

MYSTARA 2300 BC

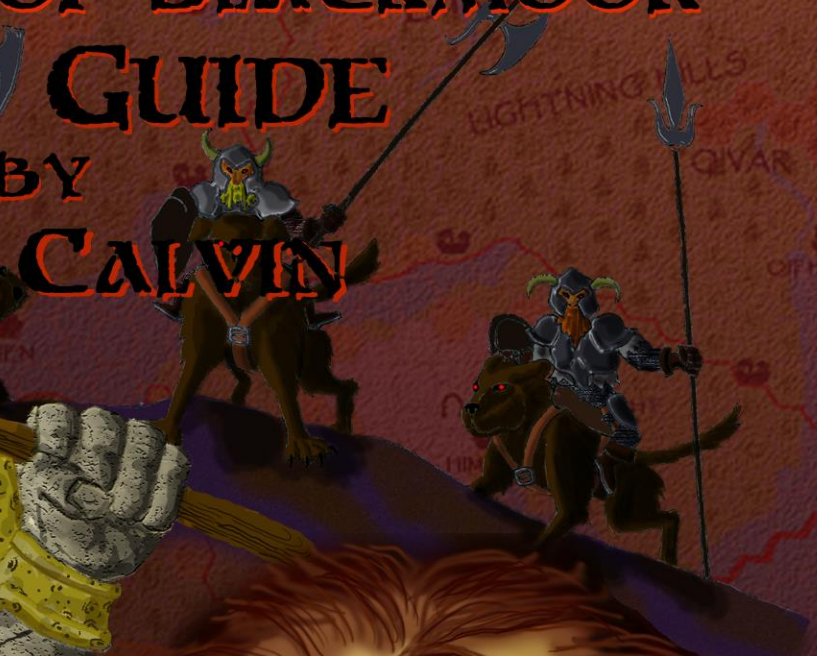
GAZBC 1

SHIMMERING LANDS
LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR

DM'S GUIDE

BY

JOHN CALVIN



DM's HANDBOOK

By John Calvin

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INTRODUCTION

Mystara BC 2300 is a time of immense upheaval. Just 700 years after the destruction of Blackmoor, the catastrophe is still fresh in the minds of those who survived. The Great Rain of Fire is still remembered (firsthand by some of the longer lived races such as the elves) and its effects are still felt across the world. Although the Great Rain of Fire's destruction was beyond compare, its aftereffects were just as violent. Those that survived were subjected to the wasting disease. Life became painfully short as the flesh literally wasted away from the bones.

There were ways to fight the Wasting (as it was called) else none would have survived at all. The forerunners of the Taymorans turned to necromantic magics and entropic immortals in order to sustain themselves. The most powerful individuals sustained themselves with the life force of others, many of them becoming vampires and nosferatu. Others embraced lichdom.

The southern elves had a schism over a debate about whether to return to the old ways of the immortals, or to continue seeking solace from Blackmoorian technologies. Those who shunned Blackmoor left their brethren and migrated northward. With the help of the immortals it is said that they found ways to contain the Wasting, and even to remove it from the environment around them.

The dwarves of Skothar had no such dilemma. To them Blackmoorian technology had become a way of life, and there was no question about shunning it. They continued to use Blackmoorian technology, and their numbers continued to dwindle. During their struggle for survival they discovered a new form of magic. Radiomancy they called it, and it was more powerful than any magic they had ever known before. The Radiomancers worked great miracles to save their people from the Wasting, and for a time they even succeeded. In the end they did more harm than good however, as their newfound powers tapped into the forces that were actually the cause of the Wasting disease. It seems strange that they did not discover this fact (for nearly every other

race that had dealings with them knew, or at least guessed at it), but perhaps their lust for power blinded them to it. Wherever the dwarves went, they were shunned and persecuted by all around them and their numbers continued to dwindle.

Giants and humanoids fared the best during these times. The giants seemed to be immune to the Wasting, while the humanoids actually seemed to thrive under it. Giant nations sprung up filling the void when human and elven nations crumbled. The humanoids increased in number (and in species) and spread destruction wherever they went.

In the year 2300 BC many of these forces converged on the southeastern tip of Brun (what would 3000 years later become known as the Known World). The Taymoran city states were emerging as a major power. Though they spent many of the previous centuries fighting amongst one another it was during this time period that their powers began to coalesce. City states were merging to form larger nations, and their influence was spreading.

The order brought to the world by the Taymorans, was not a pleasant thing however. Their rule was often violent and bloody, and few foreign nations could stomach having the undead as neighbors. The giant nations of inner Brun fought with the Taymorans for territory. So too did the Azcan tribes (broken since the fall of Blackmoor) as well as scattered remnants of the reptilian kingdom.

Elven merchants frequented the ports of Brun bringing exotic goods and the news of southern lands. In actuality these merchants were the forerunners of the elven migration and were seeking lands that they could claim as their own. The elven merchants made themselves an indispensable power in southern Brun. To those who would listen they also offered the promise of a cure. They claimed that they could rid the land of the Wasting through ancient magical rites taught to them by the immortals.

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Dwarves began to appear in the northern mountain ranges. They led vast slave armies composed of giants and humanoids, and poured out of the mountains looking for riches and gold. Rumors were that the dwarves were fleeing even more armies of giants and goblin-kin, and perhaps elves as well, but none could say if those

rumors were true. Dragons would descend upon their holdfasts, and so would the elves, but even though the dwarves were few in number, they were strong in the ways of magic. Time and time again they would defend their territories, even gaining some in the bargain.



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As the Immortals Know It

The Great Rain of Fire

Like the elves, the dwarven people were inspired by, and enthralled with, the rise of the Blackmoorian people and their technology. Dwarves had always lived on Skothar and were a part of Blackmoorian society (as well as the Thonian Empire) from the beginning, but Skothar was not the only continent they occupied. Other clans struck out, many going to Brun, hoping to make their own way out from under the thumb of the Regent of the Mines. Regardless of where they went, there was no place distant enough to keep them safe from what was to come.

Not even the immortals know exactly how the catastrophe was caused. The confluence of magical energy and technological advancements certainly had a role to play, causing instabilities in Blackmoorian artifacts powerful enough to run their cities. Even that was not enough to set the Great Rain of Fire in motion though – there must have been a trigger. Some event put spark to the tinder of Blackmoorian society, causing it to burst into flame. What that even was, or who caused it is lost to time, but although the cause remains unknown, the effects of that act were clear to see.

When the disaster struck, it took everyone by surprise. The earth shook as Blackmoor and the surrounding nations were uniformly obliterated, the force of that destruction shifting the very axis of the planet. Temperate climates were thrust upward, shoved amidst the ring of the polar circle in seconds, even as vast gouts of fire and ash choked out the sky.

Rise of the Yardraks

Among those dwarves that had migrated to Brun, the Yardrak were far enough from the disaster not to be obliterated by it outright. Their world however, was turned on its head. As the Yardrak began their long and treacherous trek south through the newly frozen wastes of northern Brun, the climate took a devastating toll on the clans. Food was scarce, snow and ice covered

much of the land, and giantish and monstrous enemies beset them on all fronts. Most of all, the poisonous eastern winds brought the Wasting, a disease that killed with agonizing pain and sickness.

Lugett Yardrak began receiving visions, not from the immortals, but from the Deep Elves who had been living beneath his people. They gave him instructions on how to lead his people through the frozen wilderness to warmer climes in the south. When he finally reached his destination, his visions led him underground for a clandestine meeting with the elves. There they taught Lugett their dark ways, instructing him in the secrets of the foul craft that the elves used to escape the Wasting.

For a time the Deep Elves lived openly among the Yardrak, but this changed with the coming of the Moadreg from across the seas. When the Yardrak discovered that their brethren from Blackmoor still lived they murdered every last elf before their secret could be revealed. Though the elves swore revenge for that act, the dark immortals they worshiped were pleased.

Coming of the Moadreg

While the dwarves on northern Brun struggled to maintain their existence, those left on Skothar didn't have any easier time. The Great Rain of Fire destroyed many communities outright, and those dwarves that were lucky enough to escape that fate had to deal with the deadly Wasting left in its aftermath. Survivors slowly made their way west, intent on finding a refuge for their people that few were certain even existed.

One band, led by Urthyne Drelgh, stumbled upon a Blackmoorian outpost on the edge of Skothar where they found an ancient technomantic device, the Farseer. As the outpost was miles underground, it made for good shelter from the Wasting fallout plaguing the dwarves, and soon many refugees flocked to the location. Urthyne Drelgh and other elders of the community spent night and day repairing the device in the hopes that it might be used to divine a suitable long

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term home for their people. Eventually one of Urthyne's apprentices, a dwarf by the name of Dranwyrf Korrskill, brought their efforts to fruition.

Not only did the Farseer show Urthyne's dwarves a new home, but it showed them a home already populated by dwarven brethren they never even suspected to exist. Beset on all fronts by giants, beastmen, and extreme conditions, it was clear that the Brunian dwarves would not survive on their own much longer. It was then that Urthyne's followers decided to leave their temporary shelter. Though the vast majority of the dwarves left the Farseer, setting out for the Bridge of Oost on Brun, some few elders remained including Urthyne herself, so that they could continue to operate the Farseer in an attempt to guide their brethren from afar.

Not all fares well for the dwarves journeying under Dranwyrf's banner however. Before reaching their destination, infighting leads to the fracture of the expedition and several clans break off heading to northern lands where they have detected signs of ancient dwarven habitation. They call their new cavernous home Hurgon and begin taming their new home even as Dranwyrf and his followers fight their way to the Bridge of Oost.

Merging of the Clans

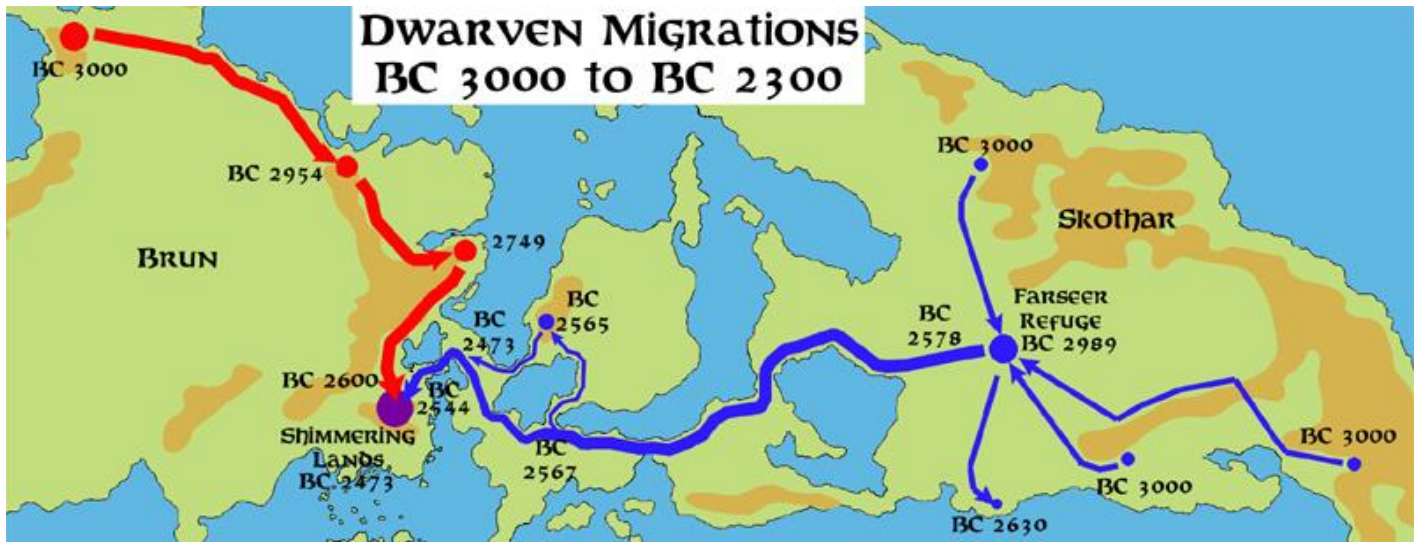
Led by several elders, and accompanied by the young apprentice Dranwyrf Korrskill, the Skotharian dwarves set out on their long trek towards Brun in order to find their lost brethren.

Their journey is long and trying, and when they cross the Dawn Lands and discover the dwarves of Brun, they are not welcomed. The Yadrak, jealous and paranoid, blame the newcomers for leading new enemies to their doorstep, and clash with the Skotharian dwarves nearly as often as they do with their giantish foes in the north.

All of this infighting does little to secure the prosperity of the dwarves. As paranoia eats at them from within, and their enemies advance on them from all directions, the now battle hardened veteran Dranwyrf Korrskill receives a vision. His old mistress Urthyne Drelgh, believed to be long dead, appears to Dranwyrf, giving him key pieces of strategic information on local enemies. Dranwyrf uses this insight, and the stunning victories it brings, to rally dwarves to his cause. Holding no grudges, he welcomes Skotharian and Brunian dwarf alike in his alliance against the giants and elves of the north.

Many clans flock to Dranwyrf's banner, including several that have heard his call from far away Hurgon. Despite this, the Yadrak under the leadership of Undwyr still harry the Skotharian dwarves and their new allies at every turn. As Dranwyrf gathers his allies for one final assault against his enemies, Undwyr's armies prepare to attack his flank. Sensing that this betrayal would prove disastrous to all dwarves, Aynmegk Yadrak usurps control of the clan from his cousin and bolsters Dranwyrf's attack. Together the dwarven forces break the giantish assault, finally winning a home for their people.

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Timeline

BC 3000 - The current Known World is in its Ice Age. The Blackmoor world, in the far northeast, comes to an abrupt end: Some Blackmoor devices explode, causing the Great Rain of Fire, shifting the planet's axis. Blackmoor becomes the north pole and its civilization disappears. One of the devices is located in the Broken Lands (see module X1). The world slowly becomes habitable as ice recedes from the region.

The polar shift changes the climate drastically for the colony of Brunian dwarves (ancestors of the Kogolor), thrusting their civilization into a wintry turmoil almost overnight. The Brunian dwarves struggle to find food and shelter in an increasingly hostile environment. To make matters worse black clouds blot out the sun, and disease ridden winds sweep across the Jaenif Sea.

BC 2995 - Civilizations across the entire face of the planet stagger after the destruction of Blackmoor, and many of them falter. Hardest hit were those nations closest to the disaster on Skothar and Brun. To make matters worse a strange rotting disease slowly kills many of the survivors.

Seeking to evade the Wasting disease caused by the Great Rain of Fire, the elven colonists on Brun retreat into caves. Over the next several decades they will traverse farther and farther into the depths of Mystara in order to escape a grim fate. Life underground is hard for the elves. Several clans devolve into degenerate cave dwellers - barbarians little better than animals. Other clans, in order to preserve their society, turn to dark entities for sustenance. These clans will eventually become the Deep Elves.

The Brunian dwarves realize they can no longer survive in their current homeland. Their elders plead with the immortals to show them a means of deliverance. A few clans of dwarves living in northern Skothar manage to survive, although their civilization is shattered. Giants and beastmen proliferate, both being strangely immune to the wasting disease.

BC 2989 - Led by Urthyne Drelgh, a small band of Skotharian dwarves take refuge in a complex near the outermost edge of Blackmoor's borders. The complex, which extends deep underground, grants the dwarves shelter from the dreaded Wasting disease that has plagued them since the Great Rain of Fire.

BC 2986 - A young Brunian dwarf, by the name of Lugett Yardrak, begins receiving visions from the immortals. Comforting him, a great being of light promises that Lugett will one day be the savior of his people, and will remove the pall of the Wasting from around their necks. The being urges Lugett to gather supporters and follow the eastern coast of Brun southward where they will be given a home to dwell.

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BC 2985 - The Brunian dwarves find themselves beset by tribes of beastmen and cold loving giants. Several of their crumbling settlements are destroyed and the dwarves are forced to flee for their lives into the wilderness. With the guidance of his immortal patron, Lugett organizes a miraculous victory and drives off the savages.

BC 2980 - Dwarven stragglers from across Skothar flock to Urthyne's refuge and their numbers slowly build. Delving deeper into the complex, the dwarves realize that their shelter is a scientific outpost of Blackmoor. They begin uncovering technomantic devices which are immediately put to use fending off the Wasting.

BC 2977 - The dwarves under Lugett begin to skirt the coast of eastern Brun in search for a home. Their numbers dwindle as they compete for ever shrinking territory with local tribes of giants, beastmen, and the remnants of elven civilization in the area. In desperation they continue to move southward.

On Skothar, Urthyne and an elite cadre of dwarven technomancers, discover the Farseer Chamber, a device once used by Blackmoor to perform remote reconnaissance across the planet. Determined to find others of her kind, Urthyne sets about the task of repairing the artifact.

BC 2971 - Urthyne and her followers manage to activate the Farseer, but are only able to use its abilities over relatively short distances. They successfully locate several local dwarven bands surviving in the surrounding desolation and guide them to Farseer Refuge. She and her apprentices continue work on the Farseer, in the hopes that they might extend its range.

BC 2963 - The Wasting hits the dwarves of Farseer Refuge hard, and they move deeper into the complex to escape the disease. Many begin to experiment with other technomantic artifacts found in the Blackmoorian outpost, forming the fledgling disciplines of Artifice, Soulforging, and Radiomancy.

BC 2954 - Still following his visions, Lugett leads his followers to the promised land in the Wyrksteeth Mountains of Norwold, and brokers a deal with the gnomes already living there. Both peoples have similar mindsets and complimentary societies and they work together to salvage their civilization after the catastrophe nearly 50 years previous.

BC 2950 - Despite having found a home, the Brunian dwarves continue to decline due to sickness. The Wasting claims dwarves from all walks of life, from young to old. Their cousins on Skothar fare even worse, and increasingly turn to the practices of radiomancy and golemworks in order to survive.

Peoples elsewhere on Mystara do not fare much better. Even the far flung elves in Vulcania are beginning to feel the Wasting's effects. As the populace wears thin many people become desperate to save themselves and turn to ever more drastic measures.

BC 2874 - Foul winds continue to blow from across the seas, bringing sickness to the Brunian dwarves whenever they come. Lugett receives more visions telling him that salvation for his people lies deep in the mountains, beneath the caverns of the gnomes. He spends the next several decades writing his visions down and studying them extensively.

BC 2853 - Lugett begins his quest, travelling into the depths of the world. He leaves all of his notes behind to his son Kardrof, and is never seen again.

BC 2800 - Elves on Vulcania divide on the issue of magic verses technology, with the returnists migrating to the northern continent. The Taymorans, composed of several clans of humans surviving on southern Brun, turn to dark magic and entropic immortals. In order to escape the death of their culture, they turn to the embrace of undeath. Powerful wizards and clerics accept the Embrace of Blood (vampirism) in order to sustain themselves.

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In Farseer Refuge, the first Soulborn are created as an attempt to preserve the dwarven race from the effects of the Wasting. Though a marked victory for Soulforgers, many dwarves see this line of craftmagic as a dead end. As the pressures of the Wasting continue to plague the Skotharian dwarves, they sink into even deeper levels of their shelter.

BC 2749 - Having studied his father's visions, Kardrof Yadrak, along with several of his companions, set off to journey deep within the Wyrksteeth Mountains. Their kin, weakened by the Wasting, sink into despair, sure that they will never see their loved ones again. Nevertheless they allow the brave adventurers to choose their own fate.

BC 2743 - After nearly six years of wandering through dark tunnels, Kardrof Yadrak and his companions find what they seek, although not what they expected. They stumble upon a city of Deep Elves far below the surface. The inhabitants seem to expect the arrival of the dwarves and are gracious hosts. Both races have struggled with the Wasting over the centuries since the Great Rain of Fire, and they have much in common. Kardrof vows to learn all he can from the elves.

BC 2730 – Renewed efforts are made to make the Farseer fully functional, with several leading dwarven Artificers believing that not only can the Farseer view distant vistas, but that it might be able to transport individuals to those remote locations. This may be the miracle the dwarves need to save their people.

BC 2723 - Kardrof's expedition returns from the depths of the mountains, although Kardrof is not with them. His companions are hale and healthy, and bring with them secrets for combating the Wasting. The teachings and faith of the Deep Elves is slowly dispersed through the dwarven population, while their origins are kept secret.

BC 2630 - Seeing little progress made on the Farseer, a small group of dwarves decides to flee their shelter before the Wasting disease finally penetrates their abode. These dwarves are never heard from again by the kin that they leave behind. They eventually make their way to the Skotharian coast and are dominated by a contingent of kopru waiting for them there. These dwarves will eventually be transported to Vulcania to become a member state in the Adhuzan Dominarchy.

BC 2600 – Increasing pressures from giants and dragons in the area force the Brunian dwarves to move further south. They follow the coast until reaching a stretch of land called the Bridge of Oost, bordering the Dawn Sea.

BC 2578 - With the Wasting once again upon them, a brilliant young apprentice of Urthyne by the name of Dranwryf Korrskill, succeeds in repairing the Farseer. With his help, an aging Urthyne uses the artifact to find their kin living on Brun, and the dwarves set out to meet them. Too old to make the trip, Urthyne decides to stay with the Farseer, guiding her people from afar.

BC 2576 - With Urthyne and the Farseer to guide them, the Skotharian dwarves continue their journey to a slice of land between Brun and the Dawn Lands, called the Bridge of Oost. They move swiftly across the land, the dreaded Wasting disease dogging their heels and plaguing those unfortunate enough to inhabit the dwarves' planned route. They make few friends during their travels.

BC 2567 – The Skotharian dwarves begin to bicker and fracture. A portion of their number leaves Dranwryf's expedition and heads north in favor of colonizing a cavernous realm the dwarves have dubbed Hurgon.

BC 2565 – Skotharian offshoots found the realm of Hurgon.

BC 2544 - As they near their destination, the Skotharian dwarves continue to bicker and fracture. The most powerful wizards among them gather sects of followers and claim vast sections of territory for their own.

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Their air of superiority sours any joy the Yadrak may have felt at learning some of their brethren survived on Skothar, and the two communities of dwarves struggle to get along.

BC 2542 - The Moadreg conflicts with their neighbors intensifies. Giants, elves, even dragons in the area, take an immediate disliking to the plague bearing dwarves. Some of the giant tribes begin to work together to repel the new invaders.

BC 2536 - Rafiel takes an interest in the Moadreg, prompting several of their most skilled radiomancers to band together and begin building a wondrous artifact on the Bridge of Oost called the Gate of Light. Intrigued by the efforts, many dwarven radiomancers break their traditional seclusion and form a community around the artifact.

BC 2500 – The continental ice sheets recede opening new territories for the dwarves to settle. Unfortunately, this also spreads their numbers thin and opens their real to increased attacks from their neighbors.

BC 2475 – Dranwyrf makes one final plea to the dwarves of Hurgon to send support for his cause. He fears that without additional aid, the dwarves inhabiting the lands near Oost will be wiped out by the combined effort of elves and giants. To his amazement, a large force from Hurgon responds to his summons.

BC 2473 - Dranwyrf unites the clans and makes a final stand in the Maghkrys Mountains against the giant and elven hordes persecuting his people. When clan Yadrak, led by Aynmegk Yadrak, joins his cause, the combined strength of the dwarves crushes their enemies like copper on an anvil. Dranwyrf is named First King of the Shimmering Lands and the site of the battle becomes Drangyr, the first gatherhold of the Moadreg.

BC 2408 - Massive volcanic eruptions in Vulcania destroy the elvish civilizations on that continent and send gouts of black ash swirling into the atmosphere. The resulting clouds plunge the world into decades of darkness and despair as the climate shifts and hunger and death plague the lands.

The beastmen of the frozen north begin to breed true and start exploring the more desirable territories to the south. The tribes gather at Urzud.

BC 2350 - Most of the Taymoran nobility has now joined the ranks of the undead under the tutelage of the original Nosferatu.

BC 2319 - Construction on the Gate of Light is completed and the Moadreg now have a permanent gateway connecting to their ancestral lands. The power of the radiomancers grows and the wasting sickness begins to reach out from Moadreg lands to other territories.

BC 2300 - The Blighted Lands begin to seep through the Gate of Light and spread across the Bridge of Oost. Elves appear sailing white ships from the south, and begin to trade with Taymora.

This is the present day for the Mystara 2300 BC campaign setting.

Future Events

BC 2200 – A group of elves break off from Ilsundal's migration and settle in the lands of Glantri. These elves settle this territory to keep a watchful eye on the gnomes and dwarves of the Shimmering Lands, to insure that a resurgence in Blackmoorian technology never again results in another Great Rain of Fire.

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BC 2000 – The glacial dam at Klintest breaks, unleashing a great flood across Mogreth, and nearly wiping that civilization from the land.

BC 1800 - The dwarves have been completely decimated by a combination of internal plagues (spurred on by their continued use of the radiance) and external conflicts. Those dwarves who finally turn from the wicked ways of their ancestors are taken by Kagyar and fashioned into a new breed – one that is resistant to the dangers of the radiance.

BC 1750 to 1700 - A series of catastrophes, both natural and artificial, shatter the Known World and send a large portion of its southern lands, including Taymora, beneath the waves.

BC 1600-1300 - A colony of modrigswerg are transported to the Hollow Moon.



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Mistress Kerghyd

"Who is it?" Jyrdri Kerghyd's eyes darted across the workshop. Someone was there, she knew it. She could hear it. Her breathing heavy, the mistress of Kerghyd Estate put down her tools and walked away from the crystal ball glowing a dim blue-green, and began to poke her nose in every nook and cranny in the workshop. "Once a year... Once a year... Is that too much to ask? When I find you I'll skin you!" Jyrdri was furious. Once a year the Gate of Light opened. Once a year it granted access to an unlimited supply of the radiance. Once a year Jyrdri had the opportunity to collect as much of that power as she could before the Gate closed again. "Where are you!" she shouted, knocking over a stack of dusty parchments with a shriveled left hand.

"From the kitchen? I hear you!" she screamed and ran toward the door flinging it open. She would skin them all... especially that useless gnome Ellrini. But there was no one there. The kitchen was empty. Quiet. The dim blue glow called back to her. "My work... must finish." She glanced around the kitchen once again before returning to the pedestal in the center of her workshop. The copper and marble pedestal consisted of a two foot high column with a large bowl attached at the top. Sitting in the bowl, now pulsing with a faint green light was a large crystal sphere four feet in diameter. Copper pipes ran from the globe, through the pedestal, and into the floor, only to reemerge along one of the walls of the chamber. Knobs, dials and levers of all shapes and sizes adorned the pedestal, and as Jyrdri Kerghyd turned and flipped them the pace of the pulsing light slowed.

Sighing, she patted the crystal globe on the side sending ripples throughout its surface. What should have been solid crystal wavered and danced like a glob of gelatin. "What! Again?" her head shot up and her eyes shone daggers across the room. "Ahhh..." she said, her shoulders slumping as she caressed the globe once more. "It's only you."

"...if it's only me, then I must be dreaming."

"Aye," she replied, and brought her head closer to the globe.

"It's close. It's very close."

"Aye, what's close then? Hmmm? What?"

"What you've been looking for. I've found it. ...Durgyr, you know I'm not to be disturbed! You had better have a good explanation, or both you and Ellrini will suffer! ...I've found it, Mistress. It's close. It's very close. ...I've found it."

"What in the name...?" Jyrdri spun out of her reverie, her eyes immediately locked onto the far corner of the ceiling. Something black and amorphous hung there, shimmered for just a moment, and then vanished before re-coalescing at the periphery of her vision. Someone was here! Someone was scrying on her! The Mistress of Kerghyd cursed herself even as she threw up a defense. With her good hand firmly placed on the radiance globe, she extended her crippled arm from beneath the folds of her robe and shouted out words of warding. A crackling blue shockwave burst from her hand, driving the shadow out of her presence. "How much do they know?"

"I've found it, Mistress. ...but there is a problem..."

Yardrak Dwarves

The clan now known as Yardrak was originally a Blackmoorian era colony on what is now the northwestern coast of Brun. Before the Great Rain of Fire, and the axial shifting of the planet,

the Yardrak inhabited temperate mountain valleys, but after the disaster that destroyed Blackmoor they were thrust into sub arctic to arctic conditions. With such a sudden temperature change, many unsuspecting dwarves froze to death even before they understood what

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happened. Perhaps hit the hardest by both climactic changes and deadly winds carrying the Wasting, in addition to constant attacks by their beastmen and giantish neighbors, the Yadrak dwarves teetered on the verge of extinction multiple times.

The saviors of the Yadrak were far from benevolent however. Dark immortals that had already corrupted clans of northern elves fleeing underground, sought to extend their influence to dwarves dwelling in the region as well. Following visions sent to him by the patrons of the Deep Elves, Lugett Yadrak and a small band of dwarves journeyed deep beneath earth, searching for the salvation of their race. They found the Deep Elves who were ready and willing to share the dark secrets that they had already learned to stave off the Wasting and to survive in the depths of the world. Lugett agreed to stay with the elves in their stronghold, but his companions brought their secrets back up to the rest of clan Yadrak. After embracing their new dark patrons and performing the rituals required of them, the Yadrak grew stronger. No longer were they affected by the Wasting winds that blew across the sea, and they became prolific and strong enough to fend off the attacks of their neighbors. Lugett and his ilk became healthy and hale again, but in return they had to sacrifice their very souls to the elven immortals.

Only a handful of the Yadrak, the most senior patrons and matrons of the clan, know the truth behind their rise to power. The founder of their clan, Lugett Yadrak journeyed deep into the bowels of the world searching for a way to rid his people of the wasting. What he found (or rather what found him) would change his people's lives forever. The Deep Elves taught Lugett dark magic, sharing their faith of entropic immortals with the dwarves and showing them the rituals that were necessary to halt the progress of the Wasting.

Should this secret ever get out, that Lugett allied himself and his people with the hated elves – destroyers of Blackmoor, disaster would strike the Shimmering Lands. Though most Yadrak freely pledge themselves to their dark immortal

patrons, very few suspect the origins of their faith.



Felwig Dwarves

Ancestors of the Felwig dwarves hail from Skothar and claim to be descendants of some of the oldest dwarven civilizations on Mystara, from Mount Uberstar, the Stormkiller Mountains, the Dragon Hills and elsewhere. Though most of these civilizations were annihilated seconds after the Great Rain of Fire, enough of their citizens survived to start again. Dwarves journeying far from home, or deep enough within the earth to survive the disaster, slowly began to coalesce and attempted to rebuild their society.

The aftereffects of the Great Rain of Fire nearly wiped out all those who survived the initial disaster. Survivors quickly learned that they had to leave their former homelands far behind or suffer the consequences of the dreaded Wasting disease, and so many began to journey westward. Urthyne Drelgh, a young dwarven neophyte of Blackmorian magitech, stumbled upon a derelict outpost in the western wilds. Set deep under the earth's crust this shelter was secure enough to protect the dwarves from the Wasting... at least for a time. Soon refugees from across Skothar

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were flocking to the new sanctuary which eventually became known as Farseer Refuge.

Many dwarves brought with them fractured portions of Blackmoorian technomancy, and as their numbers grew, so too did their understanding of the ancient arts. Deep within Farseer, Urthyne found a powerful artifact, and she and her contemporaries spent decades and then centuries trying to unlock its secrets. So it was that the crafts of Artiface, Radiomancy and Soulforging were born. Though they do not wish to see it, their crafts were all corrupted by the taint of radiance poisoning, and soon the Wasting was upon them again, forcing them to seek out a new homeland or perish.

Because of their dependence on the ancient Blackmoorian arts, and their refusal to acknowledge the detrimental effects of the radiance, Felwig dwarves bring plague and pestilence with them wherever they travel. Few welcome the dwarves in new lands, and fewer still are those who live long enough to regret it if they do.

Karlheig Dwarves

Though they shared the same spaces on Skothar with their Felwig cousins for centuries, something has always kept the Karlheig dwarves separate from their kin. These clans hailed from the outermost dwarven settlements and colonies on Skothar, and continue to display the same drive of individualism that drove their ancestors to explore the fringes of civilization in the first place. Unfortunately for the Karlheig, something on the fringes of society touched them, twisting their personalities and even distorting the way they perceive reality.

After the Great Rain of Fire, the ancestors of the Karlheig dwarves gathered at Farseer Refuge along with their Felwig cousins. While the Felwig turned outward, looking toward Blackmoorian technomancy to save their society, the Karlheig dwarves turned inward. Dreams, prophecies, and the powers of the mind became their obsession, with weeks or even months of silent contemplation deep within Farseer Refuge being the norm for these dwarves.

When Dranwyrf Korrskill led the dwarves from Farseer Refuge to find their brethren living in Eastern Brun, the Karlheig dwarves went with him. Silent and insular, with few words ever being spoken amongst them, the Karlheig nonetheless proved their worth on the long journey. Their strange and terrible mind powers meant the difference between life and death against the fierce giant clans of the Dawn Lands, and without them it is doubtful that the dwarven migration would have survived intact.

Despite this fact, few feel comfortable around the Karlheig. Whispers abound that these secretive dwarves are never truly alone... that some other worldly beings fuel their powers and drive their ambitions. Indeed, during their long years spent in the borderlands of Blackmoor Karlheig dwarves fell under the sway of the despotic kopru. Since then they have been changed, both physically and mentally, to better serve the needs of their new masters. But dwarves are resilient, and unknown even to the kopru overseers, the Karlheig dwarves secretly plot to overthrow them and usurp the role of puppetmaster for themselves.

Hurgon Dwarves

In BC 2567, a group of Felwig and Karlheig dwarves broke away from Dranwyrf's migration to found their own nation in caverns found in southwestern Jannivarsland. Calling their new nation Hurgon, the dwarves fashioned a society in the image of their ancestors of old. Trandyn Overstar took the title of Regent of the Mines and organized his realm according to dwarven sensibilities that existed even before the rise of Blackmoor.

Not caring for Dranwyrf and the other dwarves they left, nor even for the fate of their brethren on Brun, the Hurgon dwarves sought to recreate their ancient glory. Delving ever deeper beneath the mountains, the dwarves of Hurgon quickly grew rich. Trade with neighboring kingdoms on Jannivarsland, and even those across the Dawn Sea, made them powerful... and envied.

Wealth and power were not the only things that the dwarves of Hurgon found in their new cavernous home. Deep beneath the mountain was

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a sealed vault, brimming with secret treasures of the Blackmoorian era, but that was not all they found. Something else lay beneath the stones, something of malevolent intelligence.

Several times the plea for help came from their brethren in the west, and each time fell upon the deaf ears of the Regent. When Dranwyrf sent his final desperate plea in BC 2473 he expected the same response. Much to his surprise a large contingent from Hurgon came to his aid, and was instrumental in founding the Shimmering Lands. Why the dwarves came is unknown for sure. Some speculate that the Regent went mad, or that the Hurgon dwarves delved too far into the earth and unleashed a monstrosity. The truth may never be known for sure, for no Hurgon dwarf will even speak of their old homeland.

Zarka Gnomes

Zarka gnomes have lived in the territory of the Shimmering Lands (and surroundings) for nearly 600 years. Many took to living in caverns after the Great Rain of Fire, and because of this they rarely entered into conflicts with neighboring beastmen and giants. This changed with the arrival of the Yadrak dwarves circa BC 2600. With the coming of the Yadrak, the Zarka gnomes saw once again a chance to live under the light of the sun. The two races were kindred spirits, and quickly formed fast bonds fostering cooperation.

Industrious, methodical, and extremely bureaucratic, Zarka gnomes have filled in all of the cultural niches that the neighboring dwarves had lost interest in. They are the glue that holds current day Shimmering Lands culture together. Mercantilism and trade are favored professions among the gnomes, with a close second being politics.

Gnomes of the Shimmering Lands are much more religious than the dwarves who migrated into the region, and many maintain a strong faith in the old gods of Blackmoor. Though few of their ancient strongholds remain under gnomish control, rumors of vaults containing Blackmoorian lore abound and many seek to reclaim them.

Giantkin

The giantkin race is a rather new addition to the region, and not a natural one. Though enemies with the giants for generations, the dwarves of the Shimmering Lands were nonetheless impressed with their strength and determination. Both made for excellent qualities in their servants, but the giants themselves were too large and unruly to control. Not willing to ignore such a resource, dwarven elders began experimenting on captured giants, molding and shaping them more to their liking. The giantkin are the results of such experiments.

Though many still remain slaves to the dwarves, there is a growing number of giantkin who have earned their freedom, and even become valued members of Shimmering Lands society. Those that are free often find they are best suited to lives in the military or servant class.

No love has been lost between the giantkin and their dwarven masters however, and there is a movement among the free giantkin to rid themselves of their former masters entirely. Though there are few among the other Shimmering Lands races that would ally themselves with the giantkin, many foreign powers have secretly backed them throughout the past several decades.

Shades of Blackmoor

Shades first emerged in BC 2319 with the completion of construction of the Gate of Light. Wispy and insubstantial, shades appear to be translucent ghost-like humans. Despite first impressions, shades are not counted among the undead, and clerical magic holds no power over them. In fact they are Blackmoorian era inhabitants who have been transformed by the tremendous destructive power of the Great Rain of Fire. Not only does the Gate of Light connect the Shimmering Lands with their ancestral homeland on Skothar, it also crosses the barriers of time, linking back to Blackmoor mere moments after the Great Rain of Fire.

Shades do not remember their past lives, though many do have some inkling of a previous existence. Since their emergence nearly twenty

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years ago, shades have traversed across the Shimmering Lands, though their major population centers are located in Himmem and Kairhyeld. It is in those two locations that shades have the ability to become substantial and to interact with the world around them. The further shades travel from these sites, the less substantial they become.

Though the reasons are unknown to most, shades derive substance from the radiance. The closer they are to a source of radiance energy, the more substantial they can become. This fact has played a key role in limiting their spread across the world, however shades thrive near most Shimmering Lands settlements, especially those that contain a large number of radiomancers.



A Day in the Life of Kerghyd Estate

"This will not do!" Despite the fearsome appearance of the guards, decked out as they were in red lacquered armor and demonic face plates, they visibly quailed at the tone of Ellrini's voice. The old gnome's gray hair was done up in a tight bun that pulled the skin back around her face. Her eyes, framed by thin wire glasses, remained frozen on the crumpled and bloody form lying on the stone tiles before her.

The slave, a man from the west she thought, with olive complected skin and jet black hair, met her gaze. He was one of the kitchen servers, and had been caught whispering to his peers while clearing the Elder's table. Had her mistress overheard that effrontery, all of their lives might be forfeit. "Cut out his tongue," she said, turning to leave. "And blind him. Mistress is running low on animals for her... work..."

Ellrini clasped her hands together as she walked down the long semi-circular hall of the outer estate. Although she moved swiftly, she took great care that her steps were soft and made no sound. Even though the mistress rarely graced the outer halls it was always good practice to behave as if in her presence. Quickly she made her way to the Servant's Gate and exited the compound. Two of the guards there silently nodded to their fellows and fell into escort exactly seven feet behind her, as was proper. Ellrini and her small entourage made their way down a narrow gravel trail several hundred feet away from the estate to a small stone building with a roof covered half in shingles and half in thatch. Muffled growls and whimpers came from within and two figures stood outside speaking to one another in hushed tones, one with the stockier frame of a dwarf and the other slightly shorter and with a much leaner physique.

"Good, you're both here. It will save me an additional trip to track you down, Hiskel," she said acknowledging the tow headed gnome and lifting one eyebrow. "Your shipments are late. The foodstores are running low. We are down to our last weeks worth of flour, and oats, and the last of the tubers. And that shipment of wine from Fyngul that you promised me two months ago still isn't here."

"I know Ellrini. I was just telling old Sehg here to expect some company. Supply caravan should be a day away now."

"And the wine?" she asked.

"...uh, that's coming too," Hiskel stammered.

"See to it." Hiskel gulped, not daring to respond. Under the pressure of having Ellrini stare at him for several seconds he sullenly walked away. When the gnome was gone she turned her attentions to the dwarf. "Sehgdar, speaking of company, I hear we've had some recently."

The grizzled dwarf nodded and gave her a grim smile. The Wasting had taken hold of him and his lower jaw and half of his upper had been replaced with silver. "Aye," he rasped. "Something out there on the border with Derygk Estate. Seen them twice now. A small group, and fast. Could be treasure seekers. Could be spies from Derygk. Could be the Black Prince and his hounds. I've already doubled the patrols, so you've no need to come down here."

"Fine," Ellrini responded, her arms crossed. "With the day I'm having I needed to be sure." She turned to leave, but then hesitated. "When Hiskel's merchants get here, make sure they are followed at all times. See to it they don't know they're being observed. I want to know if these merchants and your recent visitors are connected in any way."

Ellrini sat down at her desk and let out a long sigh as she kicked off her slippers. A slave placed a hot cup of tea in front of her and then gingerly stepped out of the room. Ellrini took the cup in hand and inhaled its aroma... a hint of cinnamon, just as she liked. She took a single sip before a light knock on her office door

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interrupted her. Her brow furled, she set down the cup, and waited several minutes before replying, "Enter."

"I need to see Mistress. It's urgent." A burly dwarf entered into the room, dust from the road still thick about him. Tossing his sack into a corner, he began rummaging through the pouches at his belt.

Ellrini stiffened in her seat. "I take all matters to Mistress Kerghyd, Drugyr, and besides I can still smell the scaled stink of Isshum on you. What's so important that you had to interrupt my evening tea, even before washing yourself?"

"Not this time, Ellrini," Drugyr replied as he pulled out a scroll sealed with the symbols of Mogreth and dangled a polished teak token hanging from a leather strap in front of her face. "Mistress will see me. I've come straight from Tuurash' palace."

Social Structures

Although individual aspirations may differ, all Moadreg are creatures driven by ambition. They strive to attain pinnacle achievements in whatever field it is that they pursue, be that arcane craftsmanship, mastery of the Radiance, or besting fiends in the art of pact-making. During the pursuit of these goals the one thing that Moadreg despise the most is interruption. Thus they spend a great deal of preparation time making sure that their estates are running smoothly, and that all of their needs will be taken care of at the slightest whim. Servants, both magical and mundane exist on the estate with one purpose, to serve and to be seen as little as possible.

Estates can be quite large, sometimes encompassing dozens of miles, both above and below the ground, with the more remote estates being the most desirable. Neighboring estates are rarely ever closer than a dozen miles from one another (preferably with dense wilderness in between) and usually belong to close family. When the need arises a dwarf will send his servants to communicate with his neighbors. They may cooperate in order to organize common defenses, extract suitable taxes from surrounding populations, and occasionally combine their efforts on some mystical project. It is a grave need indeed however, that will actually bring the dwarves together in person.

Moadreg do marry and raise families, although it is not uncommon for a husband and wife to retain their own independent estates in addition to a familial one. It is common practice to spend only

enough time together as is required to start a family. Children are usually left in the care of servants on the family estate while their parents retire back to the confines of their own domains. Once children reach adulthood they are expected to provide for themselves and either establish estates of their own or to take control of an existing one (vacant or otherwise). It is not uncommon for a vacant Moadreg estate to go unnoticed for an extended period of time. It is an unfortunate fact of life that the Moadreg are sickly people, and often a dwarf will succumb to illness and not be missed by his peers for several decades.

Most dwarves prefer to live solitary lives, though few actually view themselves as ever being truly alone. Not all dwarves are lucky, or powerful, enough to maintain their own estates. Those who cannot attain their own private domains, live in more cosmopolitan communities throughout Moadreg territory. These towns and villages house the middle class of Moadreg culture, the artisans, merchants, and skilled laborers required to make any advanced society run. Other races find themselves living alongside their more reclusive neighbors in such communities, with gnomes making up the majority. Unlike their dwarven counterparts, the Shimmering Lands gnomes are very outgoing and have a strong sense of community.

Caste System

The Moadreg have a very strict caste system, although movement between castes is not impossible, and for many dwarves at least, it is the norm. Other races living within the

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Shimmering Lands may also move between castes, however limitations on what can be achieved are greater for them.

Elders: This is the highest level in the caste system that can be achieved, and it is reserved for dwarves alone. Only elders may own estates, and it is from this select few that members of the Elder Conclave are chosen. Becoming an elder is the dream of every dwarf. Owning one's own estate offers increased isolation from the rest of society, and allows the dwarf to pursue whatever goals they have set for themselves with a vigor and a modicum of privacy. Achieving elder status does bring new responsibilities as well however. By the dictates set forth by Drangyr, all elders must meet with their peers at a gatherhold in order to insure the continued safety of the land. They must supply the gatherhold with a portion of their personal servants and slaves to serve in the Shimmering Land's army, and must appoint a general to oversee such personnel.

Servants: Any who serve an elder are considered to be a part of the servant class, and any race living in the Shimmering Lands may achieve this status. Although both merchants and warriors fall into this category as well, they rarely serve an elder directly. The servant caste is made up of all individuals who work on a private estate and directly serve an elder. These individuals can include family members of the elder not yet powerful enough to achieve their own estate, old friends and colleagues that the elder still trusts, and anyone else employed by an elder. Many see to the day to day activities that are required to keep an estate functional, but that their masters can not be bothered to deal with.

Merchants/Traders: Merchants and traders are the individuals who make sure that the Shimmering Lands continue to function by moving goods and supplies into areas where they are required. Merchants may live in or near to a gatherhold, or may be based out of one of the few true cities within the nation. Regardless of where they live, a merchant is considered to be a servant of any elders that have jurisdiction over their territory - thus traveling merchants may fall under the service of different elders depending upon

where they are currently operating from. Although strictly speaking a merchant must obey any order given to them by an elder, this rarely happens and merchants are allowed to go about their business with relatively few constraints.

Warriors: Many dwarves spend their younger lives as part of the warrior caste, sent off by their elders to fight against the growing number of enemies that the Moadreg accumulate, but the other races are just as common within the ranks of the military as well. Warriors may belong directly to an elder in which case they reside on an estate (though typically far enough away from the elder's residence so as not to disturb them), or they may be assigned to a gatherhold. Typically an elder will assign a percentage of their warriors to a gatherhold for a predetermined amount of time. During this time those warriors serve the gatherhold, most often commanded directly by a general appointed by the local conclave. After the period of service is completed, a warrior's service reverts to their original master.

Slaves: Slaves can be found in nearly every portion of Shimmering Lands society, serving either on an estate, in a gatherhold or city, and even in the army. A slave's lot is grim, for this is the one caste in Moadreg society that can never advance. Once a slave, always a slave. On occasion slaves have been "set free" when their current master dies, especially if that elder is in a remote location and no one learns of his death for a long time. Such slaves are far from safe unless they leave the Shimmering Lands completely however, because bands of slavers are always looking to acquire new merchandise, whether it has been pre-owned or not. Dwarves are never slaves within the Shimmering Lands (although sometime an unfortunate is sold to foreign powers), nor are soulbound or shades. Gnomes very rarely receive this fate, but any other race is fair game.

Estates, Gatherholds, and Cities

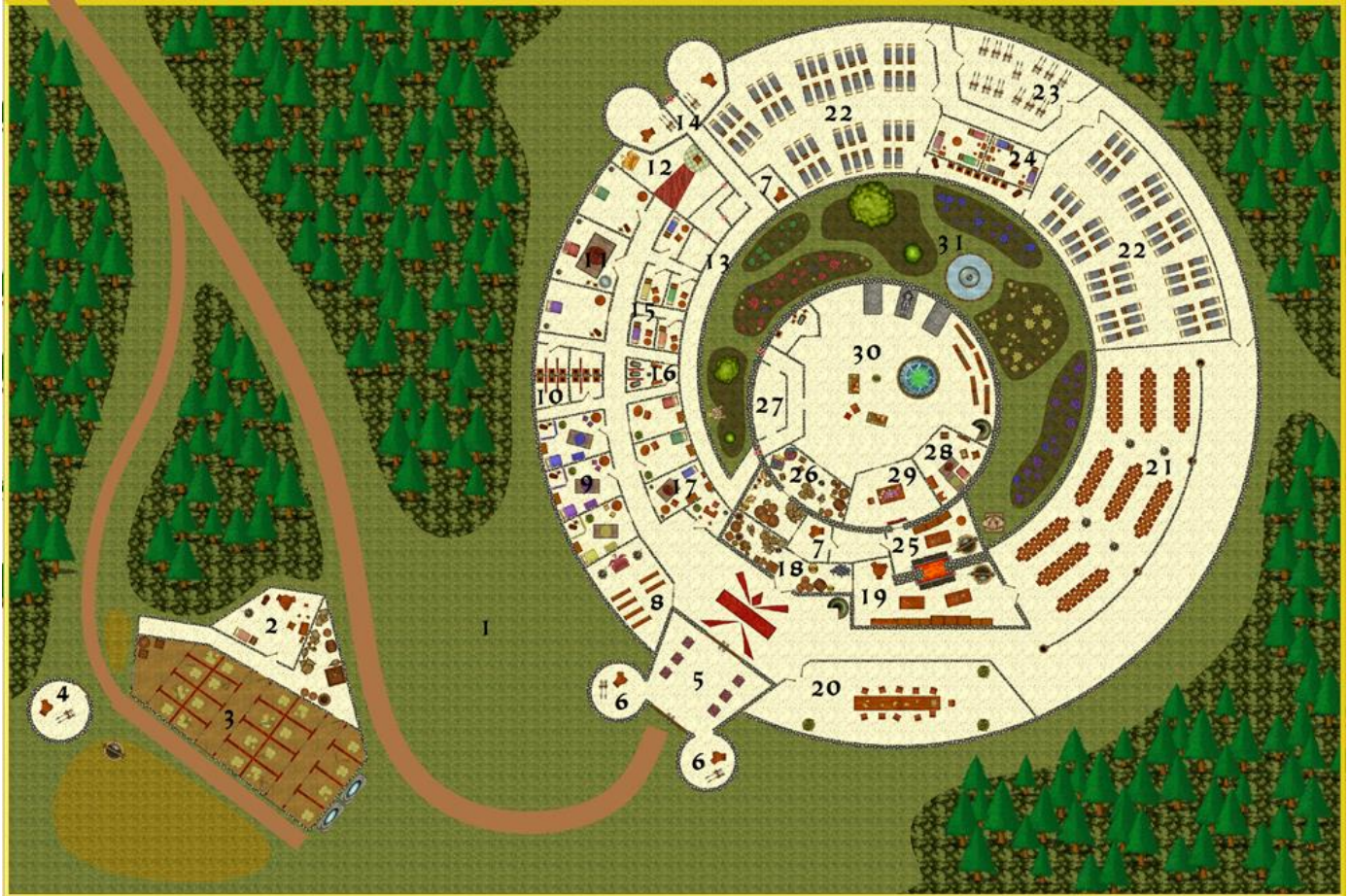
The residents of the Shimmering Lands have several varied types of abodes, which roughly grouped fall into three different categories; estates, gatherholds, and cities.

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Estates: Estates are the most numerous dwellings throughout the lands, the rights to live upon one reserved solely for dwarves. A typical estate will comfortably house its dwarven master, all of his retainers and servants, and a small guard force or standing army. Often the land on an estate, except for the main compound, is unworked and left in its natural state. In locales with dangerous

wildlife, this has the added benefit of helping to keep out unwanted guests. The space for estates is limited, and their demand is high - dwarves prefer living a solitary life, especially as they mature. One of the main pressures for the continued expansion of the Shimmering Lands is to provide its upper class with more space to live upon.

Kerghyd Estate



Estate Grounds

1) Estate Grounds – Kerghyd is one of the larger estates in Gromevand, measuring just under 200 square miles in area (typical estates can cover anywhere from 10 up to several thousand square miles of land, though most fall under 100). Mostly blanketed in untamed forest, a small personal garden on the outskirts of the estate helps supplement food brought in by merchants. Mistress Kerghyd ensures her privacy by surrounding herself with vast tracks of dangerous

wilderness, dangerous to travel through even for estate inhabitants.

2) Grounds Keeper's Abode – As Master of the Grounds, Sehgdar Kerghyd's responsibilities are focused around maintaining the security and privacy of the Estate. In addition to this abode, he maintains one of the border watch towers as his private workshop and laboratory. Sehgdar stands to inherit the estate should anything happen to his sister, though since they are close in age he can't depend on her natural demise.

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Outwardly he is a loyal servant of Kerghyd, but in truth he desires an Estate of his own.

3) Stables – The stables are not attached to the main compound, and are far enough away that the noise and stink of the animals will not upset the elder. Kerghyd maintains a dozen riding mastiffs here, with another dozen patrolling the borders stationed at smaller stables on the outlying guard towers.

4) Guard Tower – Guard towers ring the perimeter of Kerghyd Estate, and are sparsely manned by the elder's guards. Some are shaped as crags of stone jutting from the landscape, while others are disguised to look like enormous trees, with vines and foliage encouraged as overgrowth. Guards send word of intruders back to the guard captain stationed at the main compound, either through magical means or by using messenger birds.

Outer Estate Compound

5) Servant's Entrance – The largest entrance into the compound is that used by the servants. Supplies, prisoners, and guests all pass through this portal, although Mistress Kerghyd rarely does. The servant's entrance is well apportioned and gaudy, designed to impress and intimidate any who walk through. Larger estates, like Kerghyd, have a reception area and audience hall attached.

6) Servant's Entrance Guard Towers – Always manned by a pair of dwarves, these towers are positioned to keep an eye on all those who would approach the compound from the main path.

7) Guard Post – In addition to the various traps and wards that protect the inner sanctum, guards are stationed at posts throughout the compound at all times. All guards posted in the inner sanctum are dwarven warriors, many of whom claim some relation to the mistress of the estate.

8) Shrine – Though not particularly devout, Mistress Kerghyd allows her servants to maintain a shrine to Angrboda. Many can be found here throughout the day, offering up minor sacrifices in the hopes that Angrboda will look down upon

them and ward off the ravages of the Wasting, of which many in Kerghyd suffer.

9) Guest Rooms – Traveling merchants, minor conclave officials, and even distant relations of the Elder all have occasion to visit the Estate. Such guests are provided these modest rooms, and are strongly encouraged to complete their business and continue on their way. It is rare for a guest to occupy one of these rooms for more than one or two nights.

10) Privies – The privies are reserved for the servants and guests. Elders have their own attached to their main living chambers. Both privies share a common plumbing which typically leads to an underground chamber populated by puddings and other refuse devouring beasts. These underground chambers can be accessed through the servant's quarters, if they can be accessed at all.

11) Lavish Guest Rooms – Reserved for more important guests, these rooms are larger and filled with ornamental furniture and minor treasures. Dignitaries from foreign powers, nearby gatherholds, and even other estates are usually afforded one of these rooms.

12) Audience Chamber – On the rare occasions when Mistress Kerghyd meets with guests of importance, she does so from this chamber. Secret doors, disguised to blend in with the stone walls of this room, allow the elder to enter and leave this chamber at will without using any of the complex's shared spaces.

13) Elder's Hallway – The Elder's Hallway provides private access into and out of the complex, audience chamber, inner sanctum, and the central courtyard without the possibility of ever seeing a servant or guest. Guards are in rooms off of the main entrance, but their activities are strictly monitored and timed so that they will never bump into the elder in the hallway.

14) Main Entrance – Smaller and less obtrusive, the main entrance is reserved for the elder. Although hidden by a secret door and guarded by both magical and mundane traps, most household servants are aware of its location. Several passages branch off from the main entryway,

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leading to other locations on the estate, including the servant's quarters, the audience chamber, and the inner sanctum.

15) Servant's Quarters – This section of the outer compound is reserved for skilled servants and craftsmen who live on the Estate. Engineers, cooks, arcanists, clerics and clerks, all share these rooms. Most sleep on bunks and maintain a locked chest for the personal property. Head servants, those who must manage others, have quarters all to themselves.

16) Bath House – Shared by guests and servants alike, the bath house is where residents of the complex may bathe and groom themselves. Water, whether warm or cold, is drawn from the kitchen wells.

17) Majordomo's Quarters and Office – The gnome Ellrini Draithwan resides in these quarters, which serve the dual purpose of living space and office. Ellrini is Mistress Kerghyd's majordomo, and oversees all aspects of running the Estate. The small, gray haired gnome, browbeats her subordinates with ruthless efficiency. Excepting extreme circumstances, she is the only servant on the Estate granted direct audiences with its Mistress.

18) Outer Storage – Store rooms hold everything from food, to raw materials and magical supplies; everything that both the elder and their servants need to keep the estate running. These rooms often have a short pass through hallways that lead into the inner compound, in order to provide trusted servants with easy access to supplies that their master needs. Mistress Kerghyd will often use these passages to retrieve supplies for herself, in order to avoid contact with her bothersome retainers.

19) Outer Kitchens – Meals are prepared here for all household servants as well as any soldiers stationed in the main Estate barracks at the time.

20) Conclave Chamber – Estate managers meet here to discuss any important issues regarding their duties. In theory the Estate Mistress is the head of this conclave, although in practice she almost never attends these meetings. Instead, the majordomo, Ellrini Draithwan, presides over

these gatherings to insure that all of her Mistresses needs are met.

21) Servant's Mess – Servants, including all guards stationed in the barracks, usually take their meals here. Although the mess can accommodate nearly every servant in the Estate, meals are usually a quiet and somber event. Disturbing the Elder is something that all residents of the Estate actively avoid.

22) Barracks – There are over a thousand soldiers serving on Kerghyd Estate, 300 of which are stationed in the main compound at all times. Overseen by Major Wynkar Ghers, these soldiers act as guards, defenders, hunters and trackers, and special operatives - performing any task that their mistress requires which brute force or martial prowess can achieve. Soldiers operate on a rotation, being moved from duty to duty on the estate, and there are typically many more roaming about on the grounds than are stationed at the compound proper.

23) Armory – Placed between the two barracks, this vault houses the armor and weapons for all of the soldiers stationed here at the time. Unless on guard duty, or called to arms, soldiers do not wear armor or brandish weapons while in the Estate compound.

24) Officer's Quarters – Major Wynkar Ghers occupies one of these rooms, while the other is shared by his two lieutenants, Granon Brak and Joryhs Vylk. Brak is career military, having seen campaigns from the frozen wastes of Grondheim to the plains of Pampa Ichu. Joryhs Vylk is the second daughter of the Vylk Estate in Demehvand. Determined and ambitious, she will grab hold of any opportunity to further her own social standing and attain her dream of becoming mistress of her own estate.

Inner Sanctum

25) Inner Kitchens – Separated from the outer kitchens, this area is devoted solely to the task of feeding the Mistress of Kerghyd Estate. Cross contamination of food bound for the servants is abhorrent to most Elders, and Mistress Kerghyd is no exception.

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26) Inner Storage – The goods and supplies stored here are meant for the direct consumption of Mistress Kerghyd. Servants insure that the materials stored here never run dry, restocking them when their Mistress is sure to be elsewhere.

27) Special Servant's Quarters - Despite the desire for ultimate privacy, sometimes the help of a servant is required in the inner sanctum. Mistress Kerghyd keeps a hulking construct made of stone, iron, and wood here. The thing has no will of its own, but follows the orders of its Mistress to the letter.

28) Elder's Living Space – All the amenities of home are provided to the Mistress Kerghyd here: food, bathing, privies, and a bed. As long as her estate is running smoothly, and should she wish it, the mistress never needs to leave these quarters.

29) Elder's Dining Room – Mistress Kerghyd takes all of her meals here, when she remembers to eat at all. Servants prepare her meals before she enters, and only enter to clean the area once she has left the room. It is not uncommon that a meal remains untouched, especially when Mistress Kerghyd is engrossed by one of her many projects.

30) Workshop – This is the area in which Mistress Kerghyd spends most of her time. It functions mainly as a workshop, although there is also a space set aside for a library. The center of this room is dominated by a massive globe on a stone and metal pedestal. This is Kerghyd's radiance receptacle – a device that draws and stores radiance energy from the Gate of Light once a year.

31) Courtyard – Open aired, this courtyard is divided by several gardens, each one growing exotic flora taken from across the Shimmering Lands and beyond. Many of these plants possess unique properties, which Mistress Kerghyd utilizes in her varied experiments.

Dungeon Level

32) Cells – Prisoners and slaves (especially troublesome ones that have displeased their betters in some way) are kept here. Mistress

Kerghyd often has need for such “animals” as test subjects for her research. Like the store rooms, these chambers have adjoining passageways into the inner compound so that the elder may access supplies without being observed by those beneath her.

33) Treasure Vault – Valuables, sentimental baubles, collected artifacts, and failed experiments all find their way into this vault - anything that Mistress Kerghyd deems to be for her eyes only. Stashed amongst the other trinkets of this room is Mistress Kerghyd's prized possession – a dwarven Heirloom Brooch carried here by her ancestors from shattered Blackmoor.

34) Refuse Room – A deep pit with acidic jellies sloshing about on the bottom, this refuse room is the final destination for all garbage that the Estate produces. A grated shaft leads up from this chamber to the grounds above, ventilating the acrid pallor of the pit so that it does not foul the rest of the air in the compound.

Gatherholds

In many ways a gatherhold is an extension of several estates, and a necessity for their survival. Although each estate provides for its own defenses, these act mainly to insure the dwarven elder's privacy from their neighbors, and can rarely withstand a concerted attack by outside forces. Given the natural proclivities of most dwarven elders, few strong communities were formed during the dwarven settlement of the area. This, coupled with the fact that many of their neighbors hate them, would have led to the downfall of the fledgling dwarven nation were it not for the victory of Drangyr's alliance of houses in 2473 BC and the accords subsequently set forth by him.

There are currently seven gatherholds established within the Shimmering Lands, each one of them given responsibility over a specific territory or province. All estates within a province are expected to send a portion of their personal forces to serve the lord of the gatherhold, usually referred to as a general, a position of office that is voted in by the gatherhold's Lesser Conclave. New gatherholds can be created with the

sanctions of the Elder Conclave, and in fact many disenfranchised dwarves strive toward this end in order to earn themselves an estate of their own in unsettled territory. Two such territories exist currently in the Shimmering Lands, one to the west of Drangyr and one to the east of it.

In some cases, especially in areas where gnomes are more prevalent, cities may grow up around the gatherhold fortress. Strictly speaking, the gatherhold's forces have no responsibilities to defend such settlements placed upon them by the strictures of Dranwyrf, but in practice the city and its inhabitants benefit from the added protection that the gatherhold affords. Most gatherholds maintain border keeps throughout their territory. Each is appointed its own commander and supplied with troops from the gatherhold itself.

Cities

Though most Moadreg prefer solitude, there are several circumstances under which cities exist. Of the dwarves themselves, both the Yardrak and the immigrants from Hurgon prefer to live in cities. These settlements tend to have sections both above and below ground, and are divided into sections separating each of the classes of Moadreg society. Yardrak cities are dominated by a single founding family and are oppressive and foreboding locals. While the Yardrak are more social than their brethren, they guard their secrets jealously, and many who run afoul of them never leave their cities alive. Less numerous than the Yardrak, Hurgon dwarves build their settlements underground where they can be better defended. Non dwarves are viewed with suspicion in these places, for Hurgon dwarves are plagued by fear and paranoia.

Gnomes, as well as others in the servant and merchant classes also tend to congregate in cities and it is because of this that communities like Gromhyeld, Demhyeld, Fyngul, and Gnen have developed into the major trading centers of the Shimmering Lands. It is these places that most foreigners are most familiar with, since these cities place less restrictions on travelers from other lands.

Government and Politics

The Shimmering Lands are governed by two major bodies. The Elder Conclave is the smaller of the two, composed entirely of dwarves from the most ancient of Moadreg houses. A semi-secretive organization, the Conclave is mostly uninterested in the daily routine needed to keep the country running, instead focusing its attention on foreign affairs. The Golden Parliament is larger, dominated mostly by gnomes and dwarves from less prestigious houses. The Parliament concerns itself with all of the internal operations in the Shimmering Lands.

The Golden Parliament

The Golden Parliament is made up mostly of gnomes and does most of the hands on work of running the nation. They interpret the edicts handed down by the Elder Conclave by enacting laws, as well as run the organizations dedicated to enforcing them. Representatives of the Parliament are appointed by local conclaves and each is given authority based on the population and importance of the region they represent.

In practice, the Parliament has ultimate authority over most of the populous areas in the Shimmering Lands (the Bridge of Oost, and all cities on the mainland: Gromehyeld, Tairhyeld, Demhyeld, and to a lesser extend Kohlgor and Ghorrash), but they have very little power anywhere else.

Conclaves

Conclaves form the basis of all governing bodies in the Shimmering Lands. They consist of a council of equals led by a Conclave Head. The position of Head is typically assumed by the member of the Conclave who is perceived to hold the most power (typically based on martial might, political fortitude, or arcane prowess) and can change constantly.

The smallest recognized Conclaves are those that govern dwarven Estates, with the dwarven Elder serving as Conclave Head and his chief servants as his advisors. In practice however, most Elders entrust the position to their majordomos or closest relatives (if they get along).

Regional Conclaves also exist, comprised of representatives from several neighboring Estates. Each Estate is allowed a single council member and the Head position is usually taken by the representative of the largest and most powerful Estate in the region. These Conclaves in turn, select a member to represent them in the Provincial Conclave.

Provincial Conclaves

There are six Provincial Conclaves, one to govern each of the provinces of the Shimmering Lands (except for Dranevar where the Elder Conclave meets). Provincial Conclaves are based in the Gatherhold of each province and are tasked primarily with the defense of their province from outside aggressors.

Unlike lesser conclaves, the Head of each Provincial Conclave is a dwarf who has no allegiance to any of the Estates under its protection. This dwarf is voted in by the Provincial Conclave council members and typically awarded the title of general. A general keeps their position for life, until voted out by the council members (a process that must be approved by each Regional Conclave in the province, and which disgraces the aforementioned general), or until they are awarded an Estate of their own (typically decreed by the Elder Conclave as a reward for distinguished service).

Elder Conclave

Formed after the battle at Drangyr, by Dranwyrf himself, the Elder Conclave (often simply referred to as The Conclave) is a semi-secretive cabal that meets infrequently, and then only to discuss matters mostly related to foreign affairs. The core members of The Conclave are Clan Elders – all those who swore allegiance to Dranwyrf during the formation of the Shimmering Lands. The seven core members include Dranwyrf Korrskill - the Conclave Head, Engdyr Heldfyst, and Kyrreh Drashmehr (from Clan Felweg), Aynmegk Yadrak, and Lhenty Ghorrash (of Clan Yadrak) and Gherihk Gyrbain (of Clan Karlheig), and Urrigh Wanwyrf (from

Clan Hurgon). They are advised by a lesser council made up of the six provincial generals.

The Elder Conclave coordinates all military activity in the Shimmering Lands. They may also make decrees to the Golden Parliament on issues germane to the running of the internal government, however most of these are concerned with upholding the sanctity and privacy of dwarven estates. Other matters are beyond the Conclave's notice.

Currency

Many forms of ancient Blackmoorian coinage survive and are still in use; however the dwarves also mint their own coins. Shimmering Lands coins are hexagonal in shape with the obverse containing the image of Dranwyrf in profile. Each type of coin has a different image on its reverse. Platinum *gates* depict the Gate of Light, golden *gleams* sport various renowned dwarven elders, silver *shimmers* depict a crossed hammer and pick, and copper *glints* show the Andahar Hawk in remembrance of lost Blackmoor.

Laws and Customs

Dwarven estate owners are expected to tithe 10% of their raw resources and troops to their local Gatherhold every year. While resources are simply consumed, troops are rotated out on a regular schedule. City dwelling folk pay a more traditional tax of 10% of their annual income.

On individual estates, an Elder's word is law. Neither the Elder Conclave nor the Golden Parliament will interfere with the will of an Elder on their own land, unless the Elder's actions threaten the sanctity and security of the Shimmering Lands as a whole.

Gnomish settlements, as well as many of the larger cities, have more formalized laws. Punishment is harsh and is always the same for most any offense: criminals are captured and sold off in one of the Shimmering Land's many slave markets. Minor offenders usually end up serving a nearby estate, but those who commit major crimes are more likely to find themselves on the road to Isshum, to live out the remainder of their lives fighting in that city's arena. Dwarves

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convicted of any crime are given the opportunity to join a military order in recompense, though dwarven lenience only goes so far. Repeat offenders are likely to find themselves on the road to Isshum along with the violent criminals of other races.

Military

Military forces in the Shimmering Lands are controlled by one of the six Provincial Conclaves, each led by their respective provincial general. Any other military installations (those outside of provincial territories) fall directly under the purview of the Elder Conclave.

Demhyeld Vassals

Brenohk 8%

Frysghid 9%

Garnekh 6%

Hyvid 7%

Jarduhl 12%

Meghdul 10%

Yadrak 13%

Other Estates 35%

The vassal soldiers based in Demhyeld are commanded by General Grahl, who in turn reports to the Demehvand Conclave. A scheming backstabber, Grahl climbed to his current position by betraying everyone he ever knew. For the past several decades he has been trying to convince the Elder Conclave to back a military attempt to take the northlands from its current giant occupants. Grahl dreams of liberating the ancestral home of the Yadrak and of all the secrets he may find there.

Many of the estates in Demehvand are populated by Yadrak dwarves, who are much more social than their Skotharian cousins. The Demehvand troops are integrated under the following companies.

1st Company (): 50 elite (D6) dwarven summoners; plus 2 lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

2nd Company (): 300 elite (D4) dwarven and tiefling cavalry armed with crossbows and halberds, riding hellhounds; plus 6 sergeants (D6), 3 lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

3rd Company (): 1000 expert (D3) dwarven tiefling heavy footmen armed with battle axes and flails; plus 10 sergeants (D6), 5 lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

4th Company (): 1000 expert (D1) dwarven light footmen armed with crossbows and axes; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 lieutenants (D6), and 1 captain (D8)

Gromhyeld Vassals

Ghuryd 12%

Kerghyd 15%

Tynghed 14%

Wanwyrf 17%

Other estates 42%

The vassal soldiers based in Gromhyeld are commanded by General Dryag, who in turn reports to the Gromevand Conclave. Vassal soldiers come from estates located across Gromevand however, once they begin service at Gromhyeld they are expected to work and fight as a team.

Scarred and ambitious, Dryag walks a fine line between keeping the Elders of Gromhyeld in check and being labeled a coward or failure. He dreams of power for himself, yet should he fail in Gromevand's defense, he may be forced to join the Seekers. Dryag integrates his troops under the following companies.

1st Company (): 50 elite (D6) dwarven enthralled; plus 2 Lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

2nd Company (): 50 assorted enthralled beasts; plus 5 thrall masters (D6), 2 Lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

3rd Company (): 300 giantkin thralls armed with clubs and war hammers; plus 15 thrall masters (D6), 7 Lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

4th Company (): 50 giant thralls armed with clubs

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and war hammers; plus 5 thrall masters (D6), and 1 captain (D8)

5th Company (): 1000 expert (D1) dwarf and (G1) gnome light footmen armed with crossbows and axes; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6), and 1 captain (D8)

Hemhyeld Vassals

Annhet 7%

Fungyr 11%

Ghorrash 22%

Kohlgor 17%

Tyrrid 5%

Other Estates 38%

Jehrys Sogktar is a witch of infamous repute and the general of Hemhyeld. Though she reports directly to the Hemevand Conclave, she can often be “convinced” to lead punitive expeditions across the Hyrvoed Mountains to collect much sought after giant thralls. Rumors abound that she traffics in souls, and that this is her favored method of payment for the services she provides.

Many of the dwarven troops under her command are trained in the use of exotic poisons, coating their weapons before battle. Such poisons rarely cause death outright. Instead they are designed to cripple and incapacitate their victims... making it easier for Sogktar and her troops to take prisoners.

1st Company (): 50 elite (D6) dwarven summoners; plus 2 Lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

2nd Company (): 1000 abyssal thralls; plus 10 sergeants (D6), 5 Lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

3rd Company (): 500 expert (D1) dwarven tiefling light footmen armed with crossbows and axes; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6), and 1 captain (D8)

4th Company (): 700 giantkin thralls armed with clubs and war hammers; plus 30 thrall masters (D6), 15 Lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

Kairhyeld Vassals

Drynneg 8%

Heldfyst 16%

Lumegk 12%

Thaghdyt 13%

Other Estates 51%

Karghthyne troops are led by General Ryndis Heldfyst. The younger sister of Engdyr, Ryndis has survived repeated assassination attempts from her brother. Her strong and robust outward appearance belies the fact that Ryndis is kept alive only by a magically beating obsidian heart implanted deep within her chest.

Kairhyeld troops whisper that when Ryndis lost her original heart, she lost all compassion toward living souls. For her the world is black and white, containing only allies and enemies – foremost amongst that list her own hated brother.

1st Company (): 50 expert (S5) shade scouts and (G4) gnome rangers armed with crossbows and rapiers

2nd Company (Flame Drakes): 300 elite (D4) dwarven artillerists armed with dragonbelchers and short swords; plus 12 Lieutenants (D7), 2 captains (D10), and a major (D12)

3rd Company (): 250 elite (D2) dwarven cavalry armed with crossbows and halberds, riding war mastiffs; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6) and a captain (D8)

5th Company (): 500 expert (D2) dwarven footmen armed with axes and daggers; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6), and a captain (D8)

Qifhyeld Vassals

Gyrbain 27%

Other Estates

The general of Qivar is very rarely seen, at least in the flesh. Granik Thyn commands his lieutenants and subordinates in their dreams, where he appears as a small well dressed dwarf with a neatly trimmed gray beard. In truth,

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Thyn's flesh is bloated and grotesque and constantly oozing a viscous liquid that makes him smell as if he just emerged from a swamp.

Thyn's attention is firmly focused on the Dawn Lands and the terrors (perceived and otherwise) that the dwarves fled from during their migration through those lands.

1st Company (): 50 elite (D6) dwarven enthralled; plus 2 Lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

2nd Company (): 50 assorted enthralled beasts; plus 5 thrall masters (D6), 2 Lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

3rd Company (): 200 giant thralls armed with clubs and war hammers; plus 10 thrall masters (D6), 5 Lieutenants (D8), and 1 captain (D10)

4th Company (): 1000 expert (D1) dwarf and (G1) gnome light footmen armed with crossbows and axes; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6), and 1 captain (D8)

Tairhyeld Vassals

Drasmehr 14%

Frihn 8%

Krynarv 5%

Kurdyn 4%

Lemdegh 11%

Mollak 7%

Syrnagk 12%

Vyrul 10%

Other Estates 31%

Irwynha Parghem has been general in Thallyste since shortly after the battle of Drangyr. Wizeden and crippled by the radiance, Irwynha nonetheless oversees all activities in Tairhyeld perched atop a spidery stone construct that moves according to her will. Across her brow rests a thin band of Andahar Onyx, rumored to protect the general from mental attacks (and which may be the reason she maintains such a steady hold on her own sanity).

Unlike the other generals, Parghem is content with her current position. Having fought to establish the Shimmering Lands she still maintains Dranwyrf's favor and is considered one of his more trusted advisors.

1st Company (): 50 expert (S5) shade scouts and (G4) gnome rangers armed with crossbows and rapiers

2nd Company (Flame Drakes): 150 elite (D4) dwarven artilleryists armed with dragonbelchers and short swords; plus 6 Lieutenants (D7) and a captain (D10)

3rd Company (): 250 elite (D2) dwarven cavalry armed with crossbows and halberds, riding war mastiffs; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6) and a captain (D8)

4th Company (Stone Crushers): 200 expert (S2) soulbound and (G3) freed giantkin armed with clubs, maces, and battleaxes; plus 4 Lieutenants (S6) and a captain (D8)

5th Company (): 1000 expert (D2) dwarven footmen armed with axes and daggers; plus 20 sergeants (D4), 10 Lieutenants (D6), 2 captains (D8), and a major (D10)

Conscripts

Unlike the vassal troops drawn from dwarven estates across the Shimmering Lands, conscripts are recruited from the general populace among the few true cities in the nation. In addition, they are under the direct jurisdiction of the Golden Parliament, and are often used as an internal police force or guards.

Gromevand Conscripts at Gromhyeld

Gromhyeld has developed into a thriving community since its founding, and supports families of dwarves, giantkin, and mostly gnomes. In addition to being one of the Shimmering Land's major trading ports, Gromhyeld is also the lead stronghold for the Fiery Forge.

The Golden Parliament has tasked Exarch Juraed, of the Fiery Forge, with the defense of the city of Gromhyeld and its territories. A zealot of Zugzul

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to the extreme, the Exarch constantly pushes for campaigns of conquest. Thankfully most of his urgings fall upon deaf ears, as the closest neighbor to Gromhyeld is Mogreth and most dwarves value the peaceful relationship they have with the nearby lizards.

1st Company (Hellfire Knights): 50 elite (G4) gnome cavalry armed with lances and swords, riding hellhounds; plus 2 Lieutenants (G6) and a captain (G8)

2nd Company (Zugzul's Zealots): 1000 conscript (G1) gnome foot soldiers, carrying spears and short swords with bucklers; plus 20 sergeants (G3), 10 Lieutenants (G5), 2 captains (G7), and a major (G9)

Qivar Conscripts at Fyngul

Fyngul is the largest community in Qivar, founded by dwarven refugees of clan Karlheig and Hurgon. Over the years it has also grown a substantial gnomish population, and most trade from the Dawn Lands passes through here. The city is also the headquarters of the Controllers Guild, which assumes all responsibilities for defending the region.

Mallogh Tyrhen is a renowned mind dominator, and Master of the Controllers Guild. Thin for a dwarf, with pupil-less eyes of jet black, Tyrhen instills fear and loathing in all who see him.

1st Company (): 50 elite (D6) dwarven enthralers; plus 2 Lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

2nd Company (): 50 elite (D6) dwarven enthralers; plus 2 Lieutenants (D8) and a captain (D10)

3rd Company (): 100 giant thralls armed with clubs and war hammers; plus 5 thrall masters (D6) and 1 captain (D8)

4th Company (): 1000 expert (D1) dwarf and (G1) gnome light footmen armed with crossbows and axes; plus 10 sergeants (D4), 5 Lieutenants (D6), and 1 captain (D8)

Thallyste Conscripts at Tairhyeld

Thallyste encompasses a region of dark and foreboding forests, and its proximity to the Gate of Light makes it a haven for shades and soulbound alike. Like Gromhyeld, the gatherhold of Tairhyeld grew into a thriving port city, however much of the trade conducted there is domestic and very few foreigners visit there.

Saldyr Ghesdon, a soulbound wizard, shares command of the Thallyste conscripts with the local gnomish magnate, Ferrys Innemopper. Intrigue fills Tairhyeld as the two plot against each other, but nonetheless their strained alliance continues to bring prosperity to the city.

1st Company (): 50 expert (S5) shade scouts and (G4) gnome rangers armed with crossbows and rapiers

2nd Company (): 20 expert (S5) soulbound wizards and a wizard captain (D7)

3rd Company (): 200 expert (S2) soulbound armed with maces, and battleaxes; plus 4 Lieutenants (S6) and a captain (D8)

Free Companies

The Free Companies are mercenary groups who receive their charters directly from the Golden Parliament. Most charters grant such a group a certain amount of autonomy, however all military orders are expected to come to the defense of their nation when called to do so. Provincial Conclaves call upon the services of nearby Free Companies to augment their own armies in times of need. In such circumstances the Free Companies are expected to provide their services free of charge.

Charters can be, and have been, revoked in instances where a military order refuses or neglects its duty to defend the Shimmering Lands from outside invaders. The members of such treacherous companies are typically hunted down and destroyed at the first opportunity.

Seekers of Redemption

"Margwyn of Thallyste, betrayer of House Lemdegh, deserter of the battle of Teldyn Fields, what is it you seek?"

"Redemption."

"Then know it is your last."

The Seekers of Redemption, often simply just called the Seekers, is a small military order based out of the Gate of Light on the Bridge of Oost. It is to the Seekers that many dwarves turn once their failures outweigh the chances for any prospective success. Originally the "Seekers" project formed as the results of experiments done by the radiomancers of Himnem. Using their skills they found ways to fuse radiomantic devices into the flesh of living beings. Such devices enhance skills and abilities, and can even confer limited magical powers on the hosts, however the price paid for such services is the very life force of the one using them.

The order is commanded by a cabal of Himnem radiomancers, who sell their services to the highest bidder to subsidize the funding of their radiomantic experiments. Officers in the order are drawn from the ranks of the radiomancers, but just as often can be Seekers themselves. Life expectancy of such individuals is slightly longer than that of rank and file Seekers.

Sentinels of the Dusk Shroud

Wait and watch, for that which is destined to come,

Through the Shroud of Dusk.

A semi secretive group based out of Hrokyrdan in Karghthyne, the Sentinels are mastiff riding knights that have strengthened their bonds to the spirit world beyond. Their numbers are composed mostly of shades, although a significant proportion of the knights are dwarves as well. The Sentinels are expert scouts and trackers specializing in hit and run tactics. Their bonds to the spirit world allow them to move rapidly across great distances, oftentimes through areas not traversable by normal means.

The war mastiffs that the order is famous for are not shades themselves, although they have been physically modified to be more in tune with the spirit world. Rumors abound that the shadow mastiffs are created by bonding a shade with a war mastiff, possibly serving as a punishment for members who fail the order.

Shades of the order gain control of their corporeality when in their saddles, and can easily choose between an insubstantial form and one that is more solid. Their mounts share the same corporeality as their masters.

Enthrallers

My enemy is my weapon.

I need no other.

Enthrallers are composed of loosely organized band of misfits and outcasts from the Controllers Guild. Although many of them dabble in the slave trade, their true passion is in causing destruction brought about by the mental domination of their enemies. It is rare that more than a dozen Enthrallers would ever band together for a single operation. Living for battle, they often choose to enter into a fight alone. Their favored weapons are their foes themselves.

There are Enthraller chapterhouses in Fyngul, Abhuld, and Arankh, though individual Enthrallers can be found throughout the Shimmering Lands. Many also travel abroad, looking for work in foreign nations where their particular skill sets can be appreciated.

Skull Scions

Through Bone and Fire, I see through the eyes of my enemy.

Based in Jarduhl, the Skull Scions roam throughout Karghthyne and northern Demehvand. Many of the Scions are disenfranchised children of clan Yardrak – dwarven tieflings who are so far down the line of family succession as to never hope of inheriting their family estate. Known for crafting their helmets from pieces of their enemy's skulls, the Scions are fierce and brilliant tacticians. Most of their campaigns are fought to the far north against

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the giants of Grondheim or the beastmen of Urzud.

The founder and leader of the Skull Scions is Krynnox Yadrak, a middle aged dwarf with a fiend tinged eye. Whispers among his troops say that the eye shows him things – targets ripe for the taking – and Krynnox himself often alludes to the fact that some unseen force guides him in his victories.

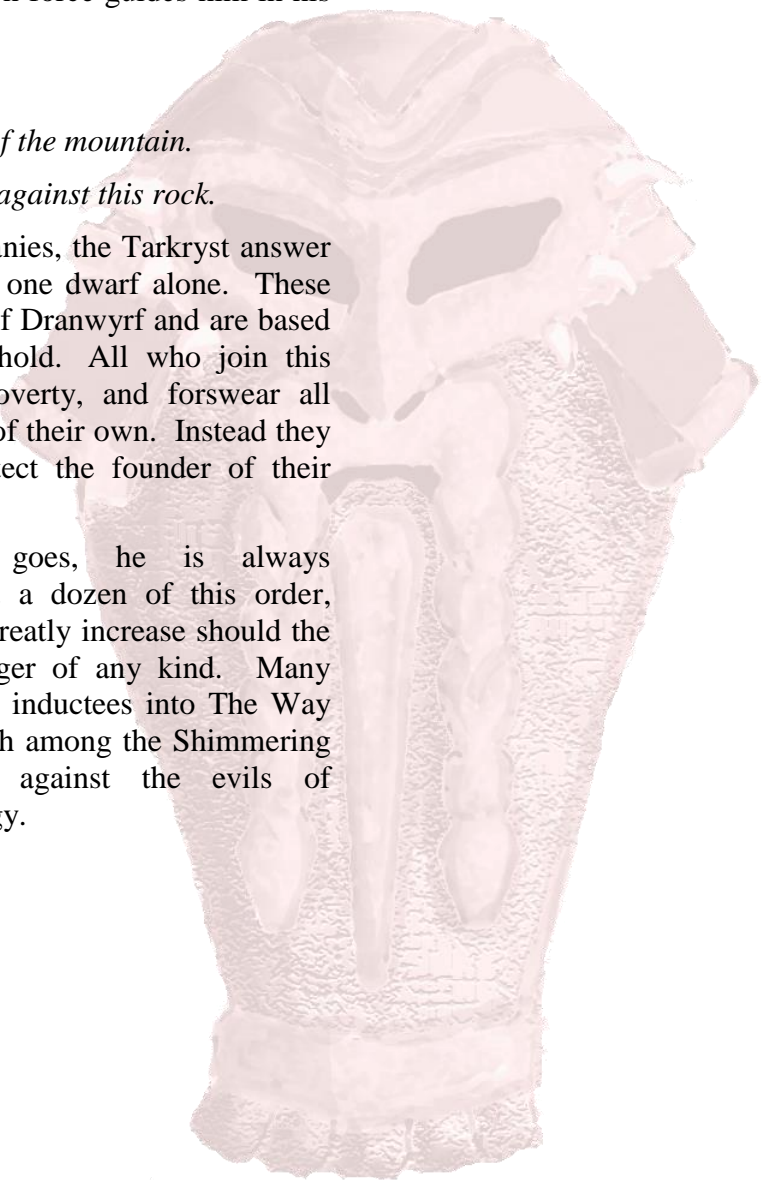
Tarkryst

I am the shield – stone of the mountain.

All shall break asunder against this rock.

Unlike most free companies, the Tarkryst answer only to one dwarf, and one dwarf alone. These are the personal guard of Dranwyrf and are based in the Drangyr Gatherhold. All who join this order take vows of poverty, and forswear all chances to gain estates of their own. Instead they vow to serve and protect the founder of their country.

Wherever Dranwyrf goes, he is always surrounded by at least a dozen of this order, though these numbers greatly increase should the First Elder expect danger of any kind. Many Tarkryst are also secret inductees into The Way of the Stone, a new faith among the Shimmering Lands that preaches against the evils of Blackmoorian technology.



GEOGRAPHY

A Mustering at Nellyg's Noch

General Dryag stood up in his saddle to get a better vantage of the troops moving by, as his war mastiff shifted its weight beneath him. Several more figures broke off from the main column to join him on the promontory. The beasts they rode were as large as his war mastiff, but leaner and with a glint of red and orange in their fur. Puffs of smoke escaped from their maws when they barked.

"General Dryag," the lead gnome said with a flourish, doing his best to bow while strapped into his saddle.

Dryag return the greeting with a nod, but kept his face impassive. "Exarch Juraed...may I take your presence as a sign of Zugzul's favor on this little expedition?" As he spoke the deep gouges under his left eye seemed to pulse with an inner red light.

Juraed's skin was pale and stretched tightly over his skull. The rictus grin he sported must have taken a great effort to force. "Not so little, it seems." When no reply was forthcoming he continued, "You have to admit General, that this is much more than some slave capturing exercise. I hear that Khergyd of Gromvand has personally brokered some deal with the abominations in Mogreth, and we are to meet their troops on the other side of these mountains. Such an effort must have the support of the Elder Conclave."

Dryag grunted, and squeezing his knees directed his mount to the edge of the promontory. Exarch Juraed spurred his hellhound forward, joining the general. Both sat silently as the last squad of giantkin from Tynghed traipsed by. The Exarch's conscripts, gnomes and dwarves from Gromhyeld, marched four abreast up the dusty trail and were close on their heels. Dryag knew full well that the skull faced gnome was right. Troops from scores of estates had already made the trek over the winding mountain pass. Estates across Gromvand, Himmevand, and half a dozen others from Thallyste, had all contributed to this effort.

On the valley floor below, more troops formed up waiting for their turn to pass, among them the free companies. Half a dozen Enthrallers clumped together under a shadow in the southeast corner, the other companies giving them a wide berth. Dryag knew that three others had already gone ahead of the marching column and would begin engaging the enemy as soon as they were in sight. Sentinels of the Dusk trickled into the valley through various means - overland, through tunnels in the mountains, and possibly even by magic. The riders and their spectral mounts congregating on the valley floor waiting for their numbers to build before making the final push to the other side of the mountains. Dryag doubted he would see any of them cross over the pass, but knew they would be waiting on the other side when he and his men finally emerged. In all there were a score of mercenary groups participating in this excursion. The most impressive, and disturbing of the bunch, were the Seekers of Redemption.

Dryag suppressed a shudder as he considered them. Their bodies were twisted and corrupt, even by Moadreg standards, yet they maintained perfect rank. Heavily armed and armored, and augmented by fell machines from Hinnem, every last one of them remained at their silent vigil, waiting patiently for all others to pass. Should this little venture succeed Dryag could find himself the master of his own estate... should it fail however he may very well be forced to join the Seekers' ranks.

A lone figure riding a shadow beast slowly began its way up the trail, stopping by from squad to squad to converse with the leaders of each group. As it approached the promontory the setting sun glinted off of a square jaw of polished silver, and two wispy figures could be seen hovering near each shoulder. One of the shades pointed upward, and the rider spurred his mount forward. In three great leaps the shadowy beast and its rider were face to face with the others.

"I'm very impressed Sehgdar," drawled the gnome, "but isn't this overdoing it for a slave run?"

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The newcomer ignored the gnome completely, pausing to survey his surroundings before finally turning to address general Dryag. When at last he spoke, his voice was metallic and raspy, "This... endeavor has been sanctioned by the Conclave."

"You overstep your bounds," the gnome spat, "as has Khergyd! I don't know what her real motives are, but I'll find out. By Zugzul's name, I know she cares little for the plight of these lizards, or for acquiring slaves of her own."

"I don't know what you're so upset about, I thought you flame heads lived for battle," Sehgdar replied, still without looking in the gnome's direction.

Juraed clenched his fists until his knuckles shone white. His entire body trembled so violently that Dryag thought he might fall from his mount. "I fight for Zugzul! Not your sister!"

Several of the dwarves inhaled sharply at that last comment, including the two fire heads flanking Juraed. Dryag let his hand drop toward his axe, but made no move to grasp it. Several of the others did the same, coaxing their mounts into better positions should any fighting break out. Invoking familial ties in a public setting was beyond reprehensible. Blood feuds had started for less, but Juraed seemed oblivious to his fax-pau. The promontory grew silent. Through strained ears, Dryag could scarce hear those near him breath.

Screeches and flutters broke the bated silence as a cloud of bats burst out from a cave above and swarmed over those on the promontory. Instinctively Dryag crouched low to his mount, but Juraed whipped his head around to face the onrush and unleashed a gout of flame from his mouth and nostrils in a great bellow. "Spies of Taymor!" he spat. Red flames licked his lips, framing the outline of his head against the dusk sky as the charred remains of winged creatures crashed to the ground among the gathering.

Ducking reflexively, Dryag put his fingers to his lips creating a piercing whistle, and signaled to the sentries posted further up the mountainside. The nearest immediately unslung his dragon belcher and took aim at the leathery winged swarm. Moments later more fell to the ground as they were engulfed by yet another ball of flame. The swarm flew south over the pass, and Dryag once again straightened in his saddle. More bursts of flame and blue radiance erupted in the sky as other sentries began targeting the creatures, though Dryag doubted that his men would bring them all down.

"They'll know we're coming!" screamed Juraed.

Sehgdar's deep metallic laugh echoed across the pass, "Shall we kill all the vermin in this valley? Every bat, rat, and curr?"

Dryag pursed his lips as he glanced from Sehgdar to the erupting gnome. With a shrug of his shoulders he dismissed Juraed's outburst. "They may know we're coming... but now we know they'll be waiting for us. This changes nothing. Exarch, I think you should see to your troops." The promontory grew quiet again as Juraed steamed over being dismissed. With his jaw clenched tight he heeled his mount, leaping back down to the pass with his entourage in tow.

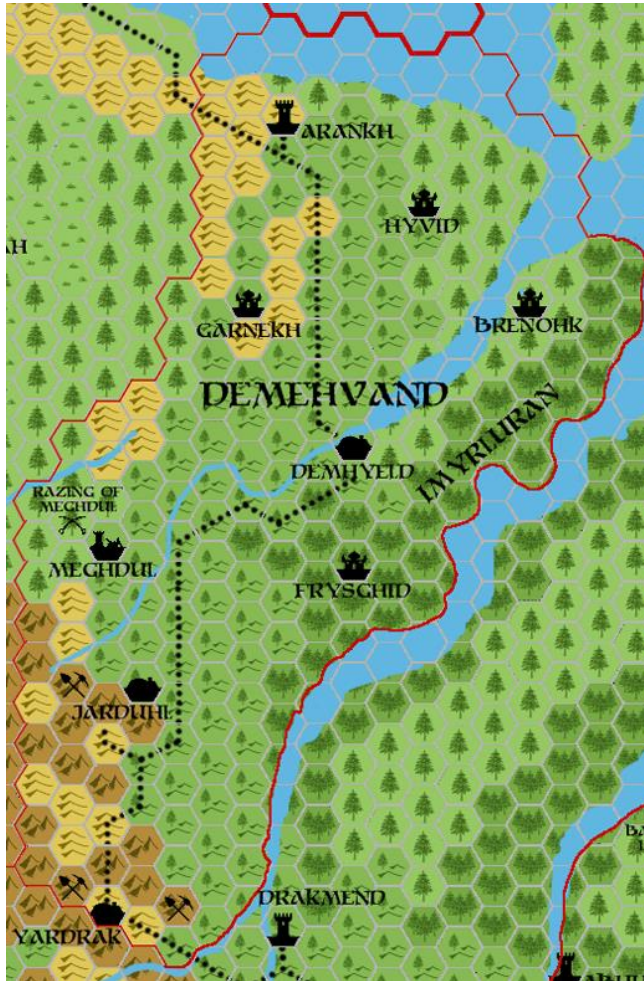
"I don't want personal vendetta to get in the way of our success," Dryag said to Sehgdar without missing a beat.

Hovering above the silver jawed dwarf, the two shades looked sidelong at one another as Sehgdar thoughtfully fingered his chin. "Don't worry general," rang his voice like someone speaking from within a narrow tunnel. "You'll have your victory. Khergyd will have her prize... and Juraed his glory." The two dwarves spent several silent seconds staring at each other until Sehgdar urged his mount on with a hollow laugh trailing behind him.

"And you, Sehgdar," Dryag sighed, "...what will you have?"

Demehvand Province

Demehvand is one of the northernmost provinces in the Shimmering Lands. It is the ancestral home of clan Yardrak, and contains two of their largest population centers, Yardrak and Jarduhl.



Ecology: Giants, wyverns, and the occasional dragon make their homes in the Maghkrys Mountains, and sporadically raid the underlying lowlands. Herds of deer and elk roam through the northern forests and hills, along with creatures that hunt them. Dire wolves, cave bears, and the occasional saber tooth cat. Unspeakable horrors often stumble from the depths of Imyrluran, and it is unknown what else might lurk underneath those dark boughs.

Economy: Demehvand is one of the larger trade centers in the Shimmering Lands, shipping goods from Qivar and Gromevand to the western portions of the country. Lumber is harvested from the northern hills, although the Imyrluran

Forest is given a wide berth. Mines also exist on the eastern tip of the Maghkrys Mountains. Gold is a major product, though it comes with a peculiar reddish tint that can not be smelted from the ore. The red gold of Demehvand is rumored to buy the souls of creatures who spend it, and its use is shunned in other parts of the nation. Fiendish arts are also a commodity in Demehvand, with the largest dark library existing in the ancestral halls of Yardrak, deep in the mountain's roots.

Arankh

Once the northernmost position, defending the Shimmering Lands from giant and elf depredations from the north, Arankh has declined in prominence since Karghthyne Province was established. Now it is a staging ground for troops from Demhyeld before they head out on punitive expeditions into Grondheim or Antalian lands.

Demhyeld

Population: 26,000 (65% dwarf, 20% tiefling, 15% other)

Max Spending Limit: 60,000 gp

Important Figures: General Kargyr Grahl

Demhyeld is the gatherhold of the Demehvand Conclave, and the major gathering point for Yardrak dwarves. Being somewhat more social than their Skotharian brethren, Demhyeld is more than just a military installation. Over the centuries it has grown into a sizable city. Once situated along a vital choke point in the area, Demhyeld no longer sees much military action. It has instead become a major center of trade as goods passing from Gromevand to Karghthyne, or vice versa, must first pass through here.

Frysghid Estate

Frysghid, an estate built in the heart of Imyrluran, was once the abode of the dwarven hero Jylta Frysghid, though whether or not she still lives is a debate of some interest. Several dwarves with claims to the estate have attempted to occupy it over the decades, though none have ever been seen again. Because the estate still sends its tithe to Demhyeld, the Elder Conclave has not intervened.

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Imyrluran

Also known as the Lost Forest, or Forgotten Woods, Imyrluran has a reputation for being a place from which no one returns. A few trails do exist through the forest, and tradition holds that travelers can buy their lives from the woods in return for throwing in some item of value. Once off the established pathways however, no amount of bargaining can prevent one's disappearance.

Jarduhl

Population: 17,000 (30% dwarf, 55% tiefling, 15% other)

Max Spending Limit: 40,000

Important Figures: Fellyn Jarduhl, Krynnax Yadrak

Built into a sheer cliff face overlooking the northern hills, Jarduhl can only be entered through tunnels to the southwest or by flight. A center of debauched depravity even by Yadrak standards, Jarduhl nonetheless remains a popular, if not dangerous, waypoint among dwarven travelers. Jarduhl dwarves are known as master channelers, and tattoo fiendish, arcane symbols all over their bodies.

Meghdur, Ruins

Once a great family, the Meghdur had blood feuds with the Jarduhl, even before the dwarves settled in the Maghkrys Mountains. In BC 2473, the Meghdur saw their chance to avenge themselves on their hated enemies. They attacked the Jarduhl by surprise as that family was heeding Drawyrf's call to arms. After the battle of Drangyr was won, Dranwyrf brought all of his remaining forces to bear against the treacherous family, destroying them utterly. Since then Meghdur has remained in ruins, populated only by the tormented spirits of its former occupants.

Yadrak

Population: 37,000 (55% dwarf, 37% tiefling, 8% other)

Max Spending Limit: 60,000 gp

Important Figures: Aynmegk Yadrak

Although technically an estate, Yadrak is more populous, and more heavily fortified than even the gatherhold of Demhyeld. The stronghold of those claiming direct descent from Lugett Yadrak himself, Yadrak is home for thousands of dwarves as well as all manner of fiendish

creatures. Deep in the heart of their citadel is rumored to be a passage to Nidhelm, far in the territory of the Deep Elves. This is a secret that the Yadrak guard viciously, for should any of their brethren learn the truth about the origins of their powers, the Yadrak may find themselves beset upon by all of the Shimmering Lands.

Dranevar Province

Although established as a province in BC 2473, Dranevar was never divided into estate lots by the Elder Conclave. Instead it has been held as a reserve and established neutral ground for all clans and families. It is here that the Elder Conclave meets, on those rare occasions when they do meet.



Ecology: Despite technically being a province, Dranevar is one of the wilder areas in the Shimmering Lands, and that's the way the Elder Conclave likes it. Giant incursion is rare, but other large creatures frequent the area. Wyverns, dragons, griffons, and other large flying predators are common. Mountain goats are common, as are lions and bears of all types. Large reptilian predators also abound in the area.

Economy: Neither commerce nor resource gathering takes place within the borders of Dranevar.

Drangyr, Battle of

In BC 2473 a large force of giants and elves from the north swept into the land, intent on exterminating every dwarf that they found. They were largely successful in the north, destroying

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several settlements and scattering their inhabitants to the four winds. This success would have continued were it not for the efforts of Dranwyrf Korrskill, a visionary refugee from Skothar. After forming a formidable force by uniting several of the larger dwarven families, Drangyr lured the attacking army into a trap deep within the Maghkryns Mountains. There his force fell upon the giants and elves. Unaccustomed to the unified dwarven attack, and left with nowhere to flee to, the invading force was shattered.

Drangyr Gatherhold

The reclusive Moadreg rarely feel the need to build cities, preferring solitude to the company of even their own kind. Drangyr is the exception to the rule, however. Established in 2473 BC, Drangyr serves as a neutral ground for members of the different clans to gather at. With the exception of the Elder Conclave, dwarven elders rarely come here themselves, although many send representatives to insure that their rights and assets are being looked after properly.

Unlike other gatherholds, the troops stationed here forsake all of their former loyalties and swear an oath of allegiance directly to the Shimmering Lands and the First Elder. These are the Tarkryst, elite warriors set with the task of protecting the Shimmering Lands and its rulers.

Eviyrast

Dranwyrf's private estate, Eviyrast is located high in the mountain peaks of the Maghkryns Mountains, just above Drangyr Gatherhold. As First Elder, Dranwyrf is the only dwarf granted permission to establish an estate in Dranevar.

Raismyr Lake

A mountain lake held in place by a glacial dam on its southern border, Raismyr is cold enough that ice can often be seen floating in its waters. Although teeming with fish, the dwarves never send boats out onto its waters. Something much more dangerous lurks within the depths of this placid lake. Something ancient and monstrous, that does not like being disturbed.

Shrine of Stone

Discovered by Dranwyrf in BC 2347, this hidden grotto is full of stone carvings and statues, all of which were apparently created through natural means. Dranwyrf is convinced that this miraculous site was created by the immortal Kagyar, and has spent several decades trying to interpret the signs left here for him. Although none but Dranwyrf currently know of the Shrine, he would be willing to show it to any other devotees of Kagyar's ways.

Gromevand Province

Gromevand is the southernmost province in the Shimmering Lands and borders directly with Mogreth. Estates in the area are dominated by dwarves of Clan Karlheig, although other clans also have some minor representation.



Ecology: Damp and slightly humid, the southern forests of Gromevand support myriads of life, not all of which is natural. Reptilian life forms dominate the area, many crossing the Ayngkan River from Mogreth. Birds of all colors and varieties are also plentiful, as are snakes.

Economy: Although timber in the area is of the highest quality, most of the inhabitants are loath to cut down any of the surrounding forests, which

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would reduce their own privacy. Some lumbering is done from Lehgid, however most of the area's economic activity is driven by a brisk slave trade. Most slaves in Gromevand are internal dissidents, but a constant stream of captured foreigners finds its way here from Qivar as well.

Gromhyeld

Population: 93,000 (60% gnome, 20% dwarf, 5% tiefling, 15% other)

Max Spending Limit: 100,000 gp

Important Figures: General Almeht Dryag, Exarch Juraed

Originally established as the settlement of Gromedyn by early gnomish colonists in the area, Gromhyeld has grown and changed dynamically over the years. It was made the gatherhold for the Gromevand Conclave in BC 2470, only a few years after Drangyr established the Concords of the Shimmering Lands. Now a bustling city as well as a military center, Gromhyeld is a major port city, and most trade with foreign nations passes through its harbors and streets.

Kantagh

Originally established as a checkpoint against the forces of Mogreth, Kantagh has declined in prominence over the ages. The border with Mogreth is stable and sees little military action, as the two nations are on fairly good terms. Infrequent monster incursions from the deep jungles and nearby mountains do occur, however the main focus of the troops stationed there is on the slave trade. Kantagh is the last stopping point on the Road to Isshum, before entering into Mogreth territory.

Lehgid

Population: 500 (90% gnome, 7% dwarf, 3% other)

Max Spending Limit: 200 gp

Important Figures:

Lehgid is a small supplying station that receives regular shipments of goods from Gromhyeld and then organizes their transport to all of the estates in the area. The inhabitants of this little village are mainly transients – folk simply struggling to earn a living in this harsh land. The pay is nominal however the dangers of passing through

this land are high. Subsequently, life in this village tends to be depressed and dreary.

Road to Isshum

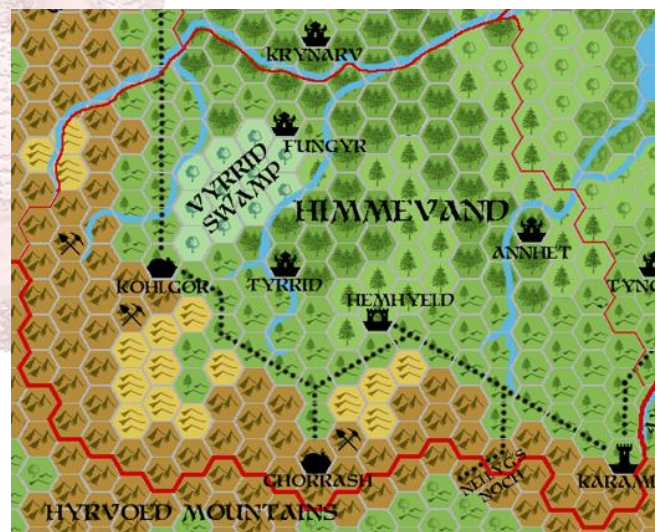
The Road to Isshum is an ominous term recognized throughout the Known World, meaning that one is headed into brutal slavery, and very likely a swift violent death. In Gromevand the term has a more literal meaning as well, as there is a brisk and thriving slave trade between Gromhyeld and the capital city of Mogreth to the south.

Wanwyrf Estate

One of the larger estates in Gromevand, Wanwyrf has a reputation as a technocratic center. Urrigh Wanwyrf, master of the estate, is an avid collector of Blackmoorian artifacts. Numerous expeditions across the Shimmering Lands and beyond, are sponsored by Wanwyrf, who claims first right of any artifacts of the ancient world that are found.

Himmevand Province

Himmevand is bordered by Gromevand to the east and Thallyste to the north. Yadrak dwarves dominate this province, although after decades of mingling with the Skotharian dwarves their bloodlines tend to be less pure than that of their cousins from Demehvand.



Ecology: The lowlands below the meeting of the Maghkryns and Hyrvoed Mountains are congested with pine forests. Vyrrid swamp and surrounds

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also boasts ferns, cycads, and an abundant variety of fungi, many of which are rumored to be poisonous. The climate is damp, but slightly cooler than on the coast. Large game in the area is scarce, with the majority being represented by small deer and various breeds of wild boar and goat. Panthers and other large cats are the predominant predators of the region, with magical breeds such as the displacer beast not being unheard of.

Economy: Plant life of all kinds, as well as a myriad of products made from them, is routinely exported from this area. The dwarves of Himmevand are renowned brewers and distillers of magical elixirs and similar concoctions. Charms, enchantments, and even love potions have their origins in this province, as do numerous varieties of toxins and other poisons. These are not the only resources in Himmevand however. The area is also rich in ores and mines in the mountains are plentiful. In Himmevand, the ancient art of smelting iron ore is still practiced, although few master smiths still remember the skill.

Ghorrash

Population: 34,000 (55% dwarf, 20% tiefling, 15% giantkin, 5% other)

Max Spending Limit: 60,000

Important Figures: Lhenty Ghorrash

One of the original settlements in the Shimmering Lands, Ghorrash was established by the dwarves of northern Brun during their southward migration. Long a stronghold against giant attacks, along with its sister city of Kohlgor, Ghorrash has withstood many assaults against its walls. The enchantress Lhenty Ghorrash holds sway here, ruling over the members of her clan as well as tribes of enthralled giants. It is from Ghorrash that the giantkin of the Shimmering Lands have their origin.

Hemhyeld

Population: 7,000 (40% dwarf, 25% tiefling, 20% giantkin, 15% other)

Max Spending Limit: 15,000 gp

Important Figures: General Jehrys Sogktar

Charged with manning punitive raids against the giants of Grondheim, Hemhyeld has one of the

largest and best trained military forces within the Shimmering Lands. The troops stationed here are expert mountaineers, capable of traversing some of the most treacherous passes even in the dead of winter. Military escorts through the mountains into Grondheim, Mogreth, and even into Intua, are available to any dwarf willing to pay the price.

Hyrvoed Mountains

A small clan of fire giants, and their stone giant servitors, lives along the western ridge of this range amongst the several active volcanoes there. They demand tribute from all who journey through their mountainous home (at best) and often launch raids into the Shimmering Lands.

Karamis

Karamis serves as a secondary checkpoint against invasion from Mogreth guarding both the pass at Nellyg's Noch as well as entrance at the headways of the Ayngkan River. Its original purpose was to protect Yadrak mining interests from foreign dwarves migrating into the area as far away as from Skothar. Now the fortress falls under the jurisdiction of Hemhyeld and maintains a small contingency of soldiers.

Kohlgor

Population: 22,000 (70% dwarf, 25% tiefling, 5% other)

Max Spending Limit: 40,000

Important Figures: Belagh Kohlgor

Along with Ghorrash, Kohlgor is one of the original Yadrak settlements in the region. It is here that the ancient arts of ironcraft are still remembered – another reason that the troops of Hemhyeld are hard to match. Kohlgor iron demands a high price and is sought after throughout the Shimmering Lands, though the Elder Conclave has forbidden the sale of the material to any outsiders upon pain of death (and worse).

Nellyg's Noch

A short mountain pass that remains open throughout the year, Nellyg's Noch connects the Shimmering Lands with the highlands of Mogreth, and is a favored trade route for

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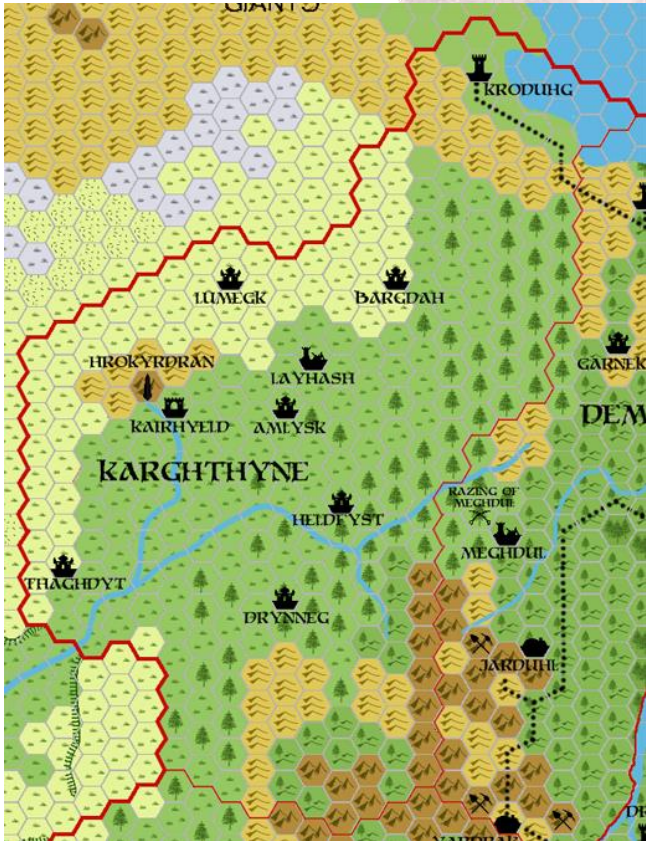
merchants wishing to avoid the swamps in the east.

Vyrrid Swamp

Vyrrid, also known as the Twisted Swamp, occupies nearly the entire northwest quarter of Himmevand. Slime ridden horrors terrorize the region on a regular basis, rumored to ooze forth from obsidian ruins in the middle of the swamp. Several dwarven estates thrive in the area regardless. Among those, Fungyr is the largest, and does a healthy trade in exotic plants and deadly poisons.

Karghthyne Province

Karghthyne is one of the younger provinces in the Shimmering Lands, established by Dranwyrf nearly a decade after the founding of the nation as homesteading territory for the dwarven clans arriving from Skothar. Felwig dwarves dominate these lands, and have served as the first line of defense against Antalians and giants of the north.



Ecology: The windblown tundra of the northwestern Shimmering Lands stretches from the tree line bordering Demehvand past the lone

mountain of Hrokydran. Grasses and sedges dominate, with small shrubs dotting the landscape closer to the tree line. The ground freezes during winter months, especially in the northern territory. The forested highlands of the south support a myriad of wildlife including rabbits, deer, lynx, foxes, and other small predators. Herds of caribou roam the northern tundra, along with packs of wolves and the occasional saber toothed cat. Extreme winters sometimes bring rhemoraz and even small troops of yeti.

Economy: Few natural resources exist in the wilds of Karghthyne, though the Felwig dwarves who live there are industrious. The strange ore mined from Hrokydran is traded throughout the Shimmering Lands and used in the forging of many magical items. Slaves also come through Karghthyne, as mercenary bands and Free Companies capture hill giants and human barbarians from the frozen lands of the north.

Heldfyst

Silence rings throughout the halls of Heldfyst. No living creature is allowed within this estate, but Heldfyst is far from inactive. Constructs and spirits toil ceaselessly on a small scale model of the Gate of Light. Built by Engdyr himself, and powered by the strange ore found within the mines of Hrokydran, the mini artifact is nearing completion. Once finished, Engdyr intends to use the device to annihilate all life in the area.

Hrokydran

Deep in the heart of this solitary mountain lies a vast arcane machine built by ancient Blackmoorian technomancy. Whatever its true purpose, the machine imparts corporeality upon any shades in the area, which is why a large population of them has flocked to the mountain. These shades helped to found the Sentinels of the Dusk Shroud, sharing their home with a small band of radiomancers from Himnem who study the arcane machine constantly.

Kairhyeld

Commanded by General Ryndis Heldfyst, the holdfast of Kairhyeld sees much activity. Most of that is directed toward the giants of Grondheim or

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the Antalians of the north, both of whom pose a constant threat for the dwarves in the area. Ryndis' primary passion however, is plotting for her brother Engdyr's demise. Some say it is because of Engdyr that Ryndis has her obsidian heart.

Kroduhg

Actively manned, the fortress of Kroduhg's main purpose is to guard the Shimmering Lands against sea bound attacks from the Winter King's ice pirates, but it also sees some action against the giants of Grondheim. A small military port maintains a handful of gnomish steamers, set to repel any pirate raids along the southern coast of the Winter Sea.

Layhash

Sixty years ago the Elder of Layhash stopped sending her title of troops and supplies to Kairhyeld Gatherhold. Instead she began building up her own troops and augmenting them with beastman mercenaries from Urzud. Engdyr Heldfyst and several other Elders learned of her plot before she could launch an attack against Kairhyeld. Their combined forces marched upon the traitor, destroying her forces utterly. Unknown to most, Layhash and many of the dwarves serving her, were all changelings of Grondheim fostered on the estate for decades previously.

Thaghdyt

Moryr Thaghdyt's spirit exists trapped in a glowing spherical radiance receptacle nearly six feet wide. The disembodied Elder can temporarily gain control of many of the constructs in his lab, and continues to direct his servants through them.

Qivar Province

One of the more populous provinces, Qivar is inhabited mainly by gnomes and Karlheig dwarves. A second wave of colonists joined these in BC 2475, when dwarves from Hurgon answered Dranwyrf's call for help against the giants and elves. Qivar's inhabitants are more

likely to form real communities, gathering into villages and town, rather than establishing estates.



Ecology: During the summer months, the land is green and growing, covered in short grasses and pines, however in the winter everything is blanketed by white snow. Storms are common in the area, often blowing in from over the Winter Sea to the north. Always thick with lightning, these storms can cause massive amounts of damage, especially in the summer time when fires are more likely. Monstrous creatures are common here, either twisted horrors wandering in from the Gate of Lite or creatures driven forth by the giants of the Dawn Lands.

Economy: Logging and fishing drive the economy of Qivar, with most of the ships built in the Shimmering Lands hailing from this province. Many dwarves and gnomes also fare well as hunters and trappers in the surrounding territories, with a thriving fur trade demanding top coin. Qivar also has the distinction of being the breadbasket of the Shimmering Lands. Wheat, barley and other grains are grown here, as are grapes and a variety of fruiting plants. Slaving expeditions into the Dawn Lands are not uncommon, though such forays into the wilderness are not always successful.

Bridge of Oost

The Bridge of Oost is a land bridge that connects Brun with the Dawn Lands. The Moadreg crossed the bridge from the Dawn Lands and settled in Norwold circa BC 2540, though several

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populations also remained on the Bridge, intent on carving out dominions of their own. Gnomish populations on the Bridge actually preceded the dwarvish, however only really saw major growth after the dwarves arrived. Oost is dangerous and often wracked by terrible storms, but it remains a defensive chokepoint against enemies of the Dawn Lands.

Fyngul

Population: 43,000 (47% dwarf, 43% gnome, 7% giantkin, 3% other)

Max Spending Limit: 60,000 gp

Important Figures: Mallogh Tyrhen

A fortified city at the feet of the Stormbringer Mountains, Fyngul has repelled many attacks from giants of the Dawn Lands. A deep bay makes Fyngul a natural port city, with ships of several nations docked here at all times. In addition to merchant vessels, a few gnomish steamers patrol the nearby waters. On the edge of the bay is an enormous alabaster lighthouse – the Coruscating Tower. In addition to lighting the way for ships, the Tower is a prestigious academy of war and magic.

Gyrbain

Population: 5,700 (84% dwarf, 11% gnome, 3% giantkin, 2% other)

Max Spending Limit: 15,000 gp

Important Figures: Gheryhk Gyrbain

The village of Gyrbain also serves as Gheryhk Gyrbain's personal Estate, and here his word is law. A large population of Hurgon dwarves also settled here, and subsequently began delving into the mountainside. Shadowy figures are often seen flitting about the streets of Gyrbain, especially in the hours just before dusk. Who or what the shadows are is unknown, but they appear to be attracted to the Hurgon dwarves, following them wherever they go.

Lightning Hills

Wracked with terrible storms throughout the year, the Lightning Hills are aptly named. Travelers through these lands claim that the lightning bolts stalk them... almost like a predator would its prey. Some say that the hills themselves attract the lightning, others that the electrical bolts are under the control of some alien mind.

Qifhyeld

Population: 11,200 (40% dwarf, 45% gnome, 10% giantkin, 5% other)

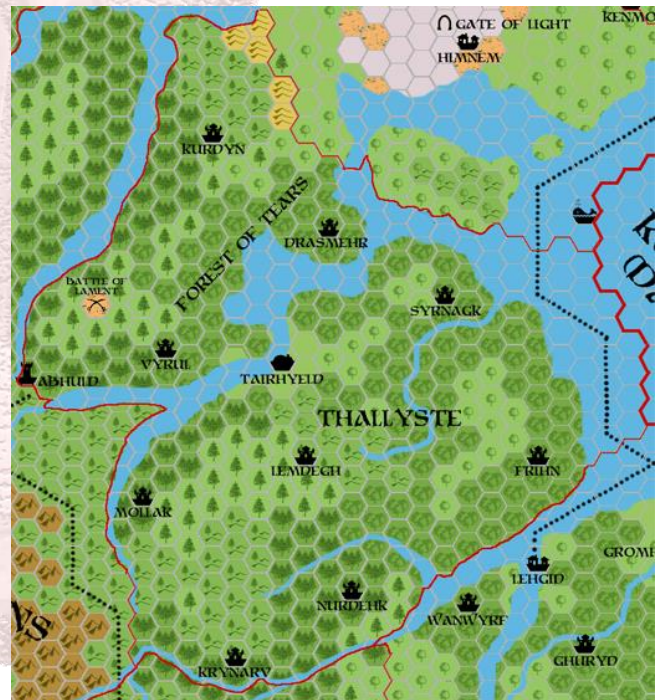
Max Spending Limit: 15,000 gp

Important Figures: Granik Thyn

Qifhyeld is the headquarters for the Dream Guard, an elite force of dream travelers trained by General Granik Thyn himself. The Dream Guard traverse the Plane of Dreams searching out secrets, both within the Shimmering Lands and without. These abilities enable the general to find and track easy targets for his slave gangs to nab.

Thallyste Province

The heartlands of the Shimmering Lands, the province of Thallyste is dominated by dark forests and filled with even darker secrets. The solitude offered by this region is most enticing, especially to Felwig dwarves whose only wish is to practice their crafts in private. Thallyste has the largest number of dwarven estates in the Shimmering Lands.



Ecology: The forests of Thallyste are dark and dense: foreboding places that let little light through even in the height of day. Douglas firs, maples, and oaks dominate the mixed evergreen forests, with pines becoming more prevalent toward the inland highlands. Thick trunked redwoods follow the coastline, one of the few

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places where the sun can find the forest floor. Wild boar is common here, along with smaller game, while bears and large cats are the major natural predators of the area. Monsters, either created by failed experiments or escaped from an Elder's dungeons, are common.

Economy: A small lumber trade exists near Tairhyeld, but the real commodity in Thallyste is isolation. Like most Felwig, the dwarves who make their homes in this land are expert craftsmen. Novelty items, engineering marvels, and magical trinkets are all produced here and find their way throughout the nation and beyond. A few hunters and trappers, those brave enough to risk a dwarven Elder's wrath, are successful here.

Abhuld

Originally a Yadrak fortress designed to defend against incursions from the Dawn Lands, Abhuld has changed hands many times over the past several decades. Taken by a combined force of giants and elves in BC 2542, the fortress remains in their hands until liberated by Dranwyrf in BC 2480. Now Abhuld sees little use at all, other than as a way station regulating trade into the interior of the Shimmering Lands.

Forest of Tears

The corridor of land leading from the Dawn Lands to mainland Brun was once a region of high contention between the Yadrak dwarves and their Skotharian brethren. Before Dranwyrf united the clans and formed the Shimmering Lands many battles were fought here between kin. Now the restless ghosts of the slain roam beneath the boughs.

Lament, Battle of

The first conflict between Yadrak dwarves and their Skotharian cousins (clan Felwig and Karlheig), occurred here. Infernal energies released on the field eventually won the day for the Yadrak, but decimated the surrounding forest for miles around.

Tairhyeld

Population: 28,000 (13% dwarf, 78% gnome, 9% other)

Max Spending Limit: 60,000 gp

Important Figures: Irwynha Parghem, Saldyr Ghesdon, Ferrys Innemopper

Much like the city of Gromhyeld to the south, Tairhyeld is a major trade center for the Shimmering Lands. Unlike its sister city however, most trade conducted here is domestic, and very few foreigners make Tairhyeld a port of call. Goods shipped in from Gromhyeld make their way onto supply caravans bound for inland destinations. Radiomancers from Himnem have a large chapter house here, from which they are slowly distributing radiance technomancy throughout the city.

Vyrul

Harqi Vyrul, master of this estate, is an anomaly among dwarves. So taken is he with the natural world, that he has turned his entire estate into a vast wild garden. Plant creatures are his favorite servants, and Harqi spends days on end perfecting his breeding programs. The trees bordering his domain have grown so thickly together as to form a living wall of wood.

Other Locations of Interest

Blighted Lands

Deep in the heartlands of Skothar, the Blighted Lands are the ancestral home for all of the Moadreg clans. It was here that ancient Blackmoor destroyed itself nearly 2000 years ago, and still the land has not recovered. There are few permanent settlements in the Blighted Lands, though the occasional lone Radiomancer will establish an estate here. Instead most Moadreg view this area as a pilgrimage site. It's not somewhere that they would want to live, but most vow to see it at least once in their lifetimes.

The blighted lands are twisted and scarred and only the area surrounding the Gate of Light has any semblance of stability. Magical storms and ever changing terrain are the least of the trials that this land has to offer. More dangerous still are the horrible aberrations that the energies in the Blighted Lands spawn.

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The Gate of Light

A massive stone arch that extends well over ten leagues in length, the Gate of Light is an artifact of immense power. The rune covered arch is attuned directly with the Blighted Lands and slowly siphons off the power of the radiance that emanates from that place. Once enough power has been stored in the artifact, it releases those energies to form a massive portal to those lands. The portal always lasts for one month, and travel back and forth between the two places is effortless. All one needs to do is walk underneath the arch. Once the month is up however, the portal closes until enough energy can be built up to open it again.

Unknown to most, the Gate of Light is not only a portal through space, but through time as well. The gate is keyed to open up to a time shortly after the Great Rain of Fire. Radiance from the aftermath of that catastrophe is highest in this time period, which is one of the things that draws Moadreg Radiomancers to the artifact. Unfortunately it is also one of the main causes of the degenerative plague that is sweeping through dwarven lands.

Gnen

Population: 16,700 (73% gnome, 19% dwarf, 8% other)

Max Spending Limit: 40,000 gp

Important Figures: Lidol Vehdnen

A small, quiet, fishing town, Gnen also has the distinction of being the birthplace of the Vehdnen, a gnomish crime family that has ties from Fyngul to Tairhyeld. Despite the fact that most are devout worshipers of Belnos, Vehdnen enforcers have a reputation for being some of the most violent, ruthless, and bloodthirsty individuals in the nation.

Himnem

Population: 5000-20,000 (90% dwarf, 7% gnome, 3% other)

Max Spending Limit: 3,000 gp – 40,000 gp

Important Figures: Karagk Fyll

The village of Himnem is populated by scholars, historians, and radiomancers, and is also the headquarters of the Seekers of Redemption. Although a center for magical learning, the village itself is not what draws folk to this

blighted and desolate region. It is here that the Gate of Light was constructed, and its yearly opening causes the village population to swell the three times its normal size. Most folk of the Shimmering Lands make a pilgrimage here at least once in their lifetime.

Jhyrrad

Little more than a military observation post, Jhyrrad monitors hostile activity along the Shimmering Lands' western border. A small band of Hurgon dwarves, enticed to settle here by the Elder Conclave, have begun opening up mines in the area. One of these has broken through to a larger series of natural caverns. The extent of these caverns is unknown, however the Hurgon dwarves plan to explore them in detail.

Lamnem

Population: 13,000 (67% gnome, 24% dwarf, 9% other)

Max Spending Limit: 40,000 gp

Important Figures:

Plagued by pirates from the Winter Sea, the citizens of Lamnem are always on the defensive. Bolstered by the Controllers Guild, Lamnem seeks a new means of defense by mentally compelling the creatures of the sea to attack any approaching vessels. So far the results are mixed as the sea creatures are just as likely to turn on the dwarves as they are the pirates.

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Field of Battle

The ground shook, and in the distance Sehgdar could hear Dryag's dragon canons as they bombarded the Taymoran village. He put that battle behind him, closing his eyes and inhaling the scents of carnage all around him. That was Dryag's fight. Sehgdar had his own mission.

"I believe our prize lies behind us, dwarf," said a gnome decked in black armor lined with fiery filigree. Lamur Gruthen, the Exarch's right hand man, had been trailing Sehgdar since he and the Exarch exchanged words at Nellyg's Noch. The sneer on his face was evident, "It's quite an adventure you've put together, for a supposed slave run into Taymora... and now it appears you've lost interest." Dark wispy shadows darted about the man but he paid them little interest. Sehgdar's other companions, a pair of shades named Tollin and Fennet, had been fading continuously since they left the Shimmering Lands.

Sehgdar chuckled, a raspy metallic clamor, while stroking his iron metal jaw. Opening his eyes again he removed a small lead cylinder from his bandolier, unscrewed the top, and slid its contents into his hand - a small glass vial filled with viscous green liquid. "You've got too much fire in your eyes, Lamur... else you might actually see what is directly in front of you."

The gnome let out a muffled gasp as something hit him solidly in the stomach, knocking all breath from his lungs as vise-like grips grasped each of his arms. The shades steadied him under Sehgdar's gaze. "It's the radiance, you see," said the dwarf in his hollow voice, nodding to the figures coalescing around the gnome, "it gives them form... makes them solid."

Lamur struggled against the shades, but to no avail. The green light emanating from Sehgdar's hand gave the two shades renewed strength and vigor. As Sehgdar approached, he drew forth a black dagger, sliding it in between the plates that armored the gnome until finding purchase in the vital organs beneath. "It's a pity your master the Exarch couldn't be here himself," the hollow voice rang out, "but this will have to be payment enough for him... at least for now..."

Sehgdar replaced the vial of radiance back into its canister, and the gnome crumpled to the ground in a pool of his own blood. "Now... we don't have much time," Sehgdar said to the shadows flitting about once again. "It's nearby. Find it."

It wasn't hard. Once the shades neared their target, they became corporeal again, solid enough to begin digging it out of the earth. Though barely perceptible, the outline of a giant buried beneath stone and vegetation was undeniable. The legs were intact, along with half of its torso, one arm, and its head... but most importantly its heart still beat. A quick excavation revealed a rusty, pitted, giant sized suit of armor, with a green glowing canister of Andahar Onyx encasing a pulsing crystalline lattice. The Blackmoorian warmachine would never move again, but its heart at least, could be salvaged.

Secret Crafts

Artifice

Perfectured during the height of Blackmoor, the great artificers of the past crafted everything from household constructs, to gigantic walking battle fortresses. Forges from the Stormkillers to the Dragon Hills supplied the empire with raw materials and resources, and the dwarves themselves excelled at shaping metal and magic to serve their needs. In the aftermath of the Great

Rain of Fire, many of these dwarves preserved what they could of this arcane science, bringing minor artifacts and more importantly their knowledge, when they sought sanctuary at Farseer Refuge.

Though much was lost during that time, the Felwig dwarves excelled in the craft, and Farseer Refuge soon supported a burgeoning population of artificers. Without these artificers, the Farseer would have remained inoperable, and the

Skotharian dwarves would never have been reunited with their cousins on Brun.

Clockwork wonders are among their most common creations, ranging from animal-like toys and companions, to sophisticated limb replacements that counteract some of the worst effects of the Wasting. Though their works are impressive, none yet have matched the grandeur of their forbearers. Clockwork constructs can be designed to follow fairly complicated tasks, but true sentience still eludes them.

Radiomancy

Most magic in the Shimmering Lands is powered by the radiance – a magi-technical substance discovered and developed by the ancient Blackmoorians. Conventional wisdom often links use of the radiance to the cause of the Great Rain of Fire, as well as to the Wasting disease that followed after it – a theory studiously ignored by the dwarves of the Shimmering Lands. With the completion of the Gate of Light, use of the radiance, with all of its benefits and detriments, is fast becoming a cornerstone of dwarven society.

Once per year, on the anniversary of the Great Rain of Fire, the Gate of Light opens and floods the surrounding lands with a raw outpouring of radiance. Radiomancers across the land capture this power in specially designed radiance receptacles – magical crystals designed to store the radiance for an extended period of time. These crystals can range greatly in size and shape, but all are prized and coveted by the radiomancers that use them, for once the Gate of Light closes these receptacles are the only source of the radiance available.

Able to deal out devastating amounts of power directly, a radiomancer's true worth becomes apparent when working with any of the other secret crafts in the Shimmering Lands. The radiance can be used to power clockwork constructs, or to feed soulbound abominations. Many of the ancient Blackmoorian artifacts brought to Brun cease to function without a constant infusion of the radiance. Unfortunately such emanations propagate the Wasting, and as

the dwarven influence on Brun increases, so too does this deadly plague.

Soulbinding

Life on Brun was just as difficult after the Great Rain of Fire as it was on Skothar, and like their far away cousins, the Yadrak had to take desperate measures in order to insure their survival. Early Yadrak shamans combated the deadly freezing conditions of the north by sacrificing giants who had been slain or captured in battle. As these techniques grew more sophisticated the art of soulbinding was born, and the Yadrak learned to suffuse weapons and armor with the souls of their enemies.

Though very powerful, the soulbound items infused with the spirits of fallen giant enemies were just the tip of the iceberg for the Yadrak – the true potential of soulbinding did not surface until they began experimenting on the souls of dwarves. Nearly all Yadrak gatherholds harbor small armies of constructs and animate armor infused with the spirits of their ancestors – the most powerful of which still retain their former personalities.

Soulbound items come with a price however. Sentient creatures imprisoned in such a way have a tendency to grow insane over time, and many of the magical items crafted by the Yadrak bring curses upon their owners.

Dreamwalking

Little is known about the origins of Dreamwalking, other than that it was a craft learned by Karlheig dwarves exiled to the outskirts of Blackmoorian territory before the Great Rain of Fire. It was the dreamwalkers who led the Karlheig dwarves to Farseer Refuge, and who were also instrumental in repairing the Farseer and helping to find the lost colonies of the Brunian dwarves.

Several sects of dreamwalkers have formed since the craft was first introduced, each focusing on their own unique skills and abilities. Dreamwalkers are masters over the mental arts, and practice mental divination, enchantment, compulsion, and domination. Many are feared

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for their ability to see the secret thoughts of others, though only the most powerful have this ability. When coupled with the power of radiomancy, dreamwalkers can actually open doorways to alternate realms and travel between them.

Exposure to such environments tends to make the more powerful dreamwalkers quite unstable, and many have trouble coping with the fact of their own reality. Still, dreamwalkers are highly valued and sought after for the services they do provide, and many have proven pivotal in the founding and defense of the nation.

Shadowmancy

Though once members of the Felwig and Karlheig clans, the short period of time spent in the depths of the earth beneath the XXX Mountains have altered the dwarves of Hurgon permanently. Those heading the call of Dranwyrf brought with them the art of shadowmancy, and can command and control the stuff of darkness on a whim.

Shadowmancers are adept conjurers, calling forth creatures of darkness to do their bidding, and forging items from shadow-stuff. Like master illusionists, shadowmancers can craft scenes and visions of their own choosing, though unlike mere illusions such magic has a form of its own and can often take on its own life.

Left unchecked shadow magic can run rampant. Summoned creatures have their own thoughts and agendas, and the more intelligent ones actively oppose those who summoned them. Even among the unscrupulous dwarves of the Shimmering Lands, shadowmancers are viewed as untrustworthy and dangerous. Many believe that the most powerful practitioners of this are have already been compromised by powers lurking in the darkness.

Artifacts

The Scorched Horn

The length of this ancient curved horn curls around on itself several times, and is inlaid with

carvings and frescos depicting scenes from Blackmoor's history during Uther's reign. Though scorched and cracked from flame and heat, its silver mouthpiece remains intact.

Displayed prominently at Farseer Refuge when the dwarves inhabited that shelter, the Scorched Horn has since become lost during the migration across Skothar and into Brun. Whether the Horn sits in the vault of some dwarven elder, lies deep in the caverns of Hurgon, or is lost to the wilds, is unknown.

Powers: Blowing the horn can have several different effects, depending on the tune being played.

- The owner of the Horn may blow it once per day, releasing a great gout of flames in a forward cone that deals 2d6 points of fire damage to all in its path. Because of the Horn's damage, there is a 1 in 4 chance that the user of the Horn also receives 1d6 points of fire damage.
- Blowing a bugle charge on the Horn summons forth a dark horseman who will obey the commands of the Horn's owner for 3 rounds before disappearing. The horseman attacks as a phantasmal killer. This power can be used once a month, and only outdoors.
- Playing Blackmoorian Pomp and Circumstance activates the true power of the Horn by summoning forth a shade of Ancient Blackmoor. The Shade is dressed in fine silks and wears a crown atop his head. Though the Shade never reveals his name, we will answer one question truthfully before departing. He knows everything that Uther Pendragon would have known during his lifetime. Once this power has been used, the Scorched Horn goes dormant, and must be recharged before any other power can be used again.

Penalties: Using any power of the Horn comes with a cost. Any time that a power is used, all those within 30 feet radius of the artifact (including the user) must make a fortitude save or suffer 1 point of Constitution damage from the Wasting. Such damage does not heal normally (though magical healing will restore 1 point of Constitution per application). In addition, there is a 2% chance that Uther's Shade will carry the

user of the Horn back with him into the Blighted Lands. The horn can be recharged at the Gates of Light by performing a special ceremony, but only when the portal is opened.

Lugett's Visionarium

Two feet wide by three feet long, this book is bound by brass rings and covered in red leather. Each of the pages within are beaten brass, though no runes or etchings can be found on any of them. The pages can only be viewed after they have been heated by specially crafted candle flames. Once heated, glowing runes appear around the borders of each brass page, while the mirror like center distorts and shimmers to reveal an illusory scene.

Last in the possession of Undwyr Yardrak, the Visionarium disappeared with the death of its owner. Any Yardrak with half an inkling would kill to possess the Visionarium, and many of them actively seek it out. Should Lugett's Visionarium ever fall into the hands of an outsider, it could spell disaster for the Yardrak.

Powers: Heating one of the brass pages with a specific kind of candle will produce one of the following effects.

- Heating a brass page with a mundane candle will allow the user to ask one question. The answer appears in the book as an image (as if the user is looking at a scene in a mirror).
- Heating a brass page with a magical candle will reveal a scene from the user's future. Only images are seen (there is no accompanying sound). Whether or not the scene will come to pass is unknown.
- Heating a brass page with a dark candle blessed by the clergy of an entropic immortal will reveal the path that Lugett Yardrek took to find his Deep Elf patrons. It will take 8 to 12 uses of the Visionarium before the user is finally led to Pralheim, where Lugett and his party first met the elves.

Penalties: The owner of the Visionarium must make a Will Save for every week that the book is in their possession. Failure indicates that the owner is compelled to use one of the book's powers. In addition, using any of the

Visionarium's powers has a 2% chance of causing the book's owner to go insane.

Farseer

Farseer Refuge was more than a shelter for the dwarves escaping the Great Rain of Fire, it was also a giant eldritch machine. Built at the height of Blackmoorian technomancy, Farseer Station (as it was then called) was one of the greatest defenses of the empire. With proper maintenance and use, the Farseer allowed Blackmoor to gather intelligence both internally and from faraway lands. Nothing was hidden from the Farseer – any location on the surface of the planet, as well as those within it, could be viewed.

By the time the dwarves occupied Farseer Refuge it had already begun to fall into disrepair. The most powerful functions of the device were lost to time, but the dwarves managed to piece enough of Farseer's secrets back together in order to get its most basic functions operational. It was through these powers that the Skotharian dwarves were guided to their new home on Brun.

Powers: Though it continues to deteriorate, the Farseer can still be used. To operate the apparatus, a user must be strapped and plugged into a reclining chair draped with wires, and tubes filled with alchemical substances.

- Naming any living target will allow the user of the Farseer to see and hear what that target is doing, as if they were being scried upon. In addition the user may elect to communicate with the target creature through whispers. The true name of the target must be known in order for the connection to be made.
- The Farseer can scry upon any location known to its user. Not only does the user see the site, but they are transported to the location through the Astral. The astral projection may traverse the site, able to see and hear creatures and objects in the area, although they are not able to physically interact with any of them.
- The Farseer's greatest power is to show its user the one thing that they desire the most, whether that thing is known or unknown. To activate this power, the user must meditate on

their greatest desire or need, for an entire day while attached to the eldritch machine.

Penalties: Each use of the Farseer contaminates the refuge with increasing radiance fallout. After 10 uses, anyone in the refuge must make a fortitude check (DC 10) once a week or suffer one point of Wasting damage. After 20 uses the DC increases to 15, and after 50 uses the DC increases to 20, and must be made twice a week. After 100 uses the check must be made once a day. Anyone who dies of the Wasting inside of Farseer Refuge becomes a shade under the control of the DM.

Pool of Dreams

In the center of Qifhyeld lies the Pool of Dreams, a twenty foot wide pool of clear water around which seven statues of gold are evenly placed. All of the statues are unique, each molded in the visage of one of the seven deadly sins – Avarice, Envy, Gluttony, Lust, Pride, Sloth, and Wrath.

The Pool of Dreams is currently in the possession of General Granik Thyn, who uses it to feed his own ambitions. The general constantly searches out those who can be bribed, blackmailed, or corrupted into doing his own will.

Powers: Dropping an item of value into the pool will trigger one of its powers. Any item used in such a way is consumed by the pool and cannot be retrieved thereafter.

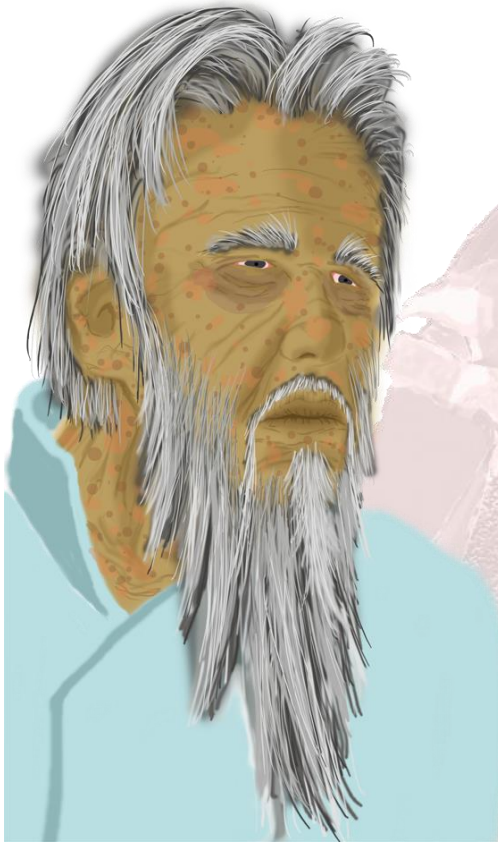
- Dropping a personal effect valued at 10gp or lower will attune the pool to the thoughts of the owner of the sacrificed item. The pool can then be used to scry on that individual for up to an hour. Scrying begins as soon as the item is sacrificed, and cannot be postponed or paused.
- Sacrificing an individual's personal effect valued at 500gp or higher will allow the user of the pool to view that individual's dreams for one hour. This power does not take effect until the target individual goes to sleep, and no other powers can be used in the meantime.

The pool user can subtly shape that target individual's dreams by whispering suggestions into the water.

- Sacrificing any object valued at 1000gp or higher triggers the Pool's greatest power. The user must stand behind one of the statues, invoking its name. The statue then moves, turning to peer into the waters for itself, and find some individual who has an affinity with the same deadly sin. The target individual is chosen at random unless the user of the pool first whispers their name to the statue. The waters then show the target individual's greatest dreams, whether they are awake or asleep. If a named target individual does not suffer from the chosen deadly sin, the sacrifice is still consumed, but nothing else happens.
- At any time during which the pool is already displaying a target individual's dreams, a second sacrifice can be made. The item being sacrificed must be valued at 2000gp or higher. Once the sacrifice is consumed, the user may enter the waters, and is physically transported to the Plane of Dreams, where they may interact with the individual whose dreams they have entered. This effect lasts for one hour, after which time the user finds themselves back in the waters of the pool.

Penalties: Using the pool carries its own set of dangers. Any time a power which sees into an individual's dreams is used, there is a 5% chance that some dream creature may find its way to the Prime Material Plane through the pool. The nature of such a creature is left to the DM. In addition, whenever the Pool's greatest power is used (to travel into the Plane of Dreams), there is a 2% chance that the user will instead be transported into the Dimension of Nightmares. In such a case the transport is permanent and one way, and the user must find another way back to the Prime.

Aynmegk Yadrak



*Member of Elder Conclave
Head of Yadrak Clan*

History: Born in 2643 BC, Aynmegk was an infant when his family began their migration from the frozen wastes of Northern Brun. Promised to Stodos from birth, the Yadrak spent his youth performing greater and greater abominations in order to appease his patron. When he was old enough he left his family and settled in the northlands across the Bridge of Oost, where he became obsessed the concept of eternal life and postponing the journey to his demonic patron. Despite that obsession Aynmegk was determined to hedge his bets, and began building up a force that would please the Croaking Demon. Constant attacks by giant barbarians and their elven allies frustrated him to no end, and on several occasions he was almost forced to abandon his estate.

In 2467 BC the Moadreg were in turmoil. Besieged on multiple fronts by their enemies, the

dwarves and their allies were ready to fall. Aynmegk usurped control of the clan from Undwyr Yadrak (a distant cousin of his), sacrificed the former patron, and consolidated an army of dwarves and demons to lead against the giant attackers. When Dranwyrf united several of the major houses, Aynmegk threw in his support, and the dwarves were finally able to secure a home.

Personality: Shifty and paranoid, Aynmegk is always looking over his shoulder, or rather down at his feet. He is convinced that something is trying to grab him and "take him away." In private he often falls into screaming bouts and claws at unseen attackers grasping at his ankles. The only thing that can calm him in one of these states is to sacrifice a sentient being to his patron Stodos. Despite this seeming madness, Aynmegk is an expert bargainer and leads Clan Yadrak through guile and deception. His avarice might be matched only by that of Engdyr Heldfyst, with whom he has a great rivalry.

Appearance: Aynmegk is old and shriveled, though the Wasting does not appear to have taken hold of him. His hair and beard, both long and unbraided, are stark white. His dark eyes are sunken and surrounded by gray skin, an obvious sign that Aynmegk gets little sleep. The old dwarf always wears fastidious robes, lighter and more free flowing than is the Moadreg norm, although all of his clothes are torn and frayed around the legs and feet, and his legs are more often than not a bloody mess of tares and scratches.

DMing Notes: A master of the dark arts, Aynmegk is accustomed to the use of intimidation and threats in order to get what he wants. Like most Yadrak, Aynmegk is much more social than the rest of his kin, and can call on any number of relatives and servants (both mundane and abyssal) when in need. Although he may be willing to help the PCs on occasion, anything that he touches ultimately ends up on Stodos' sacrificial table.

Dranwyrf Korrskill

First Elder

Head of Felweg Clan

History: Much of Dranwyrf's early life was spent fighting wars with giant kin and elves to the north and east. Trained as a Radiomancer, his skills proved useful in the struggles, but it was apparent to him that the dwarves were fighting a losing battle. Each house lead their own forces, and rarely did they coordinate their efforts. Despite being barbarians, the elves and giants worked together. On the brink of defeat, Dranwyrf brought several houses together and was able to push back their attackers. After this the dwarves recognized the importance of having a single leader (at least with regard to outside forces) and named Dranwyrf First Elder, a term translated by many outsiders to be king.

In recent years he has secretly converted to the faith of Kagyar, though if the rest of the Conclave discovered this fact they would certainly remove him and have him summarily executed as a menace.

Personality: An aberration among his kind, Dranwyrf truly cares for the fate of his people. Though just as reclusive as his peers he works tirelessly to ensure the continued existence of the Shimmering Lands and its people. Dranwyrf's expression is always stolid and unreadable, a fact that he attributes to his constant commune with Kagyar. When in solitude, the old dwarf often loses his own sense of identity and thinks of himself as a direct extension of his immortal patron.

Appearance: Small and shriveled, Dranwyrf has been nearly crippled by his use of the Radiance throughout the years. Both of his legs are crippled by the Wasting disease, as well as one arm and much of his face. Heavy robes cover these deformities and the aged dwarf uses a spider like construct to help him move. Soon he will be ready to leave the useless husk that has become his body, when he completes the process of becoming a soulbound and transfers his soul into a construct body of solid stone.

DMing Notes: Dranwyrf often works behind the scenes, promoting adventurers and visionaries who will work for the ultimate good of his people. He is secretly a priest of Kagyar and siphons funds and resources to the Way of the Stone whenever he can. The closer he gets to becoming a soulbound, the more fanatical and reckless he becomes in his beliefs. Eventually Dranwyrf will be transformed into the undying servant of Kagyar known as Denwarf Dwarffather and will return to his people over the eons to guide them when needed most.

Gherihk Gyrbain

Member of Elder Conclave

Karlheig Clan

Head of House Gyrbain

History: In 2419 BC, at the age of 23, Gherihk was apprenticed into the Controller's Guild and indoctrinated into the Cult of Dominion. He was a natural at his craft and spent several decades in the northlands skirmishing with tribes of barbarian giants. When the ashen clouds of Vulcania blotted out the sky in 2408, Gherihk came into his own. An expert at finding giant communities struggling in the wake of the disaster, he would infiltrate them and systematically destroy them from within, always dominating key members of the tribe and using them to slaughter their own people.

After returning from the northern campaigns, Gherihk rose in power quickly, both within the Cult of Dominion and the Controller's Guild. He enacted training programs to teach hopefuls his techniques on giant slaying, organized several slave rings that supply demands from Demhyeld in the north, to Isshum, and Colhador. In 2323 BC, upon the death of Stabon Feghwyl, he was named the youngest member of the Elder Conclave at the age of 119.

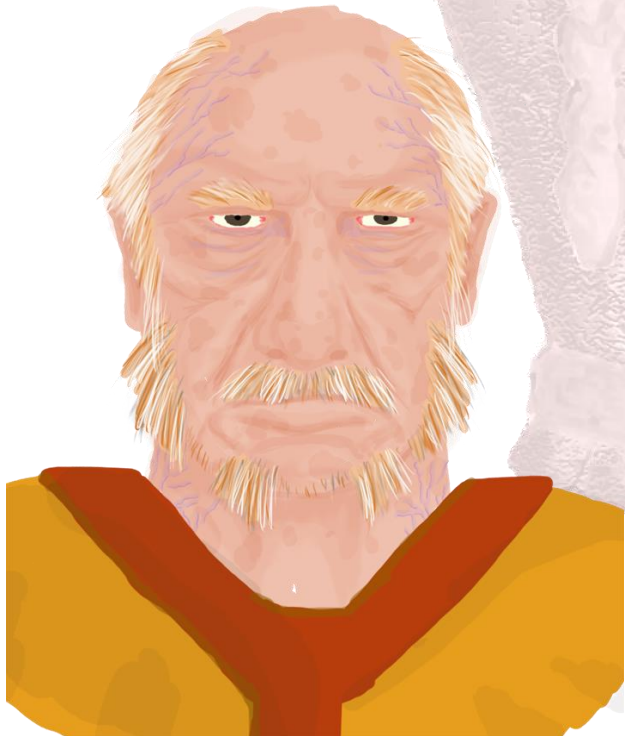
Personality: Gherihk appears to enjoy the company of others, dwarf and non-dwarf alike, although his demeanor and strange appearance tend to put others off rather quickly. He enjoys intrigue, although his schemes are rarely complex and never subtle. Gherihk prefers the act of

forcing his will upon others rather than going through the tedium of covert manipulation.

Appearance: No one ever sees Gherihk's limbs, though movement is often visible beneath the heavy robes that cover his girth. Those portions of his body that can be seen appear completely normal, as if the Wasting has bypassed Gherihk completely. Younger than most in the Conclave, he still sports a full, braided jet black beard and hair. When he speaks, his voice is like gravel being smashed on an anvil, and he often emits gurgled croaks in mid sentence.

DMing Notes: A master of mind control, and devout follower of Slizzark, Gherihk is a force to be reckoned with, and not one to be overlooked. His estate near Qifhyeld on the southern shores of Oost serves as the base for a vast slave ring and a safe haven for alien entities and servitors of long abandoned gods. Slizzark herself has sent several kopru to advise and serve him and rumors are that many of the slaves he captures see the insides of his workshop where their flesh and minds are warped into horrors best not named.

Engdyr Heldfyst



*Member of Elder Conclave
Felweg Clan
Head of House Heldfyst*

History: Born just before the dwarves settled in the area, Engdyr has always called the Shimmering Lands home. He served the radiomancers at the Gate of Light for several centuries, living an insulated life free of worries while many of his compatriots faced extinction at the hands of giants and worse. He quickly rose through the ranks when several of his superiors disappeared and were never heard from again. As the Radiomancer Guild's chapter head, Engdyr played an instrumental role in completing that artifact and was soon after awarded a seat on the Elder Conclave.

With the onset of age Engdyr feels the need for increasing isolation. He takes great solace from the teachings of Zugzul and since his elevation to the Conclave in 2319, he has used his position of considerable power to influence the Shimmering Lands into eradicating as much of the surrounding vermin as it can. Although he would much rather spend his life in solitude studying on his estate, Engdyr finds it very hard to concentrate knowing that the world is crawling with other sentient beings.

Personality: Engdyr Heldfyst is a xenophobe who can hardly tolerate his own kind, much less any of the other races he has dealings with. Most of his servants are constructs and soulbound. Although he will employ other sentients for specific tasks, he considers them all to be fodder and much prefers a clean end to any operation - one where all concerned are permanently silenced, to one in which his pawns survive. His fiery temper is legendary, and usually results in him smashing something with his obsidian arm.

Appearance: White hair framed by bright orange streaks frame Engdyr's head, or would if it were not falling out in clumps. His beard is so far gone that he has taken to shaving his face, just to clean up the few remaining rough patches that dot its surface. Bringing attention to this fact is guaranteed to attract Engdyr's wrath. Withered from the Wasting, he has replaced his right arm with that of a golem's made of shiny black obsidian and covered in glowing blue runes. When he must go out among others, Engdyr dons

heavy armor decorated with the symbols and designs of Zugzul prominently displayed, but when in the privacy of his own estate, he prefers simple robes in reds and oranges.

DMing Notes: So many years of working so closely with the radiance have taken a heavy toll on Engdyr's mind. He simply can not abide that other thinking creatures are alive (and so near to him). In the clergy of Zugzul he sees a powerful tool that can be used to help him solve his problems, however for Engdyr this is a backup plan at best. Using his intimate knowledge of the Gate of Light, he plans to turn that artifact into a weapon that will wipe out all life in the region... although he has never once considered what would happen to himself should he succeed.

Kyrreh Drasmehr

*Member of Elder Conclave
Felwig Clan
Head of House Drasmehr*

History: Another apprentice of Urthyne Drelgh, Kyrreh Drasmehr's background parallels that of her contemporary Dranwyrf. The early battles with their Brunian brethren never sat well with Kyrreh, which was in part why she claimed an Estate in the Forest of Tears. A staunch supporter of Dranwyrf's since the formation of the Shimmering Lands, Kyrreh becomes more isolated with each passing year. Now she rarely travels the distance to Drangyr to meet with the Elder Conclave.

Instead she spends most of her time with the spirits who haunt the Forest of Tears. Thanks to the proximity of the Gate of Light, many spirits in the area are not drawn to Limbo after they die, but instead linger near their mortal remains. Kyrreh roams through the forest, looking for dwarves she once knew in life... or for those she suspects hold secrets from her. Since the founding of the nation she has come to suspect that the Yadrak are covering some immense secret, and Kyrreh intends to ferret it out.

Personality: A bookworm at heart, Kyrreh has always been full of curiosity. Since being blinded by the Wasting she has become an introvert, though few suspect that she can see more clearly

than ever. Once a supporter of Yadrak sovereignty, Kyrreh has learned since not to trust them. Her obsessive, one track mind, cannot be derailed, and she is determined to discover the secrets they hide. Much of her time is spent interpreting visions sent to her by the Dreamer.

Appearance: Disheveled and unkempt, Kyrreh's clothing is always dusty from travel and more often than not her hair is knotted around some twigs or leaf. Her milky white eyes dart about constantly, despite the fact that she is completely blind.

DMing Notes: Kyrreh has been wandering the Forest of Tears blind for the past several decades gathering up the restless spirits of Yadrak dwarves. After devising methods for tormenting such spirits, she has been able to extract much information from them, slowly piecing together a puzzle that will eventually lead to their dark patrons... and the elves from which they learned their religion.

Lhenty Ghorrash

*Member of Elder Conclave
Yadrak Clan
Head of House Ghorrash*

History: Yadrak families have always been numerous, and none more so than house Ghorrash. Lhenty grew up as the youngest of thirteen siblings. After her father was killed in BC 2543, during a skirmish with giants in the Hyrvoed Mountains, Lhenty had to act fast. She put her plan in motion to execute her twelve other siblings, and by BC 2540 Lhenty had firm control of House Ghorrash. Always paranoid, the Mistress of Ghorrash spent the next few decades solidifying her power base. Most of those who did not fall under her sway, died under a sacrificial dagger of Angrboda.

Lhenty initially welcomed the dwarves of Dranwyrf's migration, but her demeanor quickly soured when she realized that their leader could not be coerced by her charms. In BC 2581, with giants from Hyrvoed arrayed to the southwest of Ghorrash, and Dranwyrf's armies to the north, Lhenty nearly succumbed to despair. Despite the animosity between the two dwarves, Dranwyrf

marched his army against the giants, breaking their siege against Ghorrash. Since then the once jilted Lhenty has been his reluctant supporter, though she continues to plot Dranwyrf's demise in secret.

Personality: Lhenty is jealous and paranoid, and the voices she hears inside her head do not dissuade her from those views. Those she cannot control through seduction, guile, or greed, she quickly betrays. Even those who fall to her charms are far from safe, for Lhenty assumes betrayal lurks just beneath every smile. One of her favorite pastimes is pitting her servants and minions against one another, though she is only ever truly happy when sacrificing a former lover to her foul patroness, Angrboda.

Appearance: Though aged, Lhenty has managed to maintain much of her youthful beauty. Her golden locks of hair show only the faintest streaks of gray. Considered to be graceful and attractive by dwarven standards, Lhenty's beauty runs only skin deep.

DMing Notes: The preeminent enchantress in the Shimmering Lands, Lhenty is a mistress of desire and temptations. Those wishing to maintain control over their own actions do well to avoid any contact with her. Anything that Lhenty cannot control she must destroy. The voices in her head argue constantly with each other, often giving her conflicting advice. Most of her days are spent deep in conversation, although two of the participants (the split personality of her immortal patroness) are entirely in her own head.

Urrigh Wanwyrf

*Member of Elder Conclave
Head of Hurgon Clan
Head of House Wanwyrf*

History: Urrigh's earliest memories are of times spent in Farseer Refuge. Although little more than a toddler when the Skotharian dwarves fled their temporary sanctuary, images of that brief home are seared into his mind. On the long trek toward Brun, Urrigh idolized Dranwyrf and eventually became one of his apprentices. It didn't take much for Wanwyrf to become

fascinated with Blackmoorian technomancy, and though he threw himself into his chosen crafts there was always some amount of bitterness about being forced to leave his beloved Refuge.

In BC 2567 the young dwarf's life was fractured yet again when several among the migration discovered what appeared to be remnants of ancient Blackmoor on Jannivarsland. This caused a schism among the dwarves of the migration, and between Urrigh and his mentor Dranwyrf as well. The migration split, and Urrigh abandoned the quest to reach Brun in favor of establishing a home in the image of his beloved Farseer Refuge – the nation of Hurgon. None know why the dwarves of Hurgon answered Dranwyrf's call for help in BC 2475, but when they arrived Urrigh was at the forefront.

Personality: Urrigh Wanwyrf is an obsessive fanatic who will stop at nothing to collect any remnant of ancient Blackmoor that he comes across. Once, his exuberance for ancient artifacts was contagious, but now that he is in Brun Urrigh's quiet intensity only unnerves others. He prefers the company of shades and constructs to other living things, though he maintains a small cadre of apprentices in a twisted mockery of his early relationship with Dranwyrf. His temper never shows, but those who displease him are rarely ever seen again.

Appearance: Wanwyrf is a dwarf ravaged by the Wasting. His gray hair is brittle and falling out in clumps and his skin is blistered red by countless radiance burns. Urrigh's black, pupil-less eyes stare through all who have the ill fortune of meeting him. Heavy robes cover flashing metallic mechanisms and sickly glowing trinkets that Urrigh adorns himself with at all times. His ponderous gait betrays the fact that Urrigh can't bear to be physically separated from any of his Blackmoorian prizes.

DMing Notes: Whatever darkness Urrigh found in Hurgon has multiplied a thousand fold inside him. His obsession with ancient artifacts hides his true purpose. His real goal is to spread Hurgon's tenebrous insanity throughout the Shimmering Lands.

Eldorwyn

Stranded in the Shimmering Lands in BC 2533 shortly after his merchant vessel was destroyed, Eldorwyn found very little welcome in the dwarven nation. Since then the elf has taken to living in the wilds, and to causing the dwarven elders as much trouble as possible. Over the decades he has freed thousands of slaves, arming and recruiting the most capable of them to his cause. He fought in the Battle of Drangyr and has since maintained ties to native elf and giant leaders in the area.

Hyllig Rath

A dwarven adventurer, Rath spends most of his time exploring the untamed wilds of the north. His right hand and eye have been replaced with onyx, but neither hampers his abilities. Rath's constant companion, a scruffy warg named Fetch, is an outcast from Urzud. The two make a living as hunters and trackers, supplementing that with any treasures they stumble upon in the wilderness.

Irrilgassh

Irrilgassh of Isshum is a lizardman merchant based out of Gromhyeld. The creature specializes in providing rare and foreign merchandise from Mogreth to the Dawn Lands, but his real passion is gladiatorial fighting. Irrilgassh is thus always on the lookout for worth gladiator specimens, which he promptly drugs, shackles, and ships off down the Road to Isshum.

Karagk Fyll

Instrumental in completing the Gate of Light in Himnem, Karagk Fyll has since risen in the ranks to become Master of the Himnem Radiomancer Guild. Fyll always walks with a pronounced limp – his right leg decimated by the Wasting nearly half a century ago. Despite this, Karagk dreams of leading an expedition through the Gate of Light and into the Blighted Lands. Such an expedition would need to return within a month's

time, or risk being stranded in the Blighted Lands for nearly a year.

Lidol Vehdnen

A small and unassuming middle aged gnome living in Gnen, Lidol Vehdnen is the head of the Vehdnen crime family. Lidol lives in his seaside cottage with his wife and three children, where he often entertains guests from across the Shimmering Lands. Such parties mask Lidol's real activities; for it is here that he meets with and advises his lieutenants.

Migkar

Centuries ago, Migkar Yadrak's soul was bound into a magical suit of armor and tasked with defending his ancestral hall from all enemies. Migkar's spirit quickly went insane with power and slew all of his living clansmen. He still guards his ancestral hall from all outsiders, and spends most of his time idly tormenting the dwarven spirits trapped in his domain. Some say that Migkar himself is trapped, and secretly searches for an end to his imprisonment.

Narogh

Adorned in filth and rags, the Oracle of Skuld haunts the wilds near the ruins of Talagk. Those desperate enough to seek him out often find him here, where Narogh freely doles out Skuld's prophecies. Unfortunately, few can stomach what the old dwarf has to say to them.

Targrid Vynd

A young battle mage training at the Coruscating Tower, Targrid has come to believe that her masters are under the influence of some outside power. Despite this gut feeling Targrid has no solid proof, and continues to perform her duties while she investigates. Still untouched by the Wasting, Targrid is eager to travel and experience the world, although so far the extent of her exploration has been limited to the eastern shores of the Dawn Land.

IMMORTALS

Zugzul's Legacy

Fires blazed forth from pits lining the entire length of the corridor. Exarch Juraed could feel beads of sweat running down the back of his neck, though he barely noticed the heat of the flames. Silently, the guards at the end of the hallway opened large oaken doors, bound in bronze, at his approach.

The shrine was empty. Juraed chanced a quick glance back to the fire-lit hallway before the heavy doors closed, leaving him in silence and darkness. The gnome took a deep breath before falling to his knees and inching forward until his hands felt the coarse basalt alter of Zugzul. As he touched it, flames erupted from its surface.

"Lamur has failed!" Juraed cried out, his voice a mixture of outrage and anguish.

Fire leapt up all around him, singing hair and blistering skin.

"No, mighty Zugzul, I have not failed you!" Juraed could no longer tell if the droplets of liquid beading down his face were sweat or tears. "The Heart is nearby... it will yet feed your Fiery Forge! It is nearly within our grasp... in Khergyd! I beg you my lord... give me one more chance to do your will!"

As suddenly as the flames erupted, they were gone. Juraed collapsed upon the scorching heat of the basalt alter, coughing and struggling to breathe... but still alive.

"I... I will not fail you again..."

Angrboda (Demogorgon)

*The Bane of Souls, The Dark Lady
Patroness of Corruption and Diseases, Patroness of
Witchery*

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 30 (Eternal), CE, Entropy

Symbol: a black pentacle on red field

Portfolio: witchery, diseases, corruption, destruction

Angrboda is always worshiped in her female aspect within the Shimmering Lands and never as his male aspect. The Moadreg despise undeath, viewing its embrace as a weakness, and often look down their noses at cultures like Taymora where it is practiced. Angrboda is thus not associated with undeath, though she is often associated with disease and corruption (and prayed to as an appeal against the Wasting).

Angrboda has gained a foothold in dwarven society and is not letting go. Many houses appealed to her to deliver them from their enemies circa BC 2400, and she responded by sending her minions to augment the dwarven armies - a move that was instrumental in their subsequent successes. She knows that radiomancy is the cause of the Wasting, and plans to use her followers to bring its corruption to all corners of the world.

Belnos (Asterius)

*Patron of Trade and Money, Patron of Communication,
Protector of Merchants and Thieves*

Level, Alignment and Sphere: 25th (Eternal, NG),
Thought

Symbol: a silver coin

Portfolio: trade, profit, communication, travel, cleverness,
merchants, thieves



A remnant of old Blackmoorian faiths, Belnos is worshiped mostly by gnomes and the lesser classes in the Shimmering Lands. He shares a grudging mutual respect with Kagyar as

both are distrustful of the technomantic devices that destroyed Blackmoor. Belnos is venerated mostly by gnomes, but is gaining a substantial following with giant-kin as well. His main concern is the preservation of aspects of Blackmoorian culture while at the same time purging from it all traces of the technology that caused the Great Rain of Fire.

The Dreamer (Rafiel)

Patron of Science

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 21 (Empyrean), LG, Energy

Symbol: a book with a star on its cover

Portfolio: radiance, magical and scientific knowledge



On the edge of true senescence, the Dreamer is barely aware of its surroundings. Drawn to the radiance in all forms, those who revere the Dreamer, mostly radiomancers and practitioners of ancient Blackmoorian arts,

perceive it as a force of nature that guides them in their chosen craft. Although lacking true self awareness, the Dreamer often finds itself at odds with many other immortals in the area, most notably Kagyar and Belnos.

The Dreamer is most active on the Bridge of Oost near the Gates of Light. Many radiomancers claim to hear imperceptible whisperings from the Dreamer when the Gates open each year. Some say that the whisperings grow stronger and more perceptible with each subsequent year.

Garal Glitterlode

Patron of Gnomes, Patron of Invention and Crafts, Supreme Technician

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 12th (Temporal), CG, Matter

Symbol: A gold coin; or two joined cogs

Portfolio: Gnomes, inventions, science, mechanics, crafts, thinkers

One of the major deities of the gnomes, Garal and Belnos share some similar interests, although Garal is more permissive on the issue of technology. Like Belnos, Garal is also venerated mostly by the gnomish population. Unlike Belnos, Garal is less concerned about the preservation of Blackmoorian culture, and more concerned about the preservation of its knowledge and technology - including the secrets that caused the Great Rain of Fire.

Kagyar

Patron of Dwarves, Patron of Craftsmen, Protector of Miners

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 28th (Eternal), N, Matter

Symbol: hammer and chisel crossed

Portfolio: dwarves, crafts, metallurgy, sculpture, knowledge, miners

Kagyar is a new addition to the Moadreg pantheon and as such only has a minimal following in the Shimmering Lands. Many of those who follow him publicly proselytize the coming end of the world and are seen as misfits and troublemakers. He preaches a return to pre-Blackmoorian ways and shuns the use of the radiance. Kagyar is aware of the Dreamer, although he is unsure what its exact nature is. He opposes that entity at every chance he is given.

Khoronus

Father Time

Keeper of the Gates of Time, Patron of History and Philosophy

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 36th (Hierarch), N, Time

Symbol: an hourglass or a water clock

Portfolio: flow of time, wisdom, history, philosophy, good government, patience, persuasion, diplomacy



Khoronus is one of the old Blackmoorian immortals, and as such he is given lip service by many in the Shimmering Lands, however true worship of this immortal is fading. Gnomes find him hard to fathom, and many dwarves simply don't have the time or patience for him. When the battle of Drangyr was won with the help of entropic immortals many turned from Khoronus toward other pursuits.

Skuld

Patroness of Fate, Keeper of the Future

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 17th (Celestial), N, Entropy

Symbol: a head of a woman with a black veil that hides the face

Portfolio: future, fate, death, divination, visions

An obscure immortal, Skuld owes her worship in the Shimmering Lands to the morbid curiosity

IMMORTALS

that many dwarves have about the future. This curiosity most certainly stems from their survival of the Great Rain of Fire, and a desire to prevent such a catastrophe from ever happening again, or at least weathering it if it is preordained. Whatever purpose Skuld has for the Moadreg is her own secret.

Slizzark

Patroness of the Kopru, The One Who Waits In Ambush

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 15th (Celestial), NE, Energy

Symbol: an eye with a hypnotic spiral at the center

Portfolio: kopru, domination of the weak, power, corruption



An alien entity, some say that Slizzark is only worshiped by the insane. This may be true, though none can doubt the impact that her followers have had in defense of the Shimmering Lands. She is

revered by many in Clan Karlheig, who view her dogma of domination as an analogy for dwarven rule over the rest of the world. Slizzark often sends kopru and other minions to act as her mouthpiece to her Moadreg followers. Although never particularly interested in dwarven followers, Slizzark never passes up an opportunity to exert her own form of domination over others.

Stodos

Master of the Icy Wastes, The Croaking Demon

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 3rd (Temporal), NE, Entropy

Symbol: a crystalline toad (ideally carved from magical unmelting ice)

Portfolio: ice, death, hatred, slavery

Faith in Stodos may have originated with the Antalianes of the north, who shared some of their secrets for weathering the freezing bitter climate of that region with passing dwarves. As with Angrboda, worship in Stodos swelled circa BC 2400 when desperate dwarves turned to him for deliverance and succor. Stodos typically takes little head of his followers on the Prime, but can be persuaded to grant boons to worshipers who offer appropriate sacrifices.

Zugzul

Patron of Power and War, Patron of Fire

Level, Alignment, Sphere: 32 (Hierarch), NE, Energy

Symbol: a metal mask of a dwarven face, with flames erupting from the eyes and mouth

Portfolio: power, conquest, fire and fire creatures, darkness, war, destruction

Only a minor dwarven deity before Blackmoor's fall, Zugzul has risen to the premier immortal in the Moadreg's pantheon since the Great Rain of Fire. Driven from their homeland by that catastrophe, the Moadreg have needed to fight for every inch of land that they now claim. Their neighbors despise them, blaming them for the dreaded Wasting disease that afflicts the world. On one side they are beset by giants and barbarians, and on the other by the undead plague of Taymora. This is the world that the Moadreg live in, and this is the world in which Zugzul thrives.

Zugzul can hardly be said to have the dwarves best interest at heart. He promotes the expansion of the Wasting because it foments unrest in the Shimmering Land's neighbors, and is probably one of the Dreamer's biggest silent supporters. He is the architect of every major conflict that the Moadreg have gotten into over the past 500 years, and shows no sign of stopping. Either his chosen people will emerge from his forge victorious, or they will become fuel for hotter fires.

MONSTERS

Seeker

Medium Humanoid (Dwarf)

Armor Class 17 (banded)

Hit Points XX (4d12+8)

Speed 25 ft.

Senses low-light vision

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 8 (-1) **Con** 14 (+2)

Int 10 (+0) **Wis** 14 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+1)

Alignment neutral

Languages Dwarvish

TRAITS

Radiance Immunity: Seekers are immune to radiance damage (such as from their own weapons) and any detrimental effects produced by the radiance (such as an Aura of Sickness).

Aura of Sickness: Any living creature within 5 feet of a Seeker must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. **Failed Save:** The target is sickened for 1 minute. **Successful Save:** The target is immune to the Seeker's Aura of Sickness for 24 hours. This immunity also applies once the effect ends.

ACTIONS

Melee Attack – Battleaxe: +4 to hit (one creature). **Hit:** 9 (1d10 +3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) radiance damage.

Melee Attack – Shield: +4 to hit (one creature). **Hit:** 6 (1d4 +3) bludgeoning damage.

Ranged Attack – Dragonbelcher (Recharge 5-6): +4 to hit (range 50 ft.; one creature). **Hit:** 7 (1d6+3) plus 10 (3d6) radiance damage.

ENCOUNTER BUILDING

Level 4 XP 270

DESCRIPTION

The Seekers of Redemption are dwarves that have lost all hope of ever achieving their own greatness. They have subjected themselves to the

experiments of Hinnem radiomancers, and are now a twisted mesh of flesh and machine. Given new life by the radiance, Seekers are destined to burn out – consumed by the very thing that gives them their powers.

Lone Seekers are rare, but on occasion they are gifted to a dwarven Elder in return for some service done for the state. Regiments of the creatures serve as mercenaries out of Hinnem, their services bought by military organizations throughout the Shimmering Lands.

Radiance Wisp

Small Aberration

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 37 (5d10+10)

Speed 60 ft., fly 60 ft.

Senses low-light vision

Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Con** 14 (+2)

Int 14 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+1)

Alignment neutral evil

Languages Common

TRAITS

Aura of Sickness: Any living creature within 5 feet of a Radiance Wisp must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. **Failed Save:** The target is sickened for 1 minute. **Successful Save:** The target is immune to the Radiance Wisp's Aura of Sickness for 24 hours. This immunity also applies once the effect ends.

ACTIONS

Actions are attacks

ENCOUNTER BUILDING

Level 4 XP 270

DESCRIPTION

Motes of intelligent radiance, Wisps appear to be small floating lights, often with a green or blue tint. Radiance Wisps hover above the ground, slowly bobbing and weaving about in an attempt

to attract other intelligent beings to their location. Once in the presence of living creatures, the Wisp darts about violently intent on causing fear and panic.

Radiance Wisps are most common in the blight around the Gate of Light, and swarms of the vile creatures abound while the Gate is open. Even the dwarves despise Wisps, though radiomancers have been known to capture them for study.

Spider Throne

Large Construct

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 37 (5d10+10)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Senses low-light vision

Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Con** 14 (+2)

Int - **Wis** - **Cha** -

Alignment neutral

Languages None

TRAITS

Traits are inherent characteristics

ACTIONS

Actions are attacks

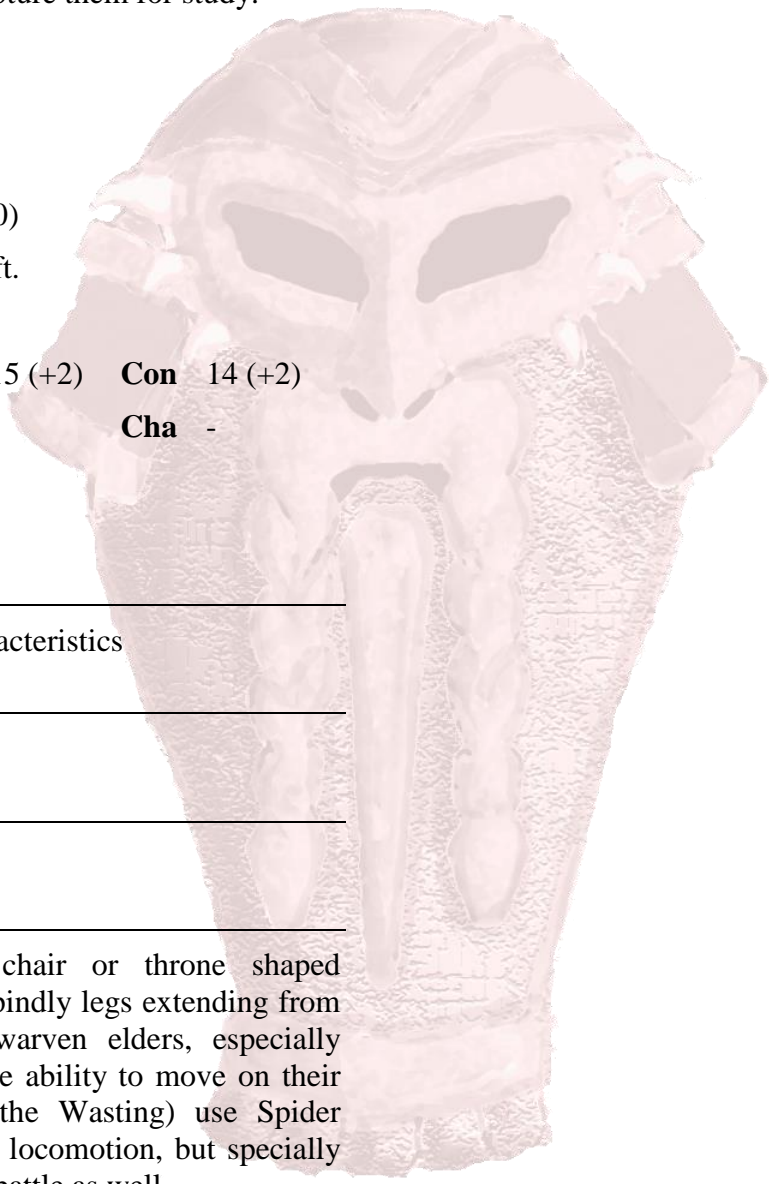
ENCOUNTER BUILDING

Level 4 XP 270

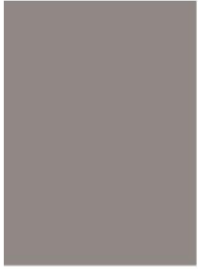
DESCRIPTION

Spider Thrones are chair or throne shaped constructs with eight spindly legs extending from their base. Many dwarven elders, especially those who have lost the ability to move on their own (mostly due to the Wasting) use Spider Thrones as a means of locomotion, but specially built versions exist for battle as well.

Spider Thrones are non-intelligent constructs, and require an operator to function. They cannot think for themselves, though some versions can follow simple commands.



MYSTARA 2300 BC



URUZUD



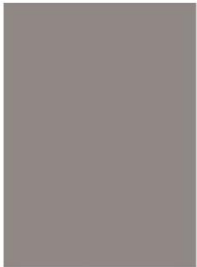
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OF THE
GIANTS



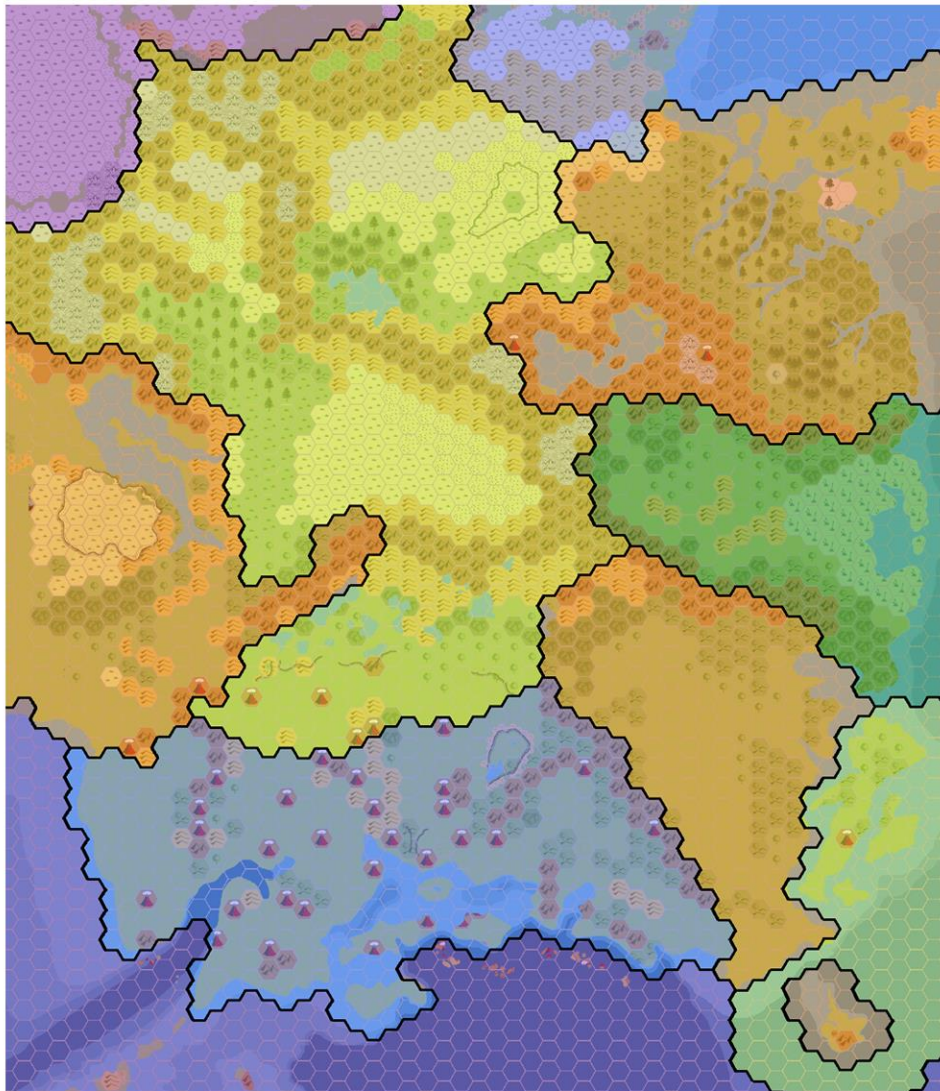
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KINGDOM
OF
WINTER



SHIMMERING
LANDS
LAST BEACON
OF
BLACKMOOR



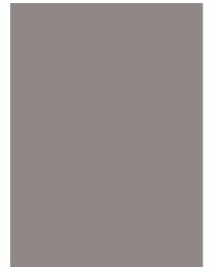
THE DEEP
ELVES



MOGRETH
EMPIRE
OF THE
LIZARD KINGS



INTI PEOPLE
OF THE SUN



FRONTIER
LANDS



ADHUZA
KOPRU
DOMINARCHY

TAYMORA
LAND OF THE
DEAD



THE MAKERS



PIRATES



MYSTARA 2300 BC

GAZBC GAME ACCESSORY

SHIMMERING LANDS LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR

BY JOHN CALVIN



THE SHIMMERING LANDS, LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR. THE HOME OF THE MOADREG IS A DARK AND FOREBODING LAND WHERE THE HORRORS OF THE WASTING CONTINUE TO PLAGUE THE WORLD. DECEPTION, INTRIGUE, AND TREACHERY ABOUND ON THE DWARVEN FRONTIER. TRULUY, THE LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR