

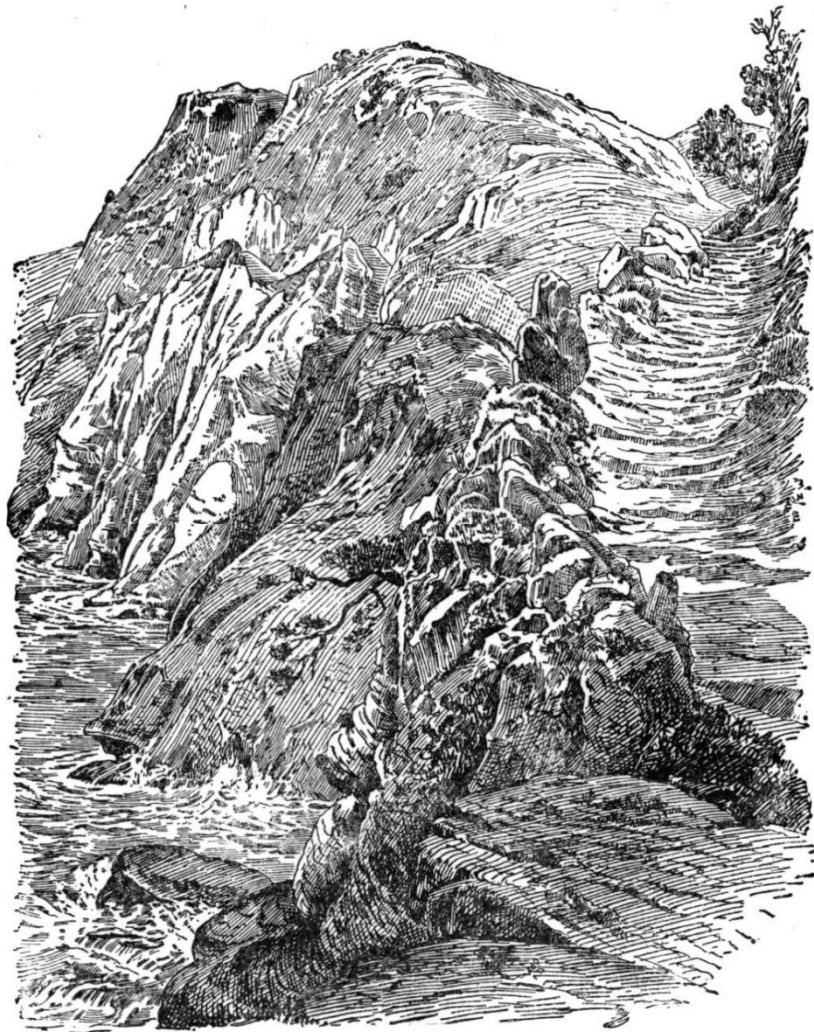


Board Enterprises proudly presents  
Build Your Fantasy World in

**Small Bites**

# The COMMUNIST Clans OF ROCK COVE

aka All About Dwarves



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our latest edition of **Small Bites**. This month our theme is All About Dwarves as seen in the Communist Clans of Rock Cove.

Yep - there are commie dwarves in Fletnern. Not all the dwarves are commies, but since the civil war the only major dwarven nation is running under a version of socialism or communism. These things never run exactly the way the text books say they should, and the Rocchairian Nation is no different there.

But this book isn't necessarily going to be about the government of the dwarves. There are a lot of cultural things here, and the government affects that, but mainly this is about being a dwarf; about being a shorter, stockier race that has specialized in industry throughout their history. How does that shape the way a player plays a dwarf and how does it shape the way a GM runs the dwarves in his or her world?

So what is this thing? In many ways, it is a monthly e-zine, but that's not it. This is a way for the folks at Board Enterprises to share everything we've put out this month with you, our supporting audience. We're going to pack it full of stuff, from characters to equipment (magical and otherwise) to rules to advice on how to build worlds.

We really hope you like it! If you do, and want more of this kind of stuff, please visit our Patreon page and pledge your support. (more about that towards the end)

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## FLETNERN WIKI

All of these posts are already out on the wiki and you can refer to them there. We have gathered them here, because we think they are valuable in a group, and they all pertain to our theme for the month. All of them are also tagged as being in the categories of "Rock Cove" and "Dwarves" in case you are more comfortable using the wiki instead of this edition.

### Yemon Bronzeplate

### Individual

Yemon Bronzeplate was widely recognized as the greatest military enchanter in the Rocchairian Nation - until Alanis Goldkeeper started to gain fame. Yemon has become intensely jealous and seeks to regain his former position of glory by outdoing Alanis.

Yemon's is a skilled enchanter and crafts useful items, but his designs lack the dramatic flair that "Golden Boy" shows. It is this flair, or Yemon's lack, that has allowed Alanis to surpass Yemon.

With the major issue of dwarves, especially heavily armored dwarves, getting into battle quickly without being whittled down by elven arrows, Yemon has been working on designs that would allow for speed and defense. It is important to note that we are talking about speed here, not maneuverability. Many of Yemon's attempts recently have relied on wheels located on the armor, turning the soldier himself into some sort of odd vehicle.

Yemon has finally abandoned his wheeled models and developed what he calls Hawk Attack Armor. This is a



splinted armor enchanted with flight (object flight on the boots). The helm is magically enhanced with “hawk vision”. This is a new spell that Yemon has invented (based on a very old spell the dwarves had all but forgotten). Hawk vision gives the wearer enhanced vision - often considered to be three times better than normal, but this may be more advertising than accurate. Hawk vision does lower the modifiers for missile combat ranges (to 0/-10/-20/-30/-40) and increases the wearer’s base Senses (by +20%).

The suit also sports a perpetual motion device contained within the gauntlet. This can be paired with either of the two weapons: the spinning sword or the “pulter”. The spinning sword causes massive amounts of damage, but does take some amount of strength to be able to use (3T @ SN=7). Unlike earlier designs, Yemon has crafted the sword to resist being disarmed (resist at an extra 10%). The “pulter” was intended to both give the wearer a missile weapon and turn him into a catapult. The launcher device links to the perpetual motion to throw a 4” steel sphere as though it was a light catapult. (Lt. catapult ranges; 2½B damage; +0 throwing mod.) Yemon plans to develop different shots for the launcher.

Yemon believes that building flying ships manned by dwarves in this armor would be unstoppable. The ship would stay safely aloft, while the warriors would fly down firing their shots. Then upon landing, they would use their swords and possibly shots to eradicate the enemy. This armor will get some notice, but it is still enormously expensive. Also, the thought of building more flying ships (which might be then commandeered like the last one) immediately turns off the Clanmasters.

### **Comfort Zone**

### **Site**

After the recent Elf-Dwarf War, the elven Slyvanian Nation was forced to cede certain lands to the dwarven Rocchairian Nation. In the Treaty of Brinston, the elves agreed to give their northernmost lands to the dwarves as well as create a shared region now referred to as the Comfort Zone.

The Comfort Zone belongs to both nations, and both perform military maneuvers within the region. Neither can build within the region, nor is anyone else allowed to take up residence. By law, the area can contain only enough vegetation to make it a viable environment and it is not allowed to be wooded.

In most areas, the Comfort Zone is twenty miles across. Its borders are marked with magical markers on both sides. Though this region was never of great use to the elven people, its loss is still a harsh consequence of the war. Few elves will not bristle at the mere mention of the place.

### **Demiargurictown**

### **Legend**

Demiargurictown is a legend of a dwarven city made entirely of gold. As legends are apt to do, this one has been greatly exaggerated from the truth. About 600 years ago, a dwarven clan made a gold strike and began mining operations. The strike was rich in gold, but so far north that the mine was cut-off during a blizzard. The clan had prepared and had enough supplies to survive. One problem that arose was that as things broke, there was no way to replace them.

Winter broke and the need for food was tantamount. Supply wagons could not afford to waste space with common household items, so the clan began to craft their own. Solid gold plates, utensils and cups were commonplace. Stools, pots and other items were also seen. The mine was worked thirty years, after which time, at least half of the household items had been replaced with gold.

Upon abandoning the mine, the clan simply packed their golden belongings and returned to Rock Cove. The gold items produced varying attitudes from envy to disdain to amusement, but they were the talk of the city long after they had been melted down.

The legend had caused many adventurers to come seeking this city of gold, assuming they would carry bricks, doors and roofs homes as riches. These adventurers have a habit of killing dwarven soldiers during their passing, thus making the legend a serious problem.

In an effort to halt the problems, the Rocchairian Nation has put the mine on their maps and established a museum in Rock Cove. Access to the museum is free, and travelers are encouraged to learn the truth about the legend.

### **Fortress (mine)**

### **Site**

Fortress is the best protected mine in the entire world. Six hundred soldiers guard it (the Fourth Brigade of Rock Cove), and each of its miners receives intensive combat training. This excess is due to the fact that it is the only full-scale mining operation of one of the component metals of dwarven steel. All other sources have proven to be short lived. The location of the mine, and any information about the metal mined there is considered a state secret. Betraying state secrets is a traitorous act punishable by hanging. Smelting of the ore is done within the mine, and only the actual metal is transported back to Rock Cove. (Although many of the mine’s workers do not know it, the mine is located south of Rock Cove along the ocean cliffs.)

## **Golden Boy**

Golden Boy is the nick-name for Alanis Goldkeeper, a young weapon builder in Rock Cove. Alanis began his career as an enchanter by hanging around dwarven enchanters from other clans. With political parents who were rarely around, Alanis simply had to escape nannies to go see the enchanters. Showing a great curiosity, he soon had the enchanters teaching him their ways. He learned quickly and was soon a sort of mascot for the enchanters. At the age of eleven he had created his first golem.

Alanis started working with the enchanters that were creating weapons, mainly because they were advancing into previously unexplored territories. His cleverness and ingenuity moved him quickly to the forefront of dwarven weapon designers. While many dwarven enchanters were working on protective armor, Alanis developed new and ingenious weapons. To date, Alanis has not created a new spell, just used established spells in new and unusual ways. He has also sought spells from outside cultures, though his use of such spells is frowned upon by his own leaders.

Alanis is an odd dwarf. He is ashamed of his clan and believes that they are nothing but a drain on the dwarven community. His hero is General Kartam, whom he refers to as Uncle Kartam. Kartam has met the young enchanter, but so far does not seem to show him any favoritism, or even remember the lad. Despite this, Alanis is determined to prove himself to "the only other Goldkeeper that does anything of value."

Alanis is obsessed with making better and better weapons. He does not think about the uses of these weapons and only enjoys the challenge of making them. Because of this, he has no moral problem with building weapons that could kill hundreds of people. Many people become bothered by his detachment when speaking of kill ratios and civilians casualties.

Alanis is now 28 years old. With the end of the Elf-Dwarf War, he is becoming disenchanted with his position. His designs will go into warehouses not to be used or tested for years to come, and possibly not in his lifetime. He believes that to perfect his craft, he will need to test his weapons in real combat situations, even if this means building weapons for non-dwarves.

Alanis specializes in large area of effect weapons. Cost is not a concern of his, and he will spend incredible amounts for materials. He was the chief designer on the fiery catapult shots (flying barrels) used in the Elf-Dwarf War, but only learned the flight spell towards the end. His dwarven enchantment spells include: flight, golem, perpetual motion, animated attack, and unliftable weapon. He would be considered an expert enchanter (power level of four). He also knows the totem trick and has been studying alchemy.

His two current projects include the Golden Eagle and the Lead Mole. The Golden Eagle is a flying golem

## **Individual**

in the shape of an eagle. This golem has been carved to resemble the eagle symbol of the dwarven god Oppotoowa the Mighty and carries a totem trick. The Golden Eagle was intended to lead dwarven troops into battle, giving them hope and the protection of the totem. The fact that the eagle is a religious symbol has caused Alanis some problems with the Clanmasters.

The Lead Mole is his response to what he perceives as the aldar threat. His plan is to craft a golem from lead (or at least is encased in lead). The golem will therefore be resistant to the aldar magics. It will need the ability to burrow through the rock and dirt and to fight. He is desperately trying to convince others of the aldar threat so that the Rocchairian military machine will continue to roll.

## **Goldkeeper Clan**

## **Group**

The Goldkeeper Clan is one of the First Row clans within the Zumakekyuba (more commonly known as the Clanmasters' Council) in Rock Cove. As a First Row clan, they are considered one of the most important to the government as a whole.

Goldkeeper dwarves are most commonly treasurers and bookkeepers - both considered to be very honorable professions. Some of their number branch out into other related fields, most commonly bureaucrats for the dwarven government, but also jewelers and gem cutters. The two best known "black sheep" of the family are General Kartam Goldkeeper and Alanis Goldkeeper, a famous enchanter and weapons designer.

The Goldkeeper Clan is rumored to be involved with the infamous Gold Guild, but there has never been any proof of this.

## **Kartam Goldkeeper**

## **Individual**

Kartam comes from the Goldkeeper Clan, a clan of bookkeepers and treasurers. As a young man, Kartam felt that something more needed to be done about the constant food shortages in the dwarven nation, so he joined the army. His determination got him promoted very quickly. As soon as he became a squad leader, he began trying to convince the other squad leaders that they should work with the barbarian humans who were in the same situation that they were. He convinced several and soon a determined band of dwarven raiders were looting the borderlands. They eventually did join with bands of barbarians and continued to bring home additional food.

Kartam and his raiders became the terror of the region. Their goal was to steal the food that the Snobist government either refused to sell them or asked too high a price. Despite this, they were pushing Rock Cove and Snobist very close to war. The dwarves were nervous and were considering giving Kartam over to the humans as a good will gesture. Fearing this, Kartam went to

Snobist and offered himself as both hostage and ambassador. The deal that was struck had Kartam stationed in Snobist as a defender and an emissary. He would monitor the trade and work to prevent additional raids. While at first he was also a hostage, he later became a trusted ally. To this day, his family and many of the dwarven politicians are very angry with him. He bucked the system and took matters into his own hands. He relied on individuality and personal power while ignoring his family and country. He continues to rely on his own decisions and will not follow the orders of his superiors.

In 651P, Kartam and his now famous 7th Brigade of Rock Cove were moved to the front lines of the Elf-Dwarf War, and Kartam quickly took over command of the entire dwarven force. Kartam was the one who changed the eternal paradigm of war between the elves and dwarves. Rather than allow the elves to hide behind trees and pick off his troops as they marched south, Kartam used various means to remove the trees, most commonly by burning a wide “road” straight into elven lands. As such, it was Kartam and the 7th who won the Elf-Dwarf War, though he is vilified by the elves for his desolation of huge tracts of their ancient forests. His refusal to listen to politicians has left him famous but without allies in his home. For this reason, he remains stationed in Snobist.

### **Granddaddy**

### **Site**

Granddaddy is one of the main veins of gold that runs through the Rock Cove region. This seemingly endless vein has been producing gold ore for close to 500 years. The mine is strongly protected by a troop of soldiers and will be until it finally quits. (Not to be confused with Old Granddad.)

### **Kcsetal**

### **Artifact**

The Kcsetal (KECK see taal) is an amulet crafted by the dwarves and given to people designated as their friends. It is a symbolic battle axe crossed with a hammer. The axe represents the might of the Rocchairian Nation, and the hammer represents the importance of the common smiths and miners. Anyone wearing the Kcsetal will be assumed to be honest and trustworthy by dwarves of the Rocchairian Nation. Often the materials the Kcsetal is made from are symbolic: ambassadors get gold, weapon smiths get steel, exceptional heroes get diamonds imbedded in the axe or hammer, etc. Any enemy of the dwarves will also recognize the Kcsetal and probably take offense to it.

### **Kajumanpekc Mountains**

### **Region**

West of the Rhoric Plains, on the southern borders of the Tantonian Tundra, lies the Rocchairian Nation. Boxed in against granite cliffs, the dwarven nation clings

to the land. In this region, mountains fall directly to the sea, and the hills rise rough against the sky. The ocean's cutting winds and the northern climate demand the residents be a hearty lot.

The Kajumanpekc Mountains have been the site of gold, silver, iron, platinum, and lead mines. Also found here, mainly in the southern arm of the range, are the rare metals used in crafting the alloy known as dwarven steel. Each separate strike is typically of an extended nature, producing a mine that takes many years to empty. Coal is plentiful in the hills east of Rock Cove. The gems diamond, ruby, sapphire, emerald, aquamarine, turquoise and chrysalist are also found. Treasure hunters be warned; units of the Rocchairian military guard all successful metal and gem mines.

### **Kwerguar**

### **Group**

The Kwerguar are a group of dwarven soldiers who prize armor above all other things. While they are seen as a “group”, Kwerguar is more of a philosophy. Its literal translation is “steel life”. Those who follow Kwerguar will most likely have ornate and enchanted armor as well as carrying all the proper tools (magical and mundane) for maintaining it.

The Kwerguar philosophy involves self-reflection and discipline. The basic theory is “If I cannot be hurt, I must prevail.” Not surprisingly, the philosophy is based on the defensive form, including shield use, terrain, and formations. This is one of the leading military philosophies in the Rocchairian Nation and is taught to some degree in all of the military academies.

Kwerguar is not a new way of thinking. This discipline has its roots nearly a thousand years ago. It grew from an idea that the training given to dwarven soldiers was important and valuable. Protecting that training by putting the soldiers in heavy armor was the wise and even economical thing to do. As such it has often been associated with various dwarven war gods. While the Rocchairian Nation claims to have no opinion of the philosophy, those outside the military see it not as a philosophy but as a near religion and are not comfortable with it being taught in their academies. While many who believe in the civic motto of “no dwarf is beholding to any god” still practice Kwerguar, it has seen some of its followers use it as a gateway to teaching religion as well.

### **Old Granddad**

### **Site**

Probably the most reliable diamond mine in the world, Old Granddad has been worked for over 250 years, yet it still produces a large number of quality diamonds. While not of exceptional size, it is the frequency of diamonds that continues to amaze those that study this site. Old Granddad is located east of Rock Cove near the

edge of the Rocchairian Nation. (Not to be confused with Granddaddy.)

### **Peoples' Road, The**

### **Site**

The Peoples' Road is an engineering marvel of the Rocchairian Nation. It is a concrete road that travels for 140 southeast out of the capital of Rock Cove through the town of Gateburg (125 miles from Rock Cove or just over 90 as the crow flies) and out towards Snobist. The road is 30' wide consistently throughout its run, even when hills needed to be cut away to allow for its passage.

The Peoples' Road was started shortly after the civil war as a means of employing citizens who were out of work, either because of industry that the war had destroyed or because they had left their homes to move into the Rocchairian Nation. Originally planned to be built from Rock Cove to Snobist, it was stopped after 44 years of construction because it became a drain on employable dwarves.

The Peoples' Road is concrete over a bed of gravel laid over a bed of sand then sealed with a mixture of fine gravel and coal tar. At least one side of the road will have a drainage ditch, but the road does not have curbs or gutters as we would know them. During the construction phase, many different surfacing methods were tried, and some had to be replaced before the road was considered to be finished.

Clan Domanilor (basically translated as People of the Road) is tasked with maintaining the road. A clan formed from those who were still looking for work once the road project was not going to be extended any further, the Domanilors are not a highly respected clan. Their work is seen as menial and without craftsmanship, but still necessary. They are often considered lazy because of the amount of time it takes them to repair sections of the road, but what is not considered is the time they must spend building a bypass before they begin work, because this is the only main passageway to Rock Cove via land.

### **Rock Cove**

### **City**

Above the granite cliffs of Rock Cove stands the city of the same name. The capital of the Rocchairian Nation, Rock Cove contains the Council of Clanmasters and many of the nation's military units. Despite the fresh sea air, the city has a dirty, smoky atmosphere due to the numerous smelting operations going on within it.

The official name of the government is Zumakekyuba, though nearly everyone calls it something else, most commonly the Rocchairian Government, Rock Cove, or the Council of Clanmasters. Technically, Rocchairian is the name of the culture, not the government. Zumakekyuba could also be seen as the name of the dwarven parliament or Council of Clanmasters.

In many ways there are two cities of Rock Cove. The first is the one seen atop of the cliffs overlooking the sea with well laid concrete roads. This is the Rock Cove of the Rinnear or white dwarves. But beneath this city is another, an underground dwelling built within natural caves and mining shafts with tunnels leading off underground to other cities, including some beneath the floor of the ocean. This is the Rock Cove of the Dolindor or black dwarves.

The Rinnear and Dolindor are of the same "race" in that they are both dwarves. The white dwarves more closely resemble Earth's Europeans or Caucasians, while the black dwarves more closely resemble Earth's Africans. Other than this difference in skin color and some differences in culture, they are the same peoples.

### **Townships**

### **Region**

Continent: Drentae (NW Central)

Terrain: Hills

Major City: N/A

The Townships are a mishmash of communities randomly located within the hilly terrain. All manner of cultures and governments can be found here, as can industries as broad as farming, ranching and mining. Dwarves and humans make up the largest percentages of the populations, but there are high concentrations of ogres and hearrsmon as well. Known for town ruling warlords, often at odds with each other, the civilians still manage to work and survive in this chaotic region.

The Townships came about after the dwarven civil war. As the noble clans weakened, the ogres of the region began to reclaim territory that had formerly been too dangerous for them to venture into. But while they were able to move westward into additional space, there were some dwarven communities that were able to hold out, maintaining their lands even when surrounded by ogre tribes. These hold outs were most commonly the mining communities where they could rely on a relatively small amount of land to provide a living for a larger amount of people. Farming communities were almost all overrun.

When there is money to be made and relatively little risk, the "warlords" come out. At first these were primarily ousted dwarven noble clans looking to establish themselves after the communists had taken their lands. It did not take too long before the hearrsmon heard there were lands "looking for rulers", and they came as well. Add in the ogre tribes who have not been able to maintain peace amongst themselves in the past millennia, and you have a large number of townships ruled by minority populations and changing hands on a regular basis.

## THE SOUNDING BOARD

### Dwarves - at least in Fletnern

When we were working on Gods and Demons, we referred to the dwarven gods and their issues. I thought, maybe we should talk about them more fully, but it didn't belong in that book. So here we go:

Some time ago, there was a revolution in the dwarven Rocchairian Nation. The noble clans had ruled over the commoner clans for centuries, and the commoner clans were done with it. Over two or three generations, they had begun to form themselves into a communist or socialist society, or at least the beginnings of one. The inevitable revolution (armed - violent) occurred. Several of the noble clans had seen the writing on the walls and joined the rebellion in order to preserve their standing in the new government. The revolution was successful, and the nobles were overthrown. A council of clanmasters was established, and the nobles lost their lands.

Well, it wasn't as clean as that. Some of the nobles managed to hold on to certain pieces of land, and a peace was established. In any case, the new communist government was quick to put down any ideas or traditions that they felt would enable the nobles to build a power base. One of the ideas they wanted to put down was religion. The communists insisted that no dwarf was beholden to any god or noble. While this was originally established to prevent nobles or churches from taxing the commoner clans, it served to nearly outlaw religion.

Fast forward to the current, and the dwarves within the Rocchairian Nation are non-worshipping atheists. While the dwarves outside the Nation (mainly the remaining, weakened noble clans) still worship, they are too few to maintain the power of the dwarven gods, and without the adoration of an organized religion, the gods are weakening, weakening to the point of heading towards oblivion.

So, when you read Gods and Demons - now you'll know!

### Your God Ate My God

Anyone who has read our Gods & Demons supplement knows how we treat divine folks. They are "fed" by fear and/or adoration. In other words, you can pray to them to power them, you can sacrifice to give them stuff (and power), and you can simply be terrified by them and their aspect(s). Without sufficient energy gained in one of these fashions, the god will "die".

But gods typically don't die. They don't even fade away. OK, they do sort of fade away, but the point here is that often one god's aspect is very similar to another's, and the surviving god will sort of absorb the dying god's

aspect. This works fairly well because then the surviving god gains a new bunch of worshippers. Yes, the surviving god needs to tend to those worshippers, but the worshippers are gaining the benefits of powerful god instead of a waning deity. Seeing as gods are divine and hugely powerful, they typically don't mind appearing as the other god when they are expected to. Physical form is



not that important to them. Important point - It takes centuries for a god to fade away.

So examples: Gillanae is the dwarven Queen of the gods and goddess of fairness. But the main dwarven culture has turned away from their gods, and all the dwarven gods are weakening. Gillanae was never all that powerful in that pantheon, and she is one of the first to start fading. But Laenta is a very similar goddess - Queen of her pantheon, goddess of motherhood and home, with the king having justice. So slowly, Gillanae is being absorbed into Laenta. Nobody is even going to notice. The dwarves who still worship Gillanae (the few that remain) will be worshipping Laenta, but calling her Gillanae. Laenta may over time direct the priestesses to change a few of the things they do to make certain the adoration gets to where she wants it, but overall - no harm - no foul. Even some of Gillanae's minions have already "jumped ship" and are working for/with Laenta.

Example 2 - Suppetta Julli is the Latvich goddess of lust. Tyreabbae is the elven goddess of magical/female

power. Both of these goddesses are embodiments of female power, but in seemingly different ways. Oddly enough, on a magical/spiritual level, they aren't all that different. In fact, the two goddesses (partly purposefully and partly unconsciously) are merging. In a few hundred years, there will only be one goddess who will have an aspect of female power. She will wield her power through lust and other natural magics and have cults amongst the elves and the Lats. This has only just begun, so the elven priestesses refuse to believe that their goddess is associated with a foreign goddess of lust, but the Lats sort of get what's going on. They have been leaving offerings to Suppetta Julli in Tyreabbae's temples. In a very rare case, the divine may be quicker to change than the mortal on this one.

Last example: OK, we said the dwarven gods are fading. Their king Karrendock is losing power, but he has always been worshipped by some humans as the god of smiths. Quimgrow, the Dinsthain (human) god of miners is a demi-god and cannot maintain his power on his own. In a weird double shift, Brakin, king of the Dinsthains, will take on Karrendock's duties as king of the dwarven gods, Karrendock will become the Dinsthain god of smiths and miners, and Quimgrow will cease to be. If you get the feeling that all of the dwarven gods are getting eaten up by the Dinsthain gods, you are on the right track.

OK, more on this later, but think about the gods in your game world. Any useless ones? Any ones you'd prefer went away? Any way you can have something like this happen? It might be nice and calm like Gillanae and Laenta, or it might wind up in some serious violence like Suppetta Julli and Tyreabbae before it's done.

### **Ages and Longevity**

First let me say, that it has been about twenty years since I played that first and most popular FRPG. I know a lot has changed, but not everything. I have a bone to pick with the age of the characters. In my games, elves, dwarves, humans, halflings, etc. all have about the same lifespan. That other game has elves living over a thousand years and dwarves going on for centuries. The problem is - They don't give them any credit for it.

Here's what I mean: A human is ready to go adventuring at age 18-25. I forget what it is for elves, but it's about 300 I think. Within five to ten years of adventuring (assuming survival), a character can get to level 10+ depending on the GM. OK - So let's assume that the human adventurer calls it quits as he/she approaches middle age. The elf is just getting started. He's got hundreds of years to go before he hits middle age. But look at your books. The average elf is about as experienced as your average human. All they get for hundreds of years of training is +1 with bows / +1 with swords. Oh, and some extra languages. Same with dwarves. A one hundred year old dwarf is considered ... wait for it ... only as good as some 21 year old human.

What? The dwarves aren't training their militias? Fifty years of dwarven drill sergeants and the guys is level 1? I don't get it. Oh, it's game balance. Call the PC police, it's game balance again.

What about the cultural impact of eternal life? If I were going to live for 1400 years, I would be a pacifist. Why would you ever risk another 1,000 years of life over a battle? Don't worry if the orcs enslave your entire people, you're going to outlive them, or at least outlive this current empire. After they are all dead from civil wars, you can go back to your gardens. And if all the oak trees are dead, grow some more. After all, oak trees would be like corn to a 1400 old elf. OK, maybe like a rose bush. (For those of you who don't know, you cut rose bushes down to next to nothing every year. It's the only way to get them to really grow.)

What about retirement? Do they amass huge sums of money so they can live in retirement for 400 years? OK, the dwarves would. What about the really active ones? I know there are good GMs out there who have monumentally powerful elven wizards and druids. After 1,000 years of learning and experimenting, you should be beyond incredible.

So how do I balance the game? Well, not by being a slave to Tolkien. Everybody lives the same 75-100 years (depending on the state of their health care abilities, both mundane and magical). I mean, I like Tolkien too, but my world isn't Middle Earth.

I can't help but think about the elven peasant. Here is a guy who farms a plot of land for 800+ years. I mean, really, 800+ years on the same plot of land. The assumption from that old style game is that after being there for, let's just say, 500 years, he's a level 1 guy. If he were really going to farm that piece of land for centuries, wouldn't he go to night school for druidic magic? I mean, ten years of night school should triple his crops for the next 1000 years. Even if he didn't, he'd probably have named every earth worm who lived on his land or at least know its genealogy.

### **Reasons for Dungeons**

I have to admit that I hate the idea of dungeons. Maybe it's an adult gamer thing, but I find it increasingly difficult to accept the concept of a "dungeon". You know what I mean, an underground complex filled with monsters and traps where you can go from room to room slaughtering them. With or without a dragon at the end, I can't suspend belief that these creatures can survive within a dungeon with concepts of feeding, cleaning (excrement), and simply not killing each other while they sit around and do nearly nothing. So having stated my bias - I know how much some gamers love the concept of a dungeon. I mean they are so easy to run - funneling the players down narrow halls, etc. So I have to justify the use of a dungeon. Here's one:



What if the reason the dungeon has not been explored is that it collapsed? But there are all sorts of rumors and some guy with some money determined that this site could be the location of the lost artifacts/treasure. So he brought out a crew and they started digging - digging out the tunnel entrance. The digging crew was astonished when some of their people were killed as they were about to breach the gate.

This "lair" was a strange point of contact between the forces of evil (underground monsters, demons, stuff like that). I like to think of it as the fantasy "dark net". There is something about this place that allows the evil guys to come into physical contact, and it was here that they were trading things back and forth. Now that the gateway (both the gates that were dug out and the lair itself) has been exposed, the evil guys are going to try and break out. It was some of the little ones who killed the first diggers, but now bigger, tougher guys are coming.

So the rich guy with the diggers first has to try and re-secure the gate. He's going to start with brick and mortar, but that won't work for very long. He's going to need to bring in the party - super toughs who can handle these types of things. But what will they find? A smugglers' den of the blackest type. There will be meeting rooms, store houses, and security check points. There might even be some manner of temples or chapels that some of the folks were using to communicate with dark forces "on the other side". There will likely be some dead folks here, but they've probably been "affected" by the demons over the centuries. Bad guys include demons coming through as well as some undead and possibly some golem types.

But this will not be all. After they find a way to defeat the bad guys who came through, they will have to stick around for a little while so the gate can be locked up again. Yeah - evidence should show pretty quickly that the entry way didn't just collapse but was sealed. But while exploring the lair, there may be some tunnels that don't do what is expected. They might lead to some of the more established manor houses in the city, showing that at least their ancestors had some questionable dealings. Maybe some tunnels to the temples too. Probably some evil doers lurking within the city, and they've been here a long time.

Shifting gears, I think different races are crafting different mines. I have a massive, underground city inhabited by the dwarves. It started out as a titan mine thousands of years ago. But they got to a point where they couldn't get enough jewelry quality diamonds out of it for the amount of money/resources it was costing them. (It was on a distant continent from their home city, the mine actually ran under the sea, etc.)

But then the dwarves came along. This was their home country, so they had better support. They were smaller so they could make smaller, more easily braced tunnels. They utilize a more earth magic based magic, and

so were better able to manage the tunnels and the diamonds. Probably most importantly, the dwarves were using the uglier diamonds in tools and were therefore happy to have the non-jewelry grade gems, though they have found some jewelry grade as well.

One of the main points of this city is that the main tunnels into the city and in some of the larger caverns are huge - big enough for carts and wagons or titans. No, they do not have livestock this deep down, but they have dwarven powered carts. Then you get into the newer areas, and they are dwarven sized - only about 4'8" and nowhere near as wide.

Just because it is a "dungeon" doesn't mean it has to be done the same way. Good hunting!



### **Fantasy Tech - Light Houses and whether or not it matters**

I'm working on how they do mundane things around my world and I have been forced to invent some things - These civilizations have been "stuck" in a fantasy era for thousands of years. They must have come up with some solutions that we would consider anarchistic. One is theaters. I don't want all of the theaters to be outdoor things like the Greeks. But how do I do indoor theater? I could just say they have powerful illumination enchantments, and for some of my cultures, that is exactly what they do. But some should have other stuff. So I added acetylene lamps (like they had in the 1880-1920 era of America). But they need to get their fire up over 2000C

- so I invented efreeti's powder. What is this - it is an alchemical that causes things to burn hotter, which actually makes them burn for shorter periods of time. Now I am also planning on adding this into some weapons or other ideas, but for right now, just for this.

Why? Well, it is actually a lot more than just for the footlights. I've been trying to figure out how I should do light houses. Again - different cultures are approaching this from different styles, but at least this one (who already are known for their chemistry and the fact that the chemical workers who make up a good portion of the middle class are willing to be sickened at work so they can maintain lives or the middle class as opposed to lives like lesser paid craftsmen) will use acetylene. Yes, others will use whale oil or magic, or possible huge pyres of wood. But as you pull into Brinston - it's acetylene burners.

Before you think I've gone completely crazy with this - check out carbide lamps. This is a bit of steam punk, but I think it works pretty well for my chemistry oriented folks. Absolutely you can ask why it's OK to use magic in the chem lab but not in the theater. Because the one controlled use of magic (in this case efreeti's powder) produces a material that can be used in multiple applications by some not so magically inclined folks. The enchanted spotlights should (in my opinion) require some manner of understanding of enchantment.

FYI - the dwarves have actually lit natural gas vents for some of their underground lighting, and because (at least for now) there is no oxygen in the "vaults" the gas is coming out of, the fire cannot follow the gas back and cause an explosion. The dwarves do not fully understand the chemistry of this, but they do understand enough earth magic that they know it won't happen here. They don't always do this, in fact most natural gas vents are vented using magically powered vent fans so as to avoid anything metallic that might cause a spark that could cause an explosion. It's actually a lot safer than it sounds, because ... well ... magic, but magic that sounds like it has a reason!

What's the point? Who really cares about theater lighting or even light houses? That's not the point, just an example. The point is: when you think about how things really work in your world, a lot of the times, you come up with ideas that can actually be really cool for your campaign world. I don't know where I'm going with efreeti's powder, but I'll bet it will get really cool!

### The Gold-Silver-Copper Conundrum

In most games, gold is ten times more valuable than silver and silver is ten times more valuable than copper. Do you know why? Because nobody wants to strain their brains.

That's the honest answer. You may not like it, but it is true. In the modern world, this 100=10=1 ratio is pure nonsense. Want to see what the ratios would have been historically on Earth?

	<u>gold</u>	<u>silver</u>	<u>copper</u>
12/31/2016	71.26	1.00	0.16
12/31/2010	41.64	1.00	0.13
12/31/2000	42.29	1.00	0.69
12/31/1990	50.62	1.00	0.16
12/31/1980	13.59	1.00	0.02
12/31/1970	3.89	1.00	0.05

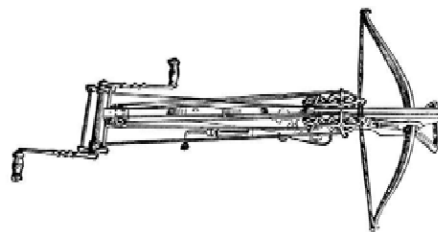
We set it so silver would always be considered "1.00", but you can see that not only is it not 100-10-1, but it is constantly moving.

Why? Well, I don't want to get too deep into the economics, because I think we have already gone too far in that direction, but ... First off, it is the fiat currency of the US\$. The US\$ is worth whatever the US government pretends it is, and whatever other folks will trade for it. That trade value is actually a detailed calculation based on interest rates in different countries. So in a shorter answer - the foreign exchange value of the US\$ affects the chart.

What else? Lots of stuff! People being scared about wars and riots change the prices. New finds of deposits affect the prices. New technology in extracting the minerals and metals affect the prices. Could be anything. Do you want to run your fantasy world that way? I wouldn't recommend it! I have spent years of my life watching the currency markets and I can tell you without hesitation - do not run your world like this! This is a small suspension of disbelief that yields an enormous amount of benefit.

So why even bring it up? Well, I believe it must be addressed. I believe that if you are stating that 10 silver coins = one gold coin and so on, then in your world, there should be 10 times as much silver as there is gold. You are not running Earth. If you wanted, diamonds could be commonplace and topaz could be really rare and valuable. You'd have a ton to figure out if you tried to do the same with gold, silver, copper, iron, or tin, but you could. Just because there is no clear gold to silver ratio on Earth doesn't mean that there cannot be on your fantasy world.

Then again, the ratio could be artificial. We mentioned the Gold Guild in our last edition of **Small Bites** (Hoards & Other Treasures). The legend says that the Gold Guild holds the ratio consistent by arbitrarily controlling the bulk of the gold reserves in the world. But no one believes that, right? There couldn't possibly be a small group of people who were so rich that they could control the price of gold globally, could they?



## Does Technology Really Matter?

Let me start by saying - Technology matters, and in fact it is required to allow adventuring. Kind of a bold statement, but let me explain ...

It is pretty obvious by now that I love knowing how economies work in fantasy games. I wrote Grain Into Gold, and it remains our best-selling product on the internet. But knowing how the money moves is only a small part of the issue. I think you need to have an understanding of the technological capabilities of your various cultures and races, or you don't know what's possible.

In my research, I've discovered the differences between a bloomery and a blast furnace. Bloomeries are (in an overly simplistic manner) kilns that smelt iron out of iron ore. But what's really important is that they do not liquefy the iron. Those pictures in your head of a smelting factory where they are pouring molten iron or steel, that's a blast furnace. A bloomery produces "sponge iron" which needs to be worked extensively in order to produce useful iron or steel. But bloomeries were in use in some areas through the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Blast furnaces on the other hand were able to actually melt the metal, which could then be poured into molds to make pig iron or other shaped products. The short answer on this is: Making a sword blade out of a bar of steel is vastly easier than making it out of a ball of sponge iron. How much easier? Well, I don't think you can even consider steel armors without a blast furnace. Not even chain mail. Blast furnaces could be found rarely in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but mainly came into their own during the 16<sup>th</sup>. So what am I saying? Well, if you have a game set in (or in the equivalent) of 1425AD, you should make metal armor incredibly expensive!

I assume the following: Every major city will have access to iron and steel smelted in a blast furnace and therefore access to "iron bars". Further, the dwarves are producing various sizes of sheet metal and metal wire. Want to craft chain mail? It is vastly better to purchase steel wire from the dwarves (even after paying to have it transported) then to have someone pull the wire by hand. Without a blast furnace, I don't think you see anything like plate mail, plate armor or even a great helm. Certainly not on someone without a noble landholding and the wealth it brings.

So I like to tie these things back into the game for all the gold farmers out there who think that things like this don't matter to them. Well, without blast furnaces, I just took away your best armor types, and probably metal shields. Assuming that something like this existed, it would be incredibly expensive. If your game has specialized metals (adamant, mithril, etc.), yeah throw those out the window!

OK, so we've probably established that your game worlds need blast furnaces - Does that matter? Well, yes! The Earth ones relied on water power to power the

bellows. Some kid on the bellows probably doesn't work here - but does work for a bloomery. So you either put your smelter (or foundry) right next to a river, or you come up with some "magical" reason that they have other power. But iron ores are not typically found next to rivers, so the ores and the fuels are likely being transported on the river. So now you have established a trade route, and trade routes need to be protected from bandits. OK, few bandits are going to steal iron ore, but they would probably steal the pig iron.

This is the stuff we're hoping to do: Help you figure out your world - here the technology. Help you build out things because they make sense, like shipping iron ore from the mine to the smelter by river barge. And help you with the adventuring parts too - such as the city's armorer cannot craft or repair armor for the party because river pirates have caused a problem on the river. That should motivate most adventurers to get off their butts and go adventuring, shouldn't it?

## Weapons by Race

There is at least one series of videos on the internet arguing about what weapons would be most appropriate for which races based on their physical capabilities. While I cannot argue with the videos necessarily, I will argue this: It doesn't matter what the physical characteristics are; only what the culture is - to a point. Here's what I mean:

Many argue that elves use bows. I can agree - to a point. True, elves are typically smaller and weaker than humans (depends on your game, but they are in **LEGEND QUEST**). So elves would more rarely use long bows, but instead use "regular bows" or what some games refer to as short bows.

I think it is important to think what works in a forest? I would argue that a crossbow that can be aimed with less strength than a bow would be better for a hunter who sits and waits for prey. Holding back a 30-40lb bow (what I consider most "standard" bows to be) still takes some strength and can be tiring. Aiming a crossbow does not require that output of effort. While I think hunting with a bow is fine, war in the forests allows innumerable trees to hide behind while people are firing bows at you. You cannot use indirect fire because of the canopy, so range weapons aren't all that important. It is reasonable to think that an archer could shoot a crossbow then hide behind a tree while cranking it back up for the next shot. Having a bow with an enormous range is likely useless as the trees would often be in the way if you are trying to shoot it too far.

Halflings are shorter and weaker still. They too can probably use "regular" bows, or crossbows, but they live in more open areas, often hilly areas. I think halfling tactics are shoot and run. While this can be done with a bow, even a short bow takes up space. If you're shooting and then trying to duck through narrow spaces, a bow

doesn't work. You need a sling! Sure, a better ranged bow would be advantageous at certain times, but a sling can hide with you while a bow cannot.

Do orcs use crossbows? Nope. Why not? Well, while some orcs could probably learn to craft crossbows, crafting precision weapons just does not seem to be their way. They would like the long bows. I also think an orc would prefer to pepper a target with as many arrows as possible rather than stay calm and aim like a crossbow sniper.

Dwarves and crossbows? Yes! First off, the same argument as orcs, in reverse. Dwarves love technology and a precision crossbow with a range finder and a safety lock would be right up their alley. I have to agree that dwarves should have shorter draw lengths, so if you need a dwarf to fire a bow, it better be some specialized bow - made shorter and thicker to deliver similar power in a shorter draw. But dwarves lack agility. (There was an argument about dwarves having shorter spines and therefore having better reactions - That guy didn't understand momentum! Getting a beefy arm to move is difficult.) So with a crossbow, they can have the best of both worlds. They can fire it from the shoulder or they can mount it on a wall or bi-pod and use it as an artillery weapon. Artillery weapons do not rely on Agility, so the dwarf's weakness is neutralized.

What about melee weapons? Well, there's a lot to talk about with melee weapons, but the first thing should be: What is the enemy wearing? Fighting heavily armored dwarves is different from fighting lightly armored elves is different from naked barbarians. If the enemy wears full plate, I suggest finding a different enemy to fight. No, really, I mean come on. If they're naked, I might even suggest saw toothed blades - maximum destruction of the flesh. In normal circumstances (normal to FRPG), a spear is the ultimate "I can do everything weapon", but I'd still prefer a war hammer against plate mail.

But melee weapons are not always about their ability to cause damage. Pikes are meant to keep cavalry away. Big axes are foolish in territories that don't have good iron mines. A poor forester can still find a workable club or shillelagh in the woods, and it's "free". He may be forced to use what he has. And we haven't even started on nets, man-catchers, and lassos for capturing or some of the military forks that (at least in game) are great for disarming.

There are some physical restrictions that should be put on races and the weapons they use. No matter how much magical strength a halfling has - having him whip around a 6' claymore would be stupid. (This is FRPG not mongo manga.) But when it truly comes to what weapons a race would use "normally" I think it all comes down to what their culture is, including what materials and craftsmen they would have accessible to them. So it's environment over heredity again!

## LIFESTYLES OF THE MAGICAL AND MUNDANE

Because the Rocchairian Nation's culture is based on their version of communism, it is entirely different from most other cultures found on Fletnern. We hope to lead you through how the "clan system" works, and even how it sometimes doesn't.

First off, it is referred to as the clan system, because it is headed by the Council of Clanmasters, most commonly simply called the Clanmasters. But the dwarven people have been living as clans for millennia, and this system is at most 200 years old. As a naming convention, it could use some improvement, but today this is what most would think of when they hear the term clan system. Control of the vocabulary is part of the clan system.

Since records have been kept, the dwarves have lived in isolated clans. These clans typically had an occupation as a clan, but not everyone in the clan followed that same profession. By this we mean that the Hilltopper Clan is made up of coal miners. While the majority of working members of the Hilltopper Clan will mine for coal, there are also cooks who prepare food, smiths who craft and repair tools, geologists who direct the mining, and the ever present bureaucrats who count things. Despite this, whenever anyone, dwarf or otherwise, hears of the Hilltopper Clan, they assume that the person is a coal miner.

As with all communistic system, everyone is supposed to be treated equally. As with all communistic and socialistic systems, this doesn't work.

The idea is that every clan is given a quota of what they are expected to produce. They are to produce that quota and in return they are provided with the things they need to live comfortably. If a clan is able to exceed their quota, then they receive more things in order to live more comfortably.

As the Rocchairian Nation relies on imports to provide the requirements of life and exports to pay for those imports, the quotas are not intended to provide the requirements of life, but typically to provide the exports needed for trade. As with most governments, the Rocchairian Nation can be heavy handed in their dealings with their trading partners. If they have excess product that their partner does not wish to purchase, they will threaten to move all of their business elsewhere unless that merchant accepts everything they are looking to trade. Because of this, there are warehouses in Gateburg filled with excess product that merchants did not wish to buy, but were forced to in order to get the items that they knew they could resell.

It is illegal for a dwarven clan (under the Rocchairian Nation) to sell or trade goods with anyone other than the Rocchairian Nation. However, this law is not strictly enforced. It is illegal for anyone other than the Rocchairian Nation to purchase or trade goods with any dwarven clan (under the Rocchairian Nation). This law is enforced.

This selective enforcement allows the Rocchairian Nation to patrol its borders and confiscate any goods that “smugglers” are trying to export. Of course since they are only enforcing the law after the smugglers have traded their goods to the clans, the government gets the goods that it owns by law, and the clans are getting the benefit of having received the trade goods. It is a win-win for the dwarves and a major loss to the smugglers. Of course, that is if the smugglers get caught.

The government of the dwarves assigns quotas to every clan. As long as they meet their quotas, they receive everything the government believes they need to live. If they exceed their quotas, they receive additional luxury items (often including whiskey), but the surplus benefits are far less than the clans can get from the smugglers. For example - A clan might be expected to produce 500 tools in a month and will receive their quota of food and building materials for doing so. If the tools are valued at 12sc each, for every 10 extra tools produced, the clan might receive a five-gallon cask of whiskey. But in a normal city, the whiskey would sell for about 36sc, while ten tools would be valued at 120sc. It is in the clan’s best interest to sell the tools to a smuggler for 100sc (or 100sc worth of product) than to turn them into the government. Not only that, but the communists would treat 48 extra tools as only 40, because they are classifying them in sets of ten.

What might be the craziest part of this is that the clans treat this as normal. The typically practical and down to earth worker clans don’t think of this as theft or immoral in any way. This is trading, haggling. They are fully aware that their government considers this to be an illegal and possibly treasonous act, but it is so ingrained in their culture that it doesn’t affect them at all.

This institutionalized black market dealing is part of the reason that this communistic system has not yet imploded on itself. Another reason is that the dwarven culture is one of hard work. Quotas are against their way of thinking (something the Clanmasters were taking for granted when they established the system). Nearly every mining or manufacturing clan produces these quotas, because it is what they do, but the farming and ranching clans are typically unable to do this. Their quotas are based on standard weather years. If the weather is poor, they will likely miss their quotas. There is only so much work that can be done to gather a better harvest in a lean year.

## THE GOOD LIFE

If there is anything known about the Rocchairian dwarves and the Kajumanpekc Mountains, it is that they cannot grow enough food to feed themselves within their own nation. From an outsider’s perspective, they are an entire nation of metal workers and miners, but this is obviously not the true story. How they feed themselves is a major part of how their culture came to be what it is.

The Rocchairian Nation has poor soils and a short growing season. They have phenomenal mineral wealth, but you can’t eat that. So they are forced to rely on other sources of food. Few outsiders understand how large the Rocchairian fishing fleet is. Small boats do a fine job of fishing the coastal regions and bays around Rock Cove, while major whaling vessels hunt the northern waters for various types of whales, depending on the season and what the citizens need.

But how does all of this affect their culture? In both major and nuanced ways! During the winter season, the whales tend to move south, into warmer waters. With such an important food source moving away from them, the dwarven navy becomes far more protective of their waters and any ship seen sailing northward should expect to be hailed and boarded as the dwarves decide whether this is an authorized trading vessel or some manner of pirate or poacher. Without the proper trade documents, the ship will be turned back. This protective and isolationist policy changes the activity in the port of Rock Cove depending on the season.

The dwarves are not known as traders, for good reason. Therefore they must rely on traders of other races to buy their goods and then transport them where they can be resold. The most active trading town is Gateburg. In Gateburg, the excess generated by the quota system can be traded for the goods needed by the state and her people. Unlike most other trading towns, the Rocchairian side of these trades is handled with the utmost formality and record keeping. It needs to be stated that Gateburg is not part of the Rocchairian Nation, but is outside the border of the Clanmasters.

Since so much of the food is shipped into Rock Cove, the populace has learned to cook with what they get. Certainly there is Rocchairian cuisine, but there are also periods when the various clans are given foods that they didn’t want, but are forced to make do. This often leads to various trades, either internally (amongst the communist clans) or externally (illegally with smugglers from outside their nation). This black market is an everyday reality for the clans, who deal with human and dwarven smugglers.

The rampant smuggling is the reason that the quota system's rewards for over production don't work. Most clans would rather hold onto their excess production and trade it for what they want than turn it over to the Clanmasters and have some "reward" delivered to them.

One of the most common foods within the Rocchairian Nation is dwarven porridge. As the nation has difficulty controlling exactly what grain products arrive through their borders at any given time, they have established a system of mixing the various grain flours that they do receive. The most common of these are rye, barley and malted barley, as these are the more common grains of the Rhoric cultures to the dwarves' east. When cheaply available, wheat and buckwheat will be added to the mix. These mixes are boiled to create a thick porridge (most similar Earth product would be Malt-o-Meal). Dwarven porridge is the most common morning meal.

While dwarven porridge is the most common use of this mixed flour, it is not the only one. One of the most common rations in Rock Cove and the multitudes of mining communities around the nation is "fish grain". Fish grain is a product somewhat similar to pemmican. Whale meat and whale blubber are dried and pounded into an almost flour-like consistency. Not all whale blubbers can be used, as some will quickly go rancid if produced in this fashion.

Fish grain is then used almost as an "instant meal". It can be boiled in water to make a style of stew or eaten as it is (in emergencies). The most common usage though is to combine the porridge mix with the fish grain and make a meal similar to what we might think of as meatloaf, only made from whale. Every person within the communist authority who has ever been taught to cook will have at least two recipes for this fish loaf - one plain (two parts fish grain to one part porridge flour) and one jazzed up to a nearly enjoyable form.

These are by no means the only foods commonly available in the dwarven state. The porridge mix can be used to make a very heavy bread roll, and often is. Where the porridge has a distinctive malted barley taste, the breads are treated with a bit of yeast and other ingredients and the rolls seem to be more of a very heavy rye. The nation has several extensive sea salt productions, so salt is a staple of the dwarven rations, and these rolls are most commonly heavily salted. They are also (at times) dipped in lye to make it more of a pretzel than a roll. If "bread" is found in Rocchairian military rations, it is most commonly twice baked pretzels.

While in the mountainous regions of the country, nearly all of the food has been preserved in order for it to survive being delivered, in Rock Cove, fresh fish is common, including various "standard" white fish such as cod and haddock, along with monkfish and tuna. The

herrings caught in the area are smoked or pickled to be sent out to the land based communities.

But the most famous fishing in Rock Cove is of the Rock Cove Lobsters. These large lobsters are natural to the area and live all along the coastal area north and south of Rock Cove. While the fishermen do take herring from these waters (one major source of lobster food), they do not take any of the mollusks or echinoderms from this area in order to encourage the lobsters and hopefully allow them to grow larger.

The lobsters typically live along the shore lines of the scattered tiny islands near the capital. They are caught with traps. Most dwarven lobster fishermen will throw back any lobsters under a pound and a half, so the typical lobster brought into port will be around the three pound mark. Few lobsters make it out of Rock Cove. This is because they are difficult to ship - even alive in sea water, they rarely last more than a few days. But the main reason is that they are loved by the city's residents.



There are times when the lobsters will be cooked and shelled, only to be frozen and packed in ice to be shipped to a more inland site. Here the lobsters are typically served in soups and not directly as meat.

The land locked areas of the Rocchairian Nation still get a large amount of fish to eat. They receive barrels of pickled and smoked herring as part of their standard rations. They also either catch or receive fresh lake or stream fish caught closer to home. While they are rarer, the creeks and ponds of the region also have some smaller crustaceans, like crayfish.

Many of these fish meals are served with dressing. While there are an unlimited number of dressing recipes, they typically start with the porridge flour, onions, and some day-old bread rolls. Dwarven dressings are served very wet, and frequently contain a small amount of meat, typically sausage and/or organs.

Seen as a mid-day or evening food item, they also eat hominy grits. The hominy affected corn is better

preserved and able to be shipped to the dwarves from the Central Plains. After being ground to a course grade, they will cook up large kettles of grits to accompany meals. More often, the grits is formed into “cakes” and fried in oil.

The dwarves are well known for brewing beer, but they have chosen to become experts in beer because the Rhorics are willing to supply them with barely and malt. With such easy supplies, they have learned to brew any number of beers, but they do tend to be heavier than would be normal in most human societies. For similar reasons, the dwarves will typically craft and distill rum. The sugar plantations of Caratok ship a large amount of molasses north to the dwarves in exchange for small iron and steel objects, and with this supply, the dwarves craft some of the smoothest rums in the world. But the dwarves are not looking for rums, but instead pure alcohols with relatively little taste. A very common dwarven hard liquor is a mint flavored rum where the rum can scarcely be tasted beneath the mint flavorings.

Mint is one of the more common flavorings in Rocchairian cuisine. Caraway is also commonly used. While the dwarves seldom have sugar, they have ample salt, and salt nearly everything. For sour tastes, the dwarves cannot rely upon citrus, so they use verjuice as the Rhorics do. Verjuice is the juice of sour grapes and can be used in this fashion or instead brewed into a vinegar. Various vinegars are used in cooking Rocchairian food, though they tend to avoid the apple cider vinegars so popular amongst the Rhorics. They mainly use malt vinegars or the verjuice vinegars.

There is a cultural impact on the use of mustards throughout the dwarven clans. During the civil war, the communists wore yellow cloaks dyed with common yellow flowers. This dye starts out as a nice yellow, but over time mellows to a dark, dirty yellow, sometimes called “mustard yellow”. Because of this, a common nickname of the communist troops was Mustard Heads, because these cloaks were hooded. Others likened the color to pus, and those nicknames were far worse than Mustard Head.

Because of this, no self-respecting noble clan will eat mustard. Instead they rely on the aforementioned malt vinegar (especially on breaded fish), an odd sauce of garum (a salty fish sauce) dissolved in malt vinegar - most commonly called “salty wine”, and horseradish sauce. (No one better call the horseradish sauce “mustard” though it is clearly called this in the Rhoric kitchens.) While all of these have their own local and clan variations, the horseradish sauce must be white or ivory and is thus made with horseradish, eggs, oil, and white wine vinegar.

One of the better known dwarven delicacies is Kontic Mushrooms. These mushrooms are considered the most flavorful of all mushrooms, and they are therefore one of the few foods that the dwarves export

(most commonly to the aldar). The preferred method is to dry them completely to preserve them and then chew them uncooked. Cooking, anything past a light steaming, is considered to reduce the taste. They are used as a garnish as too much would be overkill.

The dwarves do eat a mix of other foods as well. There are no dairy farms in the Rocchairian Nation, so the only dairy dwarves will experience is cheese. Because of this, their chief source of calcium is ground up fish bones mixed into the fish grain. Their most common vegetables are various root vegetables grown throughout the continent that can be transported to Rock Cove with minimal if any preservation efforts. They seem to like turnips best of all.

There are clans of dwarves that hunt the forests in the northern reaches of their country. Here they bring down mountain goats, muskoxen, and elands which can easily be found weighing up to a ton. This provides meat (typically smoked soon after being killed) as well as leather supplies. While there are clans that raise goats for wool and meat, there are no dairy goats in this nation.

An important distinction needs to be made. Most of the decisions made by the Clanmasters are dominated by the clans that live in and around the capital of Rock Cove. As such, they tend to forget what the clans that live in the less populated regions experience. The hammer side of the nation’s symbol was to represent the workers, seen in the miners. Today, the miners are not respected. They are seen as simple workers doing a job that needs to get done. Instead, the jewelers and gem cutters are given praise.

This affects many things that happen within the country. Miners should expect to receive fish grain and dwarven porridge while the urbanites dine on lobster and freshly caught fish. The government sees the people of Rock Cove as needing fur coats for winter because of the strong sea winds, but sends bolts of wool fabric to the miners forgetting that many of them live high atop mountains.

While this inequality causes great annoyance and griping, the Rocchairian Nation is not on the verge of civil war! The provincial clans tend to be more traditional and more stoic. They do understand that fish grain ships well and lobsters don’t. But they do have issues when they detect a lack of respect. The political class in Rock Cove’s perspective of the miners they rely on for so much as “unskilled and uneducated” is what really upsets these metal working clans.

The discontent of these worker clans could be addressed, but a far more likely outcome will be that over the next century, the Clanmasters will widen the gap between the capital dwarves and the more rural dwarves aggravating an already tense situation. Will there be a civil war in 100 years? Again, doubtful, but some manner of political turmoil is likely.

## WHAT'S MISSING

This is the “World Walker” version of this edition. Therefore it is not the complete version, but more of the slimmed down version. So the question could be - What's missing? Here is a summary of what you'd see if you got the Game Masters' version of the book:

**How to Play a ... Dwarf:** Some quick notes on how to play a dwarf, with broad strokes about generic dwarves and some specifics on how the BE crew likes to play them.

**How to GM a ... Dwarf:** Notes on how dwarves tend to battle, especially their expertise in defenses and fortifications.

**The Enlistment Report:** If you want to game master dwarves, don't you need to know how they organize themselves? At least the official ones - the dwarven military. This report describes the units and officers within the nation.

**Optional Rules:** Steel is good, but dwarven steel is better. Find out how much better.

**Gold, Silver and WHAT!?!:** In fantasy, metal wire and plate are superior technology, but the dwarves can do it. Not only do it, but do it well enough to export it. Here's the price list.

**Silver Sense:** Scrap metal and metal ores are the life's blood of the dwarven nation. Here's how to set up the economics of foundries and other metal working.

**News of Fletnern:** We talk about the dwarves and their civil war, but here is some of the historic data.

**Monsters & Other Menaces:** A paragraph to describe a fantastic race like the dwarves? No way! Here we get into far more details about them as a race of people, details you can use.

**Church Bells:** The current dwarven government says no dwarf owes anything to the gods, but there are dwarven gods. What is their situation now that their followers are falling away from them?

**Small Towns and City Neighborhoods:** The town of Gateburg stands on the edge of the Rocchairian Nation, handling all the business that the government cannot, an interesting contradiction between the socialism and commercialism.

**Mass Market Magic:** The Drill Bit is a flying ship (really!). Want more on this phenomenal ship and her crew, the Silver Sky Mining Company?

**A Funny Thing Happened ...** Wandering the borderlands can put you into conflict with a borderline golem and the military using them as watchdogs.

**Pull Back the Curtain:** If dwarves are so great, how come they haven't conquered the world yet?

**Y? Y? Y!:** Why are the dwarves of Fletnern communists and why exactly does it matter?

## IN CONCLUSION

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