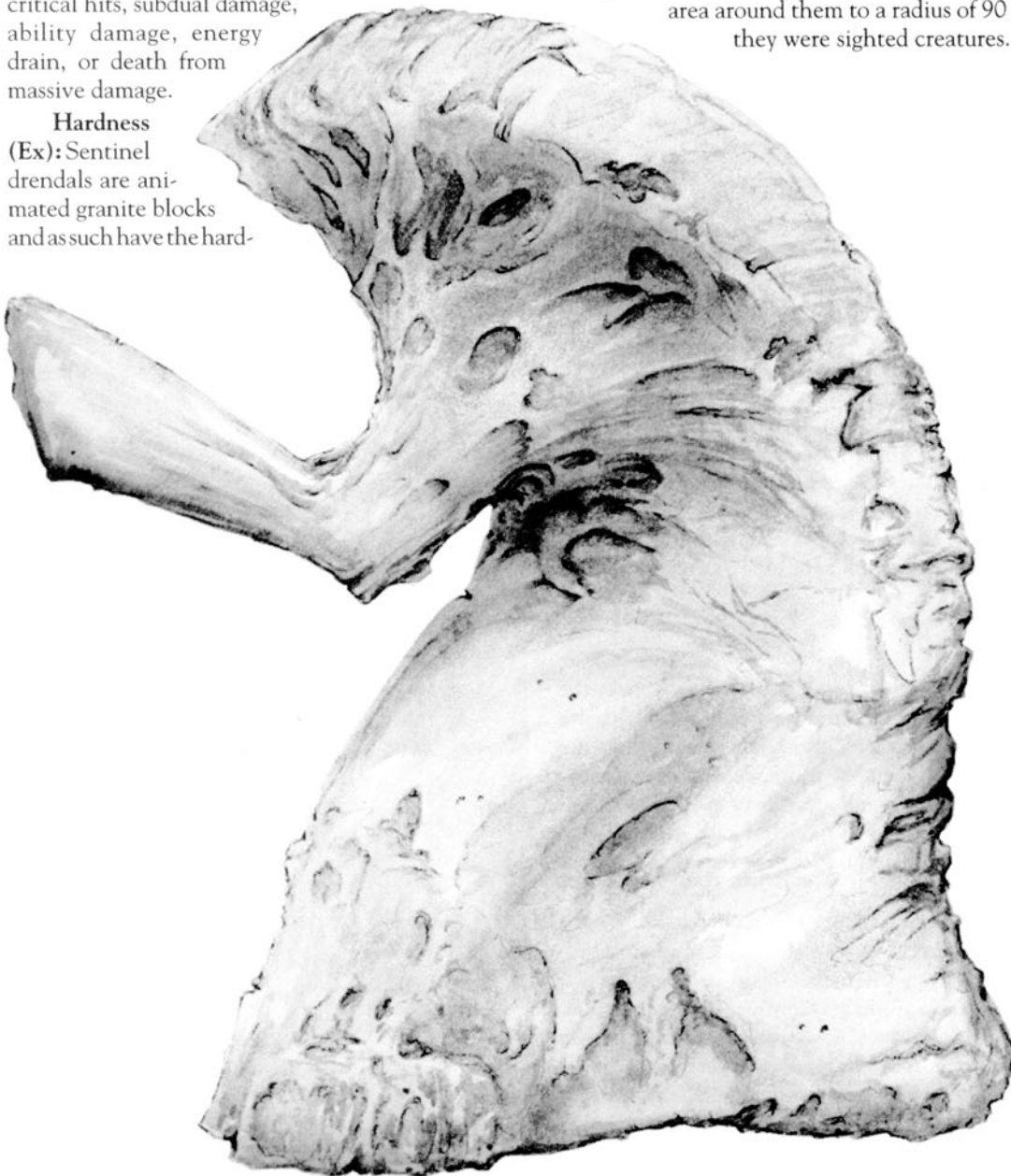
**Hardness (Ex):** Sentinel drendals are animated granite blocks and as such have the hard-

ness of stone (hardness 8). This hardness stacks with their damage reduction and exists even if weapons of +1 or greater are used against them.

**Loyalty (Ex):** Created by Nalthalos, sentinel drendals have a fierce loyalty to their creator and his worshippers. As long as a sentinel drendal is within 200 miles of Nalthalos, control of the construct cannot be wrested away, magically or otherwise. Additionally, under no circumstances will a drendal ever attack a dark elf, even in self-defense.

**Coordinated Attack (Ex):** Sentinel drendals instinctively combine to isolate and surround foes. For every three sentinel drendals attacking a target, all sentinel drendals receive a +1 circumstance bonus to attack, up to a total of +3.

**Blindsight (Su):** Although they lack sensory organs, sentinel drendals can magically sense the area around them to a radius of 90 feet as if they were sighted creatures.





## Spire Drendal

	<b>Colossal Construct (unique)</b>
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	70d10 (385 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	-3 (Dex)
<b>Speed:</b>	160 ft. (cannot run)
<b>AC:</b>	17 (-6 Dex, -9 size, +22 natural)
<b>Attacks:</b>	2 claws +26 melee, stomp +15 melee
<b>Damage:</b>	Claw 4d10+25, stomp 6d10+25, crush 12d8+25
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	40 ft. x 40 ft./25 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Crush, stomp, rend
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 30/+3, hardness, loyalty, blindsight
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +23, Ref +20, Wis +23
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 61, Dex 5, Con —, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 2
<b>Skills:</b>	Spot +20
<b>Feats:</b>	Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Underground
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary (unique)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	19
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always lawful evil
<b>Advancement Range:</b>	None

### Description

A 70-foot tall construct, fashioned out of shiny black stone that resembles obsidian but has the strength of granite, the spire drendal is the last line of defense for Dier Drendal, employed only if the city itself is in danger of falling. This particular drendal is intelligent, allowing it to employ tactics and distinguish more easily between friends and foes. Normally, the drendal only acts when commanded by Nalthalos, but in emergencies the demigod may order it to act of its own volition. The drendal only responds to commands from Nalthalos. Only a being of greater power (i.e., a god or titan) would be able to wrest control of the construct from Nalthalos.

### Combat

If the clerical sector of the city is invaded, the spire drendal is under standing orders from Nalthalos to awaken. As it is intelligent, it will judge whether actually to enter combat or not, depending upon the invaders' strength and chances of success. If it engages in combat, it will move forward, stomping on anyone in its path, rending things it cannot stomp on, and smashing enemy troop formations, siege engines, and so on.

**Crush (Ex):** The spire drendal can use its crush attack on all opponents size huge and smaller in a 35ft. radius. Creatures smaller than huge can make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to avoid being caught under the creature when it falls. Any creatures caught beneath the spire drendal take damage. Once the spire drendal has hit, it continues to inflict crushing damage every round that it is atop its targets. Victims can escape with a successful Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 21). The spire drendal may make no other



attacks while it is crushing opponents, and must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC 32) to get back on its feet.

**Stomp (Ex):** The spire drendal can use its great feet to grind foes into the ground. The spire drendal can make one stomp attack per round, attacking all opponents within its reach in a 10 ft. by 15 ft. area. It can only use this attack on creatures of large size or smaller.

**Rend (Ex):** If the spire drendal strikes an opponent with both claw attacks in combat, it latches onto the opponent's body and automatically deals an additional 2d8+12 points of damage as it tries to tear the creature to pieces.

**Construct:** The spire drendal is impervious to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, stunning, and death from massive damage. It is also immune to any effect that calls for a Fortitude save to resist, unless such an effect can affect objects specifically, and it is immune to attacks or spells of a mind-affecting nature (enchantment or charm spells).

**Magic Immunity:** The spire golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects,

except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it, as per the spell of the same name, for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. A *transmute mud to rock* spell heals all of its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure, but makes it vulnerable to any normal attack for the following round (this does not include spells, except those that cause damage).

**Hardness (Ex):** The spire drendal is a gigantic animated block of stone with a hardness of 8. This hardness stacks with its damage reduction and exists even if magical weapons are used against it.

**Loyalty (Ex):** The drendal was created by Nalthalos specifically to defend his people's city. As such, only gods or titans can attempt to take control of it from Nalthalos through construct control spells as described in *The Divine and the Defeated*. Mortals, demigods, outsiders, and other creatures are unable to contest control with the dark elves' demigod.

**Blindsight (Su):** Though without sensory organs, the spire drendal can magically sense all foes within 120 feet as a sighted creature would.

# Nalthalite

## Description

Nalthalites were once ordinary dark elves, but by joining a fanatical cult in service to Nalthalos, they have become far more. Not content to live with the limitations of their own flesh, nalthalites have taken on aspects of their god, imitating his golem-body and grafting constructed parts to their own. As such, they have ceased to be drendali, and have instead become something that is at once more and less than their former selves.

The nalthalite template can be applied to any ordinary dark elf NPC. Once she has accepted nalthalite status, the elf can no longer advance in levels, and has become a creature of Nalthalos, eschewing flesh for existence as a construct.

## Creating a Nalthalite

“Nalthalite” is a template that can be applied to any humanoid creature, although today it is found exclusively among the dark elves. The creature’s type changes to “construct.” The nalthalite uses all the base creature’s mental statistics and abilities so long as their activation or use does not require the use of a body part that has been replaced.

First, roll 1d20 on the following table to determine what type of golem the creature has chosen to imitate. All abilities determined from this point forward will be based upon the golem type so chosen.

Die Roll	Golem Type	AC Adjustment
1-4	Clay	+7
5-8	Stone	+9
9-11	Iron	+11
12-14	Copper	+6
15-17	Lead	+12
18-20	Silver	+5

Once you have determined what type of golem the nalthalite imitates, use the following chart to determine how many rolls it gets on the body replacement chart, based upon the base creature’s character level or HD.

Character Level/HD	Number of Rolls
1-3	1
4-6	2
7-10	3
11-15	4
16-20	5

Then roll 1d10 the indicated number of times on the following chart to determine what parts of the base creature’s body have been replaced. Reroll any duplicate body parts.

Die Roll	Body Part Replaced
1-4	Left Arm
5-8	Right Arm
9-12	Left Leg
13-16	Right Leg
17-18	Torso
19	Head
20	Roll twice, ignoring another roll of 20, and rerolling any duplicate body parts.

Once you have determined which body parts have been modified, cross index the body part with the golem type on the following chart. The chart lists the special attacks and/or qualities gained. These gains are cumulative. A nalthalite that has replaced both arms receives two slam attacks. A nalthalite that has rolled two replaced legs receives a -10 penalty to speed and twice the listed number of bonus HP.

**Hit Dice:** Increase to d10. Retain original HD if greater than d10.

**Speed:** Speed is adjusted as per the body part replacement chart.

**AC:** AC is adjusted as per the golem chart. This is considered a natural AC bonus.

**Attacks:** Attacks are increased as per the body part replacement chart.

**Damage:** As per base creature. Each replaced arm gains a slam (or in the case of a silver golem, claw) attack. The base creature may add its Strength bonus to the damage from this attack. Each slam or claw attack replaces the base creature’s normal attack, so a right-handed creature that replaces its right arm may no longer make a normal attack with its right arm. A creatures with one golem arm may fight with a weapon in its non-replaced hand, but creatures with two golem arms may not wield weapons. Creatures with two golem arms do not suffer any penalties for off-hand attacks.

**Size:** A nalthalite is one size category larger than its base creature.

**Special Attacks:** Nalthalites gain one or more of the following special attacks:

*Electrical Conductivity (Ex):* Electrical attacks deal no damage to the nalthalite. For every four points of damage that the nalthalite would have

Body Part	Clay	Stone	Iron	Copper	Lead	Silver
Arm	Slam 2d10	Slam 2d10+2	Slam 2d10+3	Slam 2d10+1	Pulverizing Fist	Claw 1d6
Leg	Spd -5, Can't Run, +2HP	Spd -5, Can't Run, +3HP	Spd -5, Can't Run, +5HP	Spd -5, Can't Run, +3HP	Spd -5, Can't Run, +5HP	+3HP, Fly if both legs replaced
Torso	DR 20/+1, Can't wear armor	DR 30/+3, Can't wear armor	DR 50/+3, Can't wear armor	DR 20/+1, Can't wear armor	DR 40/+3, Can't wear armor	DR 20/+1, Can't wear armor
Head	Haste	Slow	Iron golem breath weapon	Electrical conductivity	Poison gas	Flame gout



taken from an electrical attack had it failed any applicable saving throw, it heals one point of damage. Unlike copper golems, nalthalites can also be healed through normal magic and rest.

When the nalthalite has maximum hit points, it stores the remaining electrical energy and discharges it upon opponents when it strikes. It can discharge up to 10 points of stored electrical damage with each of its blows. It can store no more than half of its maximum hit points in electrical damage and any energy not discharged within 10 minutes of being absorbed dissipates out of the nalthalite without effect.

**Flame Gout (Su):** Once every four rounds, the nalthalite can release a 20-foot-long cone of fire. Anyone caught in the flames takes 3d6 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 15) halves this damage.

**Iron Golem Breath Weapon (Su):** Once every five rounds, the nalthalite may release a cloud of poisonous gas as a free action. The gas is released in a 10-foot cube directly in front of the nalthalite. It lasts 1 round and requires a Fortitude save (DC 17). Initial damage is 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage, secondary damage is death.

**Lead Golem Breath Weapon (Su):** Once every five rounds, the nalthalite can produce a 30-foot-long cone of poison gas. Anyone caught in the cone must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 20) or pass out in a number of rounds equal to their Constitution and die in an equal number of rounds after they pass out.

**Pulverizing Fist (Ex):** The nalthalite gains an attack similar to the lead golem's pulverizing fist. This attack replaces any attacks made with the arm that has been transformed. The creature can still attack normally with its other arm. The fist is treated as having a Strength of 36 for purposes of attack and damage modifiers only, so it has an attack roll modifier of +13, and inflicts 1d12+13 points of damage. A second golem arm allows the nalthalite to make one additional pulverizing fist attack per round at its best attack bonus, with no penalty for off-hand attacks.

**Special Qualities:** Nalthalites gain one or more of the following special qualities:

**Partial Construct:** Although it is never fully a golem, a nalthalite nevertheless gains some benefits of being a construct. Nalthalites are not subject to critical hits or death from massive damage. They receive a +5 bonus to all saving throws against mind-influencing effects, poison, disease and similar effects. They are subject to construct-controlling magic, but receive a +5 bonus to all saving throws against such spells.

**Damage Reduction (Ex):** The nalthalite gains DR as rolled on the body part replacement chart.

**Haste (Su):** After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, the nalthalite can *haste* itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise identical to the spell.

**Slow (Su):** The nalthalite can use *slow* as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a successful Will save (DC 10+1/2 the nalthalite's level or HD+the nalthalite's Int modifier) to negate. The ability is otherwise the same as the spell.

**Saves:** Same as the base creature.

**Abilities:** Same as the base creature. The nalthalite is never completely transformed into a golem, and so retains such ability scores as Con and Int.

**Skills:** Same as the base creature.

**Feats:** Same as the base creature.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground.

**Organization:** Solitary, gang (1d4+2).

**Challenge Rating:** Same as character +2, +1 per body part replaced.

**Treasure:** Same as the base creature.

**Alignment:** Same as the base creature.

**Advancement:** None.

## Sample Nalthalite

This example uses a 6th-level dark elf fighter as the base creature.

### Nalthalite Fighter

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	6d10+6 (41 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+7 (+3 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft.
<b>AC:</b>	24 (+3 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)
<b>Attacks:</b>	Pulverizing Fist +19 (right arm), Rapier +4
<b>Damage:</b>	Pulverizing Fist 1d12+13, Rapier 1d6+3
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. by 5ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Damage reduction 40/+3, partial construct
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 17, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 12
<b>Skills:</b>	Craft (leatherworker) +11, Handle animal +9, Heal +4, Hide +3, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +3, Move silently +6, Ride +11, Search +4, Spot +3
<b>Feats:</b>	Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting.
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Any land and underground
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	10
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Lawful evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class

## Description

A devoted defender of Dier Drendal, Valasynna was leading a raiding party into Burok Torn when she and her companions were set upon by dwarven cairn hunters. Nearly wiped out, Valasynna's raiders were rescued by the timely intervention of the nalthalite Iurokkus, a former sorcerer who joined the cult nearly

a decade ago. Impressed, Valasynna herself joined the cult, and is now well on her way to becoming a powerful nalthalite leader.

### Combat

Valasynna is only now getting used to her new arm and torso. She enjoys wading into battle, using her damage resistance to shrug off conventional blows and raining pulverizing fist attacks down upon opponents. Her two-weapon fighting feat allows her to attack with her pulverizing fist and her rapier (at a -4 penalty for off-hand use). She is overconfident, and

smug in her certainty that the power of Nalthalos will always protect her. She is eager to continue the process of growing closer to her god, and looks forward to the day when her body has been completely replaced by constructed enhancements.

**Partial Construct:** Valasynna is not subject to critical hits or death from massive damage. She receives a +5 bonus to all saving throws against mind-influencing effects, poison, disease and similar effects. She is subject to construct-controlling magic, but receives a +5 to all saving throws against such spells.



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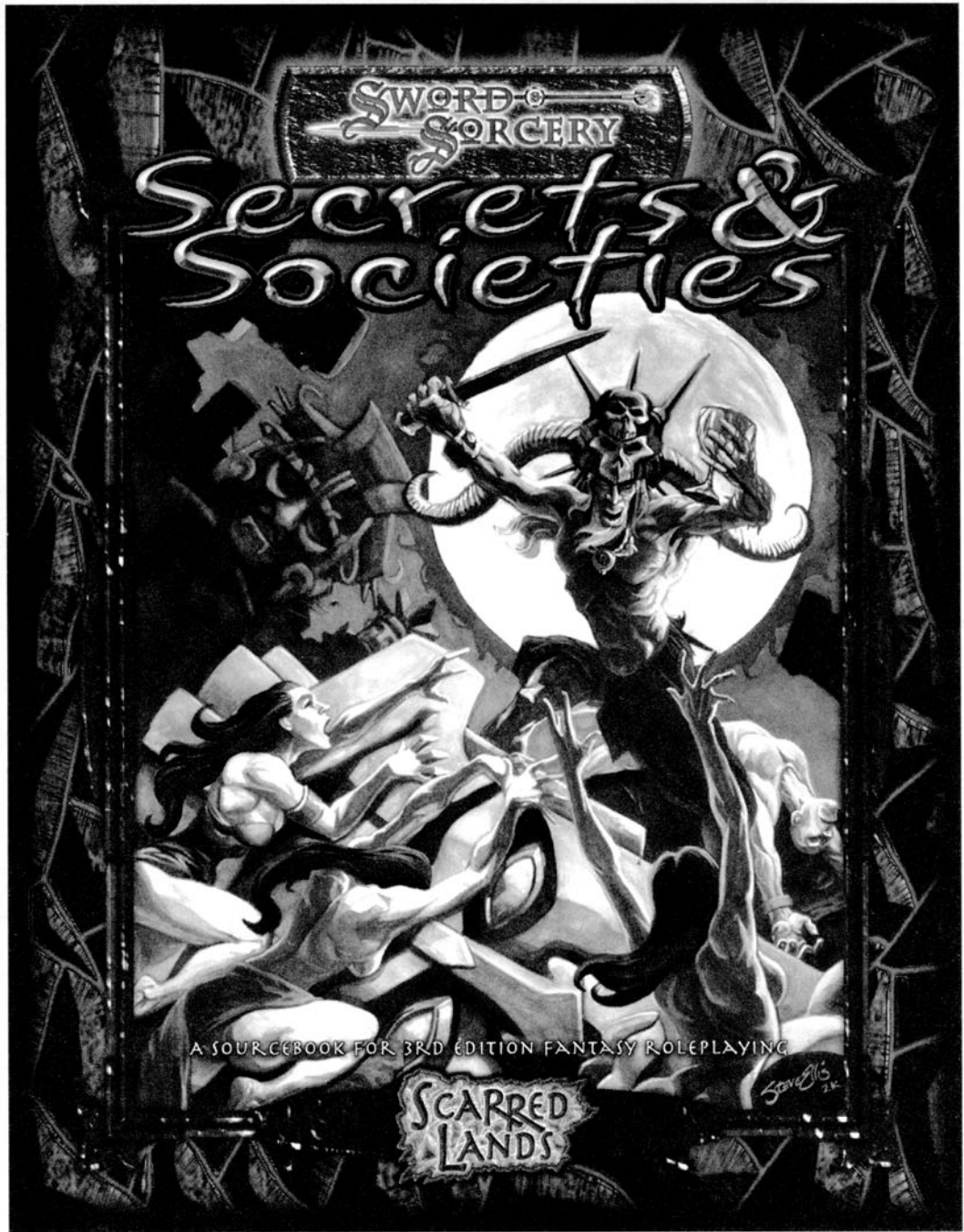
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