

# GRUDGELORE

A HISTORY OF GRUDGES AND THE GREAT REALM OF THE DWARVES



NICK KYME AND GAV THORPE



DWARFS ARE A hardy race who dwell beneath the mountains of the Old World. They have endured much in a long history fraught with strife. With envious eyes do greenskins, rat-men and dragons regard their kingdoms and abundant treasure hoards, invading, killing and stealing. The dwarfs remember each and every wrong. Scribed in the blood of kings are the books of grudges, records of every fell deed ever inflicted upon hold and kin. Legendary is the treachery of the elves, the tumultuous Goblin Wars and the ravages of dragons. Ever are the dwarfs reminded of them, ever do they seek vengeance. Never forgive! Never forget!

HEREIN LIES AN extract from one of the lost books of grudges of Karak Eight Peaks. Weep at the sacking of the mighty hold by the goblin warlord, Snarsnik, rejoice at the efforts of Duregar to reclaim the peaks and scowl as he is thwarted. Learn of the hold's clan brothers, the dwarfs of Karak Azul, and the lament of Kazador. The heinous acts of dragons, elves, greenskins, skaven and the undead are all described within in exacting and vengeful detail.

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A faint, stylized illustration of a grudge, depicted with large, feathered wings and a wide, pleated skirt, centered behind the title.

# Grudgelore

A history of grudges and the great realm of the dwarfs



# Contents

## INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR 3

### Chapter One

## THE GREENSKIN GRUDGE part one 5

### The Atrocities of Gorfang

- Grobkul in the Upper Hall of the Third Deep 5
- The Greenskins of Black Crag 6
- Attack on Karak Azul 7
- The Shaming of Kazrik 11
- Gorfang Rotgut (dramatis personae i) 12
- Kazador's Decree 12
- King Kazador (dramatis personae ii) 13
- Dwarf Womenfolk 14
- The Reward of Kazador 15
- Anatomy of a Hold 16
- Wutroth 18
- Miners 18
- Dwarf Pastimes 19
- Longbeards (the veteran brotherhoods i) 20
- Guilds 21
- Beer and Brewmasters 22

### Chapter Two

## THE DRAGON GRUDGE 23

### The Ravages of Mordrak

- Dwarfs and Dragons 23
- Reckoners and the Reckoner's Log 24
- Kruzdi's Lament 24
- Collapse at Grunspire 25
- Besmirchment of the Svengeln Clan 25
- Retribution for Grunspire 25
- Ironbreakers (the veteran brotherhoods ii) 26
- Gold 27
- Calamity at the Cave of Mordrak 28
- Edict of Kazgar 28
- Kurik makes his Oath 30
- Council of Elders 31
- The Saga of Kurik Kaznagar (sagas i) 32
- The Slayer Cult 34
- Ungrim Ironfist (dramatis personae iii) 35
- Kings and Wealth 36

### Chapter Three

## THE ELF GRUDGE 37

### The War of the Elves and Dwarfs

- The War of Vengeance 38
- The Throne of Power 40
- The March to Tor Alessi 40
- The First Siege of Tor Alessi 41
- Dwarf Siege Tactics 42
- The Longest War 44
- The Doom of Imladrik 45
- The Destruction of Athel Maraya 46
- The Final Siege of Tor Alessi 46
- The War Ends 47
- The Elves Leave the Old World 47
- Ancient Trade Routes of the Dwarfs 48
- Dwarf Shipping 49
- Of Dwarfs and Elves 50
- Snorri Whitebeard and Malekith 51
- Oathstones 51
- Losses in Battle 52
- Battle Trophies 53
- Phoenix King Caledor II (dramatis personae iv) 54

### Chapter Four

## THE UNDEAD GRUDGE 55

### The Depravities of Konrad

- Dealings with the Undead 55
- The Wars of the Vampire Counts 56
- The Rise of the Blood Count 57
- Hunger Wood 58
- Runes, Runic Magic and Runesmiths 60
- Provisioning the Throng 62
- The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods 64
- Ancestor Worship 64
- Ancestor Badges 64

### Chapter Five

## THE RAT-KIN GRUDGE 67

### The Fall of Karak Eight Peaks

- Dwarfs and the 'Rat-kin' 67
- Rat-kin Warrens are discovered in the Fifth Deep 69
- Karag Zilfin Mines Destroyed 69
- The Citadel of Eight Peaks is Lost 70
- Hammerers (the veteran brotherhoods iii) 71
- Varkund Avenged 73
- Eight Peaks is Torn Asunder 73
- Trolls 74
- The Demise of Eight Peaks (map i) 75

## THE GREENSKIN GRUDGE part two 77

### The Impudence of Skarsnik

- Dwarfs and Greenskins 77
- Battle at the Citadel 78
- The Way into the Lower Deeps is Shut 78
- Belegar allows Passage into the Deeps by Outsiders 79
- The Citadel is Besieged 79
- Belegar's Missive 80
- Battle of the Jaws 81
- Duregar's Route (map ii) 81
- Duregar reaches the East Gate 81
- The Rescue of Duregar Hammerfist 83
- Battle of the East Gate (map iii) 83
- Skarsnik (dramatis personae v) 82
- Eight Peaks is Reinforced 84
- Extract from 'The Fall of the Southern Holds' 84
- The Underway is Reopened 84
- Ambush at Death Pass 84

## APPENDIX 85

- Dwarf Battle Tactics 85
- Ages of the Dwarfs 85
- Khazalid - Language of the Dwarfs 85
- The Runic Script 86
- Klinkarhuu 86
- Khazalid - Basic Structure 87
- Common Signifiers 87
- Useful Elements 88
- Magic Runes 89
- Rite of Rune Forging 89
- The Dwarf Realm (map iv) 90
- Khazalid Lexicon 92
- Karak Azul - A Clan Record 95



# Introduction

## warfen lore and law

have been both a passion and an indulgence of mine for most of my life. From my earliest years I have been fascinated by these folk, the closest of our allies, ever since a dwarf by the name of Grondik Knarkson befriended me whilst I

attended Blackthorn College in Nuln. Though he is reticent by nature, the little I gleaned from my conversations with this doughty librarian was enough to set a fire in my mind that has smouldered for many years. Long I have yearned to study better the ways of these people, and by chance, or perhaps the guiding hand of Verena, I have been able to do so these past twelve years. This fire consumed me for that long time and I hope that the reader shares with me the excitement of discovery and scholarly pursuit that this tome represents.

It was an auspicious moment when a group of adventurous souls entered my shop of books and scribewares. They proffered to me an ancient dwarf tome, much scarred, which they claimed to have recovered from an ancient dwarf hall beneath the Worlds Edge Mountains. I examined the book and was delighted to authenticate their claim, for I held one of the books of grudges of the ancient dwarf hold of Karak Eight Peaks. It cost my entire savings to procure it from these mercenaries, for they had some inkling of its rarity and value and were hard bargainers, but it was worth every crown and shilling. By examining the book's contents, I have been able to study the dwarf mind, the culture of their civilisation and the history of their empire as never before. For these last dozen years I have spoken to many colleagues, both human and dwarf, and the volume you now hold is the result.

To understand the nature of the grudge is to be given rare insight into the dwarfish mind. On casual contact, one might mistake the dwarfs as capricious, yet not altogether unlike ourselves. However, as I reveal in this book, the dwarf mind and the human mind are as truly unlike as that of men and elves or even foul orcs. One must also come to appreciate how much of our own custom and tradition has been inspired and influenced by the traditions of the dwarfs, and how little our own culture has impacted upon them. Though some dwell in our towns and cities, and for many of us urban folk the sight of dwarfs is not uncommon, we must forever be of mind that they are a race apart. It is through good nature and conduct





on our part that the dwarfs choose us as allies, but there are lessons to be learnt from the information I have gathered herein. Let it not be forgotten – never wrong a dwarf!

A grudge is, at face value, a simple thing. It is a record of a misdeed done to a dwarf, or the race of dwarfs, so that the wrong might not be forgotten. In this regard, it is not so dissimilar to the vendettas common in Tilea, or the concept of revenge with which we are all familiar. Yet a grudge is something much more than a simple call for vengeance. It forms a major part of dwarf law; it is an account of a dwarf's honour; it is a ledger of oaths and fealty. The diligence with which a dwarf trader totals his invoice is as nothing compared to the detail and gravitas placed upon the scribing of a grudge. Grudges are contracts and history. Before the scribing of a grudge, the grudges of ancient times are consulted, the old records brought forth to see what the wisdom of the ancestors can teach the kings of today. Through precedent and judgement, the weight of debt is measured, so that the deeds of all dwarfs, and their allies and enemies, can be properly reckoned.

A great part of dwarf society and endeavour is solely geared towards the recording and avenging of grudges, giving rise to the learned grudgemasters and loremasters, and the creation of the sinister reckoners. All dwarfs record their grudges, but it is the greatest of grudges that concern us here. Armed with the information in the volume I have in my possession, I am able to examine the grudges of kings.

Each king maintains a book of grudges, recorded in blood – several volumes, in fact. Some grudges are of a personal nature, some relate to his clan and his hold. Largest and most sacred of these is the Dammaz Kron, currently held by Thorgrim Grudgebearer, the High King of the dwarfs and lord of Karaz-a-Karak. In the Dammaz Kron are recorded all of the grudges of dwarfkind. Twice in every century the Day of Grudgement is held. All of the dwarf kings travel to Karaz-a-Karak and relate their new grudges together with grudges that have been settled, so that the Dammaz Kron can be kept accurately. In these dark times, this 'Day' of Grudgement now lasts for several weeks. When the dwarf empire is called to war, the Dammaz Kron is brought forth. From his Throne of Power, a gilded, rune-etched chair borne aloft by four sturdy dwarf warriors, Thorgrim leads his army, reading out aloud those grudges perpetrated by the enemy and not yet atoned for. Such is the power of the Dammaz Kron, it is said to drive the dwarfs into a fighting madness as their minds fill with the insults and wrongs of ages past.

Dwarf grudges can take many literary forms. Some are very formal, dictated by a grudgemaster for the king to inscribe properly. Others are simple histories, while some are elaborate tales. Some of the greatest and most popular dwarf sagas were first recorded as grudges, and some entries in this volume have a particularly poetic quality. The preferences of the king, the importance of the grudge and historical styles have all influenced different types of wording over the many centuries since the first grudge was recorded.

Once written, a grudge can neither be erased nor struck through until it has been settled. This might occur through the death of the perpetrator, material recompense, apology or punishment. Over centuries the grudges recorded by the king's predecessors and his peers form the basis of dwarfen law, so that the debt of a grudge in distant times and places forms the basis of judgement for the reckoning of grudges. The grudgemasters research long and hard for guidance to give their king, providing him with recommendations of suitable recompense taken from other grudges. Likewise, in matters of grudges against fellow dwarfs, a dwarf against whom a grudge is pending will employ his own grudgemaster to present other previous grudges that are similar in nature, with the aim of garnering leniency.

While a grudge still stands it is a burden to be carried by the king, an unavenged wrong that the dwarfs believe will weigh him down and be used in judgement against him come the time of his passing into the Halls of the Ancestors. Even those that have been settled, of which there are pitifully few in comparison to the many thousands recorded, are still held in permanent record should the need arise to refer to them. Grudges can also be recorded against a person after their death. In this regard, the descendants of the recorded transgressor are liable for making amends. A dwarf so grudged against will carry his grudges in the Halls of the Ancestors until suitable reparation is made, and will be so weighed down by the grudge that he will not be able to sit at Grungni's table.

Thus, the grudges are also one of the greatest histories of the dwarfen people, and through their study distant times and strange lands are laid before us. So, join me now, as we delve into tales of honour and deceit, of war and betrayal, of craftsmanship and beer.

*Heinrich Altendorfer*

Heinrich Altendorfer, 2519



## Chapter One

# The Greenskin Grudge



### The atrocities of Gorfang

There are many grudges that record the dwarfs' hatred of the greenskin, dating back thousands of years. One of the most recent and bitter events that has further fuelled this loathing is the attack of Gorfang Rotgut on Karak Azul.

### Grobkul in the Upper Hall of the Third Deep

Be it known that on this day King Kazador of Karak Azul bears witness to a grudge declared against the Red Sun grobi. This grudge be declared on behalf of Thorki Borrisson who broke his ankle whilst giving chase to grobi in the Third Deep east of the Upper Hall. This grudge names the Red Sun tribe as particularly poor sport. Today's grobkul<sup>1</sup> organised by King Kazador resulted in only a handful of green vermin being found. It is to be noted that the Red Sun tribe are of a particularly

cowardly temperament, even more prone to running than normal grobi scum. This grudge shall be recompensed upon the annihilation of the Red Sun tribe and the fullest reclamation of the Third Deep east of the Upper Hall.

Be it known that King Kazador of Karak Azul has this day declared grudge against a grobi of the Crooked Claw tribe. The greenskin offered little entertainment to the king upon this day's hunt by dint of narrowly ducking a crossbow bolt fired by King Kazador. Our king is most displeased at such selfish behaviour though it is to be expected from goblin filth. Said grobi avoided death at the expense of King Kazador slaying his one hundredth goblin in a single calendar year. This feat was achieved by the former king but has yet to be equalled or bettered by King Kazador and as such our thane-king's dis-appointment is great this day. The grobi can be identified by a large wart on the left side of its nose. It also has a broken tooth in its lower left jaw and a squint in its right eye. Its most defining feature is likely to be a fresh groove-like scar across the top of the head from front to back. King Kazador has offered twenty gold pieces as recompense to the individual who locates this grobi and presents it to him for a second shot.



<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'the art of stalking goblins in caves', a common diversion of the dwarfs. See 'Dwarf Pastimes' for further details.



## The Greenskins of Black Crag

On this grave day let it be written that King Kazador of Karak Azul records a great grudge against the urks of Black Crag. One hundred and twenty-three Dwarfs have lost their lives this day in battle against the greenskin menace. All fought hard and valiantly. Amongst the dead are four to be especially missed for their deeds during the fighting.

Thane Henkist of the Dwirrar clan was killed by a rock hurled by a crude war machine. He was leading the Dwirrar Longbeards on an attack against the urk left flank and had already accounted personally for some score or more of their number. Whilst fighting against a brutal and ugly urk warrior of some height and girth, Thane Henkist was momentarily laid upon his back. He was forced into this supine position by the fact of his opponent falling on top of him once its knees had been severed by a well-timed axe blow. From this predicament Thane Henkist was unable to extricate himself for several moments during which the crew of the aforementioned war machine loosed their engine against the longbeards. Most managed to evade the impact of the shot but Thane Henkist was crushed immediately as was his nephew Grodi who was attempting to assist Thane Henkist in freeing himself. Thane Henkist Will Be Remembered, Grodi Wirrar Will Be Remembered. Despite the loss of their Thane, the Dwirrar Longbeards continued to press the enemy and routed many of their number from the field.

The third death marked out for especial grudge is that of Gobrik Bannag of Clan Bannag. Gobrik Bannag gave his life in defence of King Kazador of Karak Azul. The brave beardless of only forty-three winters

interposed himself between his liege-lord and the mace of a large and vicious board-riding urk. Gobrik Bannag was carried from the field with his

skull broken and despite the attentions of the priestesses of

Valaya died from the injury before he reached the hold.

Gobrik Bannag Will Be Remembered.

Engineer Baruum Tubak is also especially mourned for his self-sacrifice.

Fast-moving wolf riders had flanked the main force and were in the process of preparing to charge the war machine battery. In the skies aboard his gyrocopter, Engineer Tubak saw the threat posed by this development and acted in a manner that will see him lauded in the Halls of the Ancestors. Engineer Tubak expended the remaining ammunition in his Windlass-propelled Rotating Automated Handgun<sup>2</sup> but due to buffeting winds was unable to direct the greater part of his shot at the wolf riders. These cowardly raiders were moments from reaching the cannon on the outermost right flank when Engineer Tubak pushed his gyrocopter into a steep dive and crash-landed in their midst. Though many foul greenskins were killed by this heroic act, Engineer Tubak ensured the destruction of the flanking force in its entirety by the selfless detonation of the distilled alcohol burner powering the engine of his gyrocopter. The resultant explosion slew many of the stinking grobi and caused the few survivors to flee thus saving the cannon and other war engines. Engineer Baruum Tubak Will Be Remembered.



King Kazador of Karak Azul wishes his anger of the day to be particularly noted. Though long there has been a thrice-cursed greenskin presence in Black Crag, the orcs have of late been especially bold. Today they had crossed the Dearding Stream and marauded as far as the Fourth Tower. It was such reckless advance that arose the wrath of King Kazador and forced the throng of Karak Azul to march forth and do battle. The one hundred and twenty-three deaths of the warriors of the hold this day are laid solely upon the orcs of Black Crag. King Kazador demands that vengeance be swift lest the growing strength and boldness of these foul urks is not stemmed. The reclamation in full of Black Crag and the outlying outposts is already subject to many grudges. King Kazador wishes it to be known that recompense for this grudge is counted only by the death of the ruling warlord of the orcs of Black Crag. This brutal greenskin leader must be identified and dealt with in a speedy and forthright manner.

2. A somewhat revolutionary weapon frowned upon by the Engineers' Guild at the time.





## Attack on Karak Azul

In this year does the foul grobi chieftain, Gorfang Rotgut<sup>3</sup> commit a heinous raft of wrongs against Azul and its noble lord, Kazador of the Donarkhun clan<sup>4</sup>.

By means of a tunnel lost in the dust of ages, does the grobi, squatter king of the once glorious Karak Drazh<sup>5</sup>, sneak into the hold. With low cunning, as befits its filthy breed, does the urk choose his time to attack with great Thane-King Kazador away from his realm at a grobkul. Many of his clan-kin are with him.

A horde of great urk, warriors of Rotgut's conspirator Morglum<sup>6</sup>, and grobi follow the squatter king. At the threshold to Azul, Badarin Stonehand and Kurgrin Cragbrow fall, the black shafts of grobi crossbow bolts embedded in their backs. *True grobi courage that! An arrow in the back as is their wont.* The blood of a hundred grobi each for their passing. Their names will be etched in blood in the kron<sup>7</sup>.

Rotgut and his foul kin reach the ale store of the Third Deep<sup>8</sup>. Brewmaster Thengeln, resting his eyes, is slain. A rusted blade through the heart as he is in repose. *Thagi!* Thengeln's blood still warm, the grobi befoul the many casks and firkins with their dung.

Thengeln's Golden Preserve, a brew grown old by a century of fermentation is amongst those lost forever, much like his art<sup>9</sup>. A great gorog takes place. In the aftermath, nought remains but dreg and grog. *Our vengeance shall be exacted in grobi blood of equal measure for every drop of grizdal spilled!*

The Hall of Kazgar runs thick with dwarfen blood. Black urks – with armour thick and blades broad – attack quickly and it is barely a battle. The clan warriors of Azul, slain in their sleep! *More grobi treachery!* A fight is made by those able but the grobi are many. No khrum is sounded in the deep and so the chamber falls and Rotgut is left to commit further affronts. Statues, remembrances of the ancestors<sup>10</sup> of Azul, are beheaded and made wrong. *Krut sores upon the grobi filth!* They smear their dung upon the walls. Its stench shall stain the hall for many years. *Uzkul take them!* This grobkaz is not the end of it. The Karak Zharr, its heart has burned since the thane-king was a beardling<sup>11</sup>, is extinguished. A mound of grobi dung befouls it. *A thousand woes that can only be dulled by blood!*

The urk force their way into the vaults in search of galaz, gorl and rhun. The lesser chambers are

<sup>3</sup> See 'Gorfang Rotgut'.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Karak Azul - A Clan Record'.

<sup>5</sup> Karak Death was one of the great holds of the dwarf realm. Indeed, it was one of the largest and possessed rich veins of metal ore and deposits of gemstones and jewels. It fell many hundreds of years ago to the orc warlord, Dork. In modern times it is known as Black Crag, now a formidable orc fortress ruled over by the warlord Gorfang Rotgut.

<sup>6</sup> Some historical sources suggest that the infamous warlord, Morglum Necksnapper was present at this battle. I am undecided on that theory, but it may be the case that only his black orcs were involved as part of some fragile treaty with Gorfang Rotgut.

<sup>7</sup> Kramlid for book or historical record. Here, I believe, it is referring to the hold's book of grudges. See my introduction to this volume for further expansion on the subject of grudges.

<sup>8</sup> Dwarf holds are arranged in a series of subterranean levels referred to as 'deeps'. See 'Anatomy of a Hold' for a more discursive discourse on this subject.

<sup>9</sup> See 'Beer and Brewmasters'.

<sup>10</sup> See 'The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods'.

<sup>11</sup> Beardlings are what the dwarfs call their youth. The name refers to the infancy of their beard growth – suggesting a lack of age and wisdom, but is also an indicator of a dwarf's mental maturity. Given their longer lifespans, beardlings are only regarded as adults once their beards have grown to a requisite length, despite the fact their bodies might already be fully developed. This can take several decades, making them much older than human children and adolescents.





breached, their guardians slain by urk arrows. Grunak Bardikson is alerted by the commotion and rouses the vault warden and a band of clan warriors. They fight the grobi in the feasting hall<sup>12</sup> of the Fourth Deep. None so far have opposed the squatter king. Hallar Halgakrin is the only survivor of this battle. He tells of Grunak's rage at the debauchery of the urk. They make merry in the hall, gorging themselves on meat and ale as Grunak bellows a challenge to Rotgut. The dawí meets the horde with steel and grom, shields locked fiercely.

Rotgut is broad and thick of muscle.  
His red blade carves a ruin in Grunak's kin.  
Grobi blood is spilled, yet it is not enough.  
Grunak and his warriors are encircled.  
The shield wall thins.  
It is a runk.

Grunak himself is slain by an urk crossbow as he fights to get to Rotgut. His beard is sheared and worn like a pelt at the squatter king's waist. *Rutz upon him until his bowels run loose!* The wounded

and dying are left and Rotgut is free to plunder the vaults. Mercy of Valaya, the thindrongol<sup>13</sup> is not discovered. Urks do not possess the wit or cunning to bypass the concealed rhun seals.

Kazrik, son of Thane-King Kazador, rouses from slumber, ever vigilant in his father's stead. Together with his personal hammerers<sup>14</sup>, Kazrik enters the feast hall of the Fourth Deep and finds the dwarf dead. A small group of urk, torturing the wounded with coarse blade and flame, are quickly felled. Hallar Halgakrin, son of Fengast Halgakrin, tells the heir of Azul of the urk treachery, the besmirching of dwarf honour and of pillage most foul. It is his final breath. His name shall be etched in the book of remembering<sup>15</sup>. Upon sight of Grunak, Kazrik weeps openly. A great loremaster<sup>16</sup>, proud of tromm was Grunak. His wisdom will be missed. A thousand grobi swine shall perish in his name!

Karag blood in his veins<sup>17</sup>, Kazrik, with axe in hand, marches from the feast hall, hammerers in tow. Galin Thunderheart is the first to see the vaults.

12. See 'Dwarf Pastimes'.

13. Khazalid for a secret vault in which treasure or ale is kept. I believe in this instance, it is likely referring to a gold vault. See my treatise on 'Gold' for further detail on this subject.

14. See 'Hammerers'.

15. The book of remembering is a huge tome that simply lists all of the dwarf dead for a given clan and hold, much like a memorial plaque. In it is recorded the name of the deceased, their deeds and the manner in which they died. Particularly important or wealthy dwarfs are afforded an epithet from the king or hold loremaster.

16. Dwarfs that display a particular aptitude for learning and remembering things are often interned as loremasters. It is the solemn duty of the loremaster to scribe all of the deeds of his clan and indeed his hold, so that they might never be forgotten. A king will have a personal loremaster to record his life and his deeds, and on occasion I have read that they even transcribe grudges as dictated by the king himself. They hold a much-revered position in dwarf society as they are custodians of knowledge, something dwarfs place much stock and respect in. It is not uncommon for longbeards to be found amongst the ranks of these dwarf chroniclers. Their beards are a sure indicator of their tenure and they carry with them the wisdom of ages. Lesser loremasters, mere apprentices in the art, are known as lorekeepers.

17. Literally this means 'blood of the fire mountain'. I propose that this refers to lava and therefore suggest it relates to Kazrik's building fury and fire.









The doors are smashed with urk clubs, rhuns broken. Scattered gorl is in evidence, much of it has been stolen. In its wake is a grinning effigy of the urk gods, wrought in foul-smelling dung. Kazrik smashes it with his axe.

Tunnels lay thick with urkish dung. The grobi stench hangs in the air like a cankerous pall. The statue of Razek Forgehand, the first rune-maker of Azul, lies in ruins. An urk cleaver has split it in twain and remains stuck fast in the stone. Kazrik follows the trail of sacrilege to the Hearth Hall of Azul<sup>18</sup> in the Fifth Deep. It is dark within, all torches extinguished, the hearth slumbering. In the light of glowstones<sup>19</sup>, a figure is revealed at the back of the chamber. It is Thordrik Greymane, known as Thordrik the Venerable, longbeard<sup>20</sup> of the Donarkhun clan and Kazrik's uncle. He is bloodied and broken. Urk chains bind his beard, hands and feet. The heir of Azul rushes, heedless, into the chamber intent on bringing vengeance to the grobi who committed such an act.

Thordrik mouths a silent warning at Kazrik's approach, but it is too late. Torches flare to life and to his horror Kazrik finds the heathen urk infesting the Great Throne Hall. The squatter king laughs upon the throne of Azul's ancestors, the corpses of dawis slain all about him, beards hewn for trophies<sup>21</sup>. In black urk chains are the rest of the Kazador clan bound, together with many others taken by Rotgut. Thordrik's tongue has been removed in an act of calousness. A thousand grobi shall be slain for this affront alone!

Kazrik's hammerer bodyguard surround him, even as the grobi close. Twenty dawis stand shoulder-to-shoulder against a hundred or more grobi. Kazrik, enraged beyond word or deed, shatters the shackles of Thordrik and vows vengeance paid in urkish blood. Bellowing a war cry in his heathen tongue, Gorfang orders the attack. In an orgy of bloodshed the first wave of urks are repulsed, skulls cracked by hammer and shield. Grim-faced, the hammerers press forward with Kazrik at their centre, their oathstone<sup>22</sup>, urk bodies trampled by dwarfen boot. The urk come again, this time buoyed by a flurry of black-shafted crossbow bolts. The stout armour of the hammerers repels the worst of it but Duric and Burdrakk are slain. Their Names Will Not Be Forgotten. Five-hundred grobi skulls shall mark their deeds.

The urks crash against the shield wall<sup>23</sup> of the dawis in earnest. Once again, they are repelled. Bitter fighting ensues. These urk are Rotgut's personal

18. Dwarf recreational activities are often conducted in hearth and feast halls. My treatise on 'Dwarf Pastimes' sheds further light on this matter.

19. Glowstones are used by the dwarfs to illuminate subterranean passageways and tunnels. Dwarf understanding of geology is unfathomable to us; even the engineers of Nuln and the wizards of the Gold College are unable to unlock these secrets. A very rare glowstone is called brynduraz - meaning brightstone. It was mined solely from Mount Gunbad, which fell in -1457 (IC), sacked by night goblins.

20. See 'Longbeards'.

21. A shorn beard is a mark of shame and a serious affront to any dwarf. Admission into certain guilds and the application of royal taxes, as well as overall status is affected by beard length. It is a documented punishment of the dwarfs to clip beards, thus undoing years of training in order to become an apprentice to a well-respected craft guild or to be deemed worthy to marry a dwarf female of status. See 'Guilds' and 'Dwarf Women'.

22. See 'Oathstones'.

23. See 'Dwarf Battle Tactics'.



warriors, much larger and brutish than their grobi brethren. Helgar, Rinnik, Dane and Fundrin are slain. In the Halls of the Ancestors do they now sit. Grobi dead piled to the height of Azul will avenge them.

Kazrik lays about him with fury. Iron and stone rend in the deep. The son of Kazador wields both grund and az. The urk are brought low. There are but ten hammerers now at the heir of Azul's side. Kalgar, Azlak, Zorin and Oleg will not see another feast nor feel the stone of the Karak at their feet. Grungni<sup>24</sup> holds them to his breast. *May his wrath smite the grobi and bury their cursed race beneath the earth.*

Rotgut joins the battle and Kazrik hews a path to him. The squatter king is huge and he smites the heir of Azul down with a blow from his red blade. Kazrik is undone. Those hammerers that remain are disarmed or dead. Rotgut orders them bound in urk chains. Kazrik is defeated and shamed.

The urks bellow and hoot, no better than beasts. Thordrik, in the wake of Kazrik's shaming, crawls to the Thunderhorn<sup>25</sup>, heirloom of Azul. The grobi pay little heed to the venerable dawī. Though without tongue, without speech, breath remains in Thordrik still. Taking up the mighty war horn of Kazador, he blows a long and loud note. Ever mournful is its report. The deeps of Azul shake. The throng of the karak are already amassing and head for the bellow of the horn.

At the sound of dawī thunder, the grobi quail and snarl. Thordrik is struck by a crossbow bolt. The horn is ended. Booted feet, the scrape of klad, is heard in the deeps. Gorfang roars at the cowering grobi. Khrum rumbles from above. The king is returned! A panic fills the grobi scum as the great doors to the hearth hall are thrown open and the warriors of Azul charge, a red rage upon them. Rotgut and his warriors are put to flight. *Pah! Urk have little stomach for a battle face-to-face, one dawī for every three grobi.*

Kazador reaches the Great Throne Hall. Rotgut and his brood are gone. Driven out by steel and courage.

Azul is defiled.

Heirlooms are lost.

Treasures stolen.

No less than fifty dawī are taken, many thethane-king's kith and kin.

Freygar, priestess of Valaya<sup>26</sup>, is gone.

Karagin, weaponmaster<sup>27</sup>, is gone.

Varganson Ironmaster<sup>28</sup> is taken.

Hurl Badrikk is led away in chains.

Orgrin Stonebeater is gone.

Malrik Morbad is taken.

Kreln Kromson is gone.

Morga, queen of Kazador, mother of Kazrik, is abducted by the grobi – For this, does Thane-King Kazador swear particular vengeance – Kazador's clan all. A bitter blow. They are taken to Black Crag, formerly Karak Drazh. There they dwell with many others. Thordrik Greymane is dead. Kazrik is shamed. *By the blood of Grungni, the urk and the grobi shall pay. By hearth and hold, by wrath and ruin, by oath honour it is sworn!*

## The Shaming of Kazrik

The deeds of the squatter king, Gorfang Rotgut, are fell indeed and Kazador was deeply wounded by the creature's trespass. Kazrik's fate, though, was worst of all and was separately recorded. It is likely that such detailed testimony came from Kazrik himself, in what brief snatches of lucidity the dwarf was able to muster.

Bloodied and battered, Kazrik is taken by the urk lord, Gorfang. Dragged by his beard, Kazrik is thrust upon the throne of his thane-king. He struggles, held in place by no less than four of the urk. Kazrik's defiance is cut short, a blow from the hilt of Gorfang's red blade silencing him. His wrists are held in place by thick urk claws. A stout nail is driven into each. Kazrik does not scream. Rotgut is displeased. He takes a crude blade, blunted by use, dark with blood and shears Kazrik's beard. Kazrik is silent throughout. The urk then shaves the hair from his head. It is rough work and Kazrik suffers many wounds, his once proud beard juts in clumps. His head purpled by bruise, is a cross-hatch of cuts. Upon the heir of Azul's bald pate Gorfang sears a crude glyph, a mark of their heathen gods and a brand of ownership. There is he left, the rest of his kin taken, as a gesture of contempt.

Too late does the thane-king return. Into the Great Throne Hall, Kazador comes. At his seat does he find his son, Kazrik. Noble Kazador can barely bring himself to look at him. He weeps openly at this sacrilege. Then does his mood grow very dark. Vengeance must be wrought for this deed. *Dreng tromm! Dreng tromm!*<sup>29</sup>

Kazrik is removed from the throne. Days, weeks, years forth the wounds inflicted by Gorfang will not heal. Kazrik is not whole – his father's son no longer.

<sup>24</sup> Grungni and indeed all of the dwarf ancestor gods are described in my treatise entitled 'The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods'.

<sup>25</sup> See 'King Kazador'.

<sup>26</sup> I discuss Valaya and all of the dwarf ancestor gods in 'The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods'.

<sup>27</sup> Weaponmasters are amongst the many craftguilds of the dwarfs, a highly respected position in dwarfen society. See 'Guilds'. For Karak Azul in particular I have unearthed copious amounts of information relating to its abundant weapon shops and so the role of weaponmaster is lauded even more highly at this hold. See 'King Kazador'.

<sup>28</sup> Much like weaponmasters, ironmasters are well respected members of dwarf society and part of one of the prestigious craft guilds. See 'Guilds'.

<sup>29</sup> The literal translation of the Khazalid is 'slay beard'. Judging by my own observances of the dwarfs, this is likely referring to the act of a dwarf tearing at his own beard – in my experience, a very serious lament.



Mind broken by the tortures of Gorfang, he is like zaki<sup>30</sup> now. No cure can be found for it.

Forever has the hold of Karak Azul been stained this day. Forever will the grobi known as Gorfang Rotgut be the subject of our ire. Forever will he be hunted. Curse the grobi and all their foul kin. Curse them for eternity. May Grinnir's<sup>31</sup> wrath take them. No mercy shall be given. No blood spilled will be enough. Never shall this grudge be struck out. Always will it be remembered. *Uzkul urk! Dreng urk!*

## Kazador's Decree

Though considered genial and welcoming before the attack on Karak Azul, Kazador's demeanour has become grim since the shaming of his son.

On this most dismal of days King Kazador has pronounced grudgement on Thane Begrid as doorwarden of the Fourth Level Eastern Portal<sup>32</sup>. Be it known by this grudge that it has come to light that Thane Begrid failed in his duties as doorwarden and by omission of action did allow the vile orc warlord Gorfang Rotgut to intrude upon the hold. An ancient tunnel with a hidden doorway was lost in the records of the Begrid clan and thus it was overlooked as a means of entry by the greenskin scum. By dint of failing to provide proper sentries Thane Begrid endangered the hold. Thane Begrid did further compound this error by the untimely celebration of his daughter's marriage that left the Fourth Level Eastern Portal unguarded by sober individuals. This action was key to the intrusion of Gorfang Rotgut

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### Gorfang Rotgut

The orc warlord Gorfang Rotgut is the current overlord of Black Crag (once the dwarf hold of Karak Drazh). Accounts speak of many battles that the greenskin has perpetrated against the dwarfs. Some records I have read maintain that he wears the beards of the dwarfs he has slain around his waist like pelts in an effort to further enrage the sons of Grunni. Of all his deeds, the most infamous and audacious was the attack on Karak Azul and the capture of several of King Kazador's kinsmen. Though attempts have been made to rescue them, it is believed that they still languish in the dungeons beneath Black Crag.



30. I surmise from various testimony I have read, that Kazrik's torture and subsequent shaming at the hands of Gorfang left him in a delirious state, fraught with terrible nightmares, forever blighting the line of Kazador.

31. I describe Grinnir and all of the dwarf ancestor gods in detail in 'The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods'.

32. See 'Anatomy of a Hold - Dwarfs and the Surface'.



## King Kazador

Kazador of the Donarkhun clan, son of Kazgar and aged lord of Karak Azul, is massive and incredibly strong, even for a dwarf (I have not met him, but he is well described in his chronicles). In his youth, his feats of strength and endurance were legendary. Entries in the Karak Azul Book of Days boast of the king rescuing a fully-laden ore pony trapped in a deep crevasse by lifting said creature above his head. No dwarf in his kingdom has ever matched him in a drinking contest, though I can find no account of him ever being tested by his brewmaster, Thengeln. He is the undisputed champion of the annual anvil hauling competition and his throw in the hammer toss is the longest I can find on record. He excels at goblin hunting, no dwarf has ever bested his tally – save for his father – for he is reputed to be a fine shot with a crossbow, and often he would wager with his fellow lords.

Such revelry and bawdy behaviour ended the day Karak Azul was attacked by the orc warlord Gorfang Rotgut, while the king was away hunting in the mountains. Many of Kazador's kin were captured and his son, Kazrik, nailed to his throne and shamed. An account of these fell deeds is noted in this tome.

**Karak Azul** – Karak Azul is known as Iron Peak, for it bears the richest deposits of iron ore in the entirety of the Worlds Edge Mountains. Its weapon shops are presided over by the runesmith Thorek Ironbrow, and that it is the only one of the southern holds to have endured the predations of orcs, goblins and trolls is in no small measure due to its brimming armouries and warlike traditions. Azul is the chief supplier of weapons and armour to Karaz-a-Karak and all of the other remaining dwarf holds (the requisition orders I have deciphered from the Khazalid were staggering), a trade that brings much prosperity to Karak Azul.

**The Thunderhorn** – One of the ancient heirlooms of Karak Azul. It is a symbol of the hold and borne by its king, Kazador, along with the Hammer of Karak Azul and the Armour of the King of Karak Azul. The legends I have read say that the horn was fashioned from the tusk of some mighty beast and that the reigning lord of Karak Azul has carried it into battle for centuries.





## Dwarf Womenfolk

The dwarfs are fundamentally a patriarchal race. This is due in no small part to the fact that in every generation of dwarfs, only a small minority are female, a ratio of around one or two girls in every ten births. Dwarf women live longer than the men, on average up to fifty years longer. There are even records of female living ancestors, known as Daughters of Valaya. The bulk of daily work and craft is undertaken by male dwarfs, while dwarf women tend to the raising of the children and the running of the household – much like in our own society. It is also possible for a dwarf hold to be run by a queen, although heavily advised by her elder council and seen as a stop-gap measure until a suitable husband can be found.

Dwarf women are as strong-willed as their husbands, and no doubt in the running of domestic affairs are a force to be reckoned with. Some dwarf women may sit on the king's council of elders, but this is something of a rarity. On the whole, a dwarf woman's standing is based upon the rank of her husband, or former husband in the case of widows. It is the ambition of every proud father for his daughter to marry above his station and thus increase the fortunes of the clan, both literally and metaphorically. This means that a daughter is seen as a blessing from Valaya.

Dwarf marriage rituals are amongst the most closely guarded secrets of their whole culture, but I have gleaned a few scraps of information from the book of grudges in my possession. The father of the groom pays a dowry to the bride's clan, as womenfolk are rare and thus quite sought after by amorous and ambitious dwarfs. This dowry is traditionally calculated with a large device, the name of which roughly translates as 'nuptial scales'. The dowry is derived from the bride-to-be's weight, using an ancient formula based on the wealth of the clan she is from and that of the clan she is marrying into. The logic here is that a plump, healthy bride is worth more than one who is thin and malnourished. For this reason, dwarf women are considered attractive if round of hip, wide of girth and heavy of bosom. Some dwarf brides are feasted every day for a month or more before the official weighing in order to increase the dowry to be paid.

Another reason for such behaviour is the 'gartering of the girth'. This ceremony is used by the oldest clans to calculate the suitability of a would-be suitor marrying into the clan. In order to ask for the lady dwarf's hand in marriage, the suitor must be able to wrap his beard at least once around her waist, thus proving a certain degree of venerability, wisdom and good behaviour. See the earlier note on beard-shearing for an explanation of this last point.





→ and led directly to the calamities already recorded. Thane Begrid died whilst defending the Fourth Level Eastern Portal and thus recompense is named as that being the adjudication of his peers within the Halls of the Ancestors. King Kazador wishes it be known that when he finally goes to the Halls of the Ancestors himself, he shall seek out Thane Begrid for a full account of his failures.

On this day further grudge is sworn by King Kazador of Karak Azul against the orc warlord Gorfang Rotgut and the greenskins of Black Crag. In a brave attempt to recover their captured kin, the dwarfs of Karak Azul did the day before last invest the tower of Black Crag and attempt forceful entry. This expedition met with uncharacteristic resistance that led to the deaths of forty-seven dwarfs of the hold and the serious wounding of seventeen others whose future health is as yet uncertain. Though King Kazador led the throng of Karak Azul through the hidden passages of the Underway to surprise the urks no ingress into Black Crag was found. It is believed that the gateway collapsed several years earlier and thus a grudge is also accounted against the Engineers' Guild of Karak Azul for improper maintenance, to the extent that sturdy wutroth<sup>33</sup> pillars had splintered, and failing to report this turn of events to King Kazador before the expedition left. Their main course of entry thus thwarted, the throng of Karak Azul was forced to seek overground route to Black Crag during which they were severely harassed by grobi wolfriders and intermittent long range war-machine attack. With the element of surprise thus diminished, King Kazador wishes it to be known that no grudge is to be recorded against the warriors of the throng. The dwarfs of Karak Azul acquitted themselves with bravery and tenacity and it was upon King Kazador's own orders that the siege was lifted in its second day to prevent further unwarranted loss of life.

## The Reward of Kazador

Years of war and the pressures of recovering from the orc attack meant that Kazador was only able to launch one assault to reclaim his captured kin. Since then, he has offered a grand reward for any thane or other adventurers who succeed in doing so. One half of his hoard he has promised to any dwarf who brings back his kin alive, and one third to any non-dwarf who does the same. A quarter of his gathered treasure is set aside for anybody who can return their bodies for proper burial. Any who bring King Kazador Gorfang's body are to have their 'pick of the king's riches'. Although the exact amounts are not known and King Kazador's hoard has been oft-

used lately, it is likely that these sums would be worth all of the gold of Altdorf and more. The following are just a selection of the many grudges recorded on behalf of those who have attempted to claim the reward.

King Kazador wishes to record grudge against Gorfang Rotgut for the death of Kurdat Brinngarda and his warriors whilst attempting to rescue the hostages of Black Crag or otherwise return their bodies if they be dead.

King Kazador wishes to record grudge against Gorfang Rotgut for the death of Killan Broadshoulder and his warriors whilst attempting to rescue the hostages of Black Crag or otherwise return their bodies if they be dead.

King Kazador wishes to record grudge against Gorfang Rotgut for the death of Snarlin Delmhut and his warriors whilst attempting to rescue the hostages of Black Crag or otherwise return their bodies if they be dead.

King Kazador wishes to record grudge against Gorfang Rotgut for the death of the manling of the Empire Leopald Hurstwencker and his warriors whilst attempting to rescue the hostages of Black Crag or otherwise return their bodies if they be dead<sup>34</sup>.

King Kazador wishes to record grudge against Gorfang Rotgut for the death of Zar Fundabar and his warriors whilst attempting to rescue the hostages of Black Crag or otherwise return their bodies if they be dead.

King Kazador wishes to record grudge against Gorfang Rotgut for the death of Yorri Borkodin and his warriors whilst attempting to rescue the hostages of Black Crag or otherwise return their bodies if they be dead.

King Kazador this day is displeased and thus bears witness to grudge against Thane Fredi of the Rikstak clan. Thane Fredi accompanied King Kazador upon a campaign against the grobi of the Broken Leg tribe. In the decisive engagement that took part four days ago Thane Fredi failed to pursue thoroughly the routed enemy and thus allowed a considerable number of the grobi filth to escape. Upon passing this judgement, King Kazador accepts that the warriors of clan Rikstak were tired from several weeks of military campaign. King Kazador lets it be known that no blame is to be placed upon Clan Rikstak for failing to catch the fleeing grobi but that Thane Fredi failed the hold by not ordering the pursuit and thus allowing the grobi to evade retribution for many ancient wrongs recorded in this tome. Upon hearing of his king's displeasure Thane Fredi has taken the slayer vow and so recompense of this grudge is to be considered exacted from Thane Fredi upon his noble death in battle as a slayer.

<sup>33</sup> See 'Wutroth'.

<sup>34</sup> It is rare for non-dwarfs to be recognised in grudges. Hurstwencker was a notorious mercenary and brigand in the Empire at the time, so I expect honour was the least of his concerns.



# Anatomy of a Hold

## Dwarfs and the Surface

Though the dwarfs live for much of their life underground, and the greater part of their realm is beneath the rock, they do not shun the surface altogether. Indeed, as much as one third of a king's domains may be above ground and far afield.

Such surface structures include not only the gates and gatehouses into the hold, but also a network of other delvings that may only be connected to the hold by overground routes. These incorporate all manner of mines, lookout towers, goat-herding stations, trading posts, breweries, farms, gyrocopter landing stages and ranger outposts.

All of these are considered part of the hold, and regular contact is maintained with them when possible. However, some of these outlying realms may be cut off by war, weather or other circumstance for decades, if not centuries. In these times, expeditions are sent to re-establish communications, often several generations later. Some of these isolated settlements may have been wiped out, others will have grown and will seek nominal independence from their hold; for an appropriate severance payment to the ruling king, of course.

The most obvious outward signs of a dwarf hold are the bastions and skybridges. Walls and watch towers jut from the snowy rock, manned every hour of the day and night, with beacon fires ready to be lit. Often these are linked by covered walkways, reinforced trenches and roads with parapets, so that forces can be moved safely from one place to another. Some are linked by tunnels that never connect with the hold, allowing warriors to redeploy secretly from one tower to the next, yet at no time risk the security of the hold should they be overrun.

The skybridges vary enormously. Some are thin and have no parapet, barely wide enough for a single traveller to cross. Others are broad enough for three carts to move abreast, with high towers along their length. No skybridge has been built for over four thousand years, for they were constructed when dwarf power was at its height, before the Time of Woes. Many were destroyed in the eruptions and earthquakes, others have been abandoned and have all but collapsed. Those that survive are impressive indeed, soaring from peak to peak across the mountains, spanning valleys many miles wide, some as high as the clouds themselves.

## Beneath the Earth

Below its surface, a dwarf hold is divided into a series of descending levels called 'deeps'. These deeps are most usually linked by long stairways, subterranean tunnels and shafts, invariably brazier lit, expertly crafted and adorned with dwarfen mosaics and runic insignia.

Through what materials I have been able to procure, assorted maps and my own experiences, I propose a rough organisational structure of a typical hold, including the deeps, halls, chambers etcetera that they each contain. It is worth noting that the rooms, temples and so on, along with their conjoined tunnels and passageways, are often vast and of staggering stature, despite the shortness of the occupants.





## Upper Deep

This level is found immediately beyond the great gate to a hold and is used for receiving the troops of visiting dwarf lords and other visitors.

I Entrance hall, barrack rooms, audience chamber and guardrooms.

## Lower Deeps - In order of depth.

II Merchant halls, clan halls, barracks (clan standards are kept here), armouries, the king's court, council chambers, throne room, galleries.

III Great hall, guild halls (metal smiths, stone cutters and masons, carpenters, rope-wrights, candle-makers and miners), breweries, ale stores, kitchens, pantries, drinking and feast halls.

III King's chambers, royal clan hall, esteemed guild halls (rune-smiths, jewel smiths, gold smiths, brewmasters, engineers), loremaster's chambers, library, scribe's chambers, armouries, hammerer barrack room, trophy room, counting room, servant quarters, guard rooms.

III Armouries, foundries, forges, workshops and powder rooms.

III Shrines and temples, hall of remembering and hall of deeds.

## Vaults

III Treasure vaults, king's hoard room, ancestor chambers.

III Tombs, burial chambers, preparation rooms.

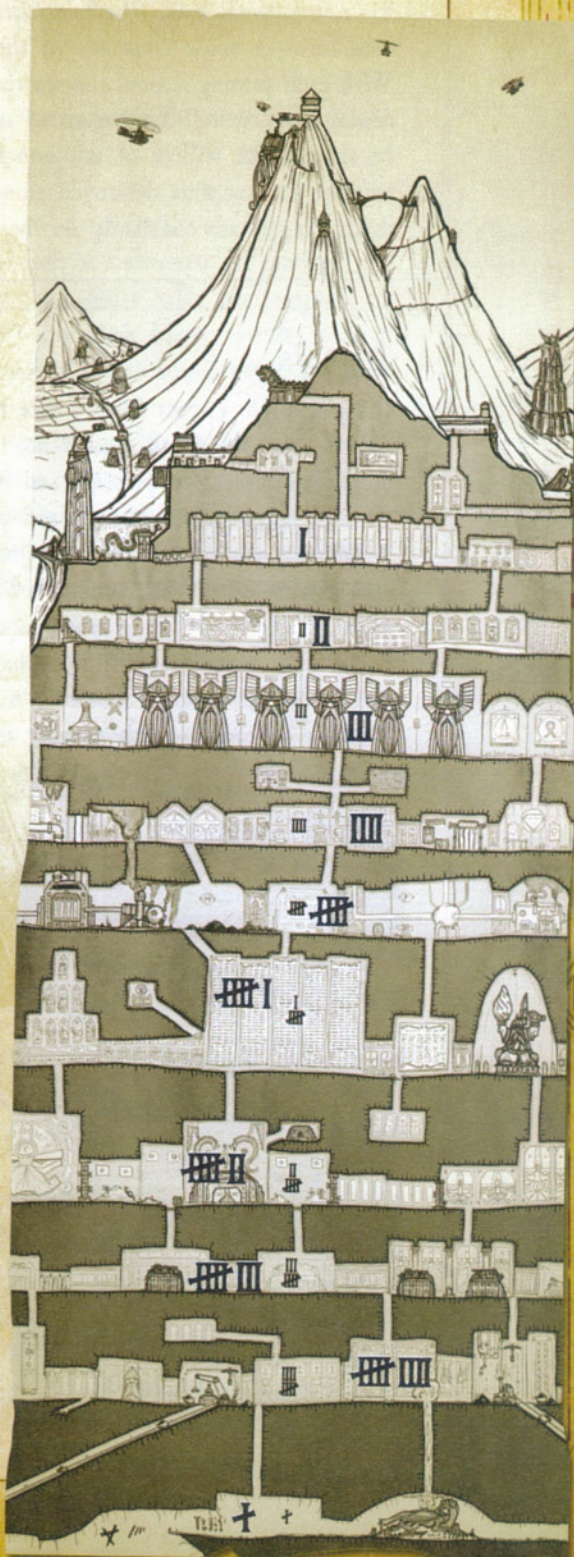
III Mines, barrack rooms, clan halls, refectories (smaller version of a drinking/feast hall).

## Underdeep

† Lowest levels of a hold, sometimes abandoned completely, dwarfs don't usually venture here...

Dwarf holds possess many gates. The so-called 'Great Gate', singularly the largest of a given hold and that which opens it to the world above, is the most important. I have seen the Great Gate of Karak Norn and it appeared to me much like a gargantuan slab of the mountainside, though ornately carved. I have unearthed several accounts by some traders admitted to certain holds that rituals exist whereby a much smaller ingress can be 'opened' within one of the great gates enabling small groups of visitors to enter the hold without the need to fully open the great gate and leave it vulnerable. My researches have revealed secondary entrances into the hold, usually through the subterranean Underway or occasionally on the opposite side of a peak, and these gates, much like the great gate, are well secured and guarded at all times.

Other, smaller (I say 'smaller', but in truth, the inner gates I have seen are still immense and awe-inspiring), but still well fortified and heavily guarded inner gates to a hold are found between deeps and bar open passage to rooms and areas of importance such as the king's chambers, great hall, guild halls and some particularly prestigious clan halls. Of course, dwarfs also erect protective barriers to guard their treasure vaults and ancestor tombs, many of which are hidden with magical runes and cunning geological trickery.





## Wutroth

In latter centuries the dwarfs have taken to making most of their goods and arms entirely from smelted steel, brass and gold. Yet in ages past they fashioned items from wood-like men and elves, and through careful lacquering and care, the oldest dwarf heirlooms still have wooden parts. Most of the wood lumbered from a hold's overground realm is used to make charcoal for fires, but there is one tree that the dwarfs value as much as metal. This is the wutroth, known variously as ironbark, stonetrunk or mountain oak.

The wutroth is not the tallest of trees, but its trunk and boles are exceptionally broad. It grows incredibly slowly, and only at the highest altitudes. To preserve itself against the wind and cold it has a very thick bark, which is worn smooth by constant mountain gales. Its leaves are small, and its nuts form in dense clusters that the dwarfs' ancestors used to employ as bullets for hunting slings. With each passing season, the wutroth layers on ring after ring of fine new growth, leading to a very dense, heavy wood. Yet for all of its strength, this wood keeps moist for a long time and thus can be shaped like willow or ash into bows, shields, canopies and other curved structures. The greatest wutroth forests were destroyed along with much of the dwarf realm during the Time of Woes, and dwarf rangers are constantly on the lookout for isolated groves and small woodlands of this tree.

## Miners

As one might expect from a race that dwells almost constantly underground, the role of the miner is a much valued and lauded one. The Miners' Guild in any hold is perhaps second only to the Engineers' Guild in prestige and influence, and sometimes up to half the adult dwarfs of a clan may be employed as miners, and some clans consist almost entirely of mining families.

While we may use the term 'miner' to describe these dwarfs, there are many, many subsets of this profession. Dwarf mining is highly complex, and the members of a mining team have specific roles; to the dwarfs it is much more than simply swinging a tool at a rock face. The proper preparation and maintenance of mineshafts is one area of expertise, the surveying and analysis of rock and its ore is another. There is much overlap with engineering, particularly as new tools such as blasting charges – black powder explosives used to shear off large parts of a face – and steam-

driven hammers and drills become more common. Within each of these many areas, a dwarf will specialise in a particular type of ore or rock. Some are coal miners, others iron workers, others seek gems, while many are wholly dedicated to the pursuit of precious metals. The best ways to locate and extract these ores are often clan-held secrets, and no few grudges have been recorded on account of other clans attempting espionage to gain some insight into a particular clan's techniques.

As a beardling, a dwarf miner will begin to learn his trade by helping move the ore from the rock face to the smelteries, learning how to identify different types of rock in the process. He will then progress to shoring up mine shafts, and then working on the face itself, first with a pick but later with more sophisticated tools. Over many decades, a miner may move from one type of ore to another, and his knowledge will broaden as well





as deepen. The guildmasters are venerable miners that can use smell, touch and hearing to identify hidden seams, and can operate mining machinery in almost total darkness.

The mines themselves make up the outermost regions of any hold. Rather than being abandoned as are the mines of other races, the mines of the dwarfs are turned into corridors, chambers and halls by mining teams and stone masons. Even the most glorious throne room or vault once started life as a simple mine! As the miners follow the seams of ore, the hold expands. This can seem haphazard to outsiders, as galleries and tunnels often follow convoluted paths. To aid navigation, the dwarfs have a well-established vocabulary to define the areas of a hold, as revealed elsewhere.

## Dwarf Pastimes

Although commonly reserved and reclusive amongst other races, even downright distrustful in the case of elves, there is evidence to suggest that dwarfs are a very sociable people when amongst their own.

**Feasting** – Dwarf pastimes are varied but usually revolve around or culminate in feasting and drinking (in the Khazalid, a rough translation is 'trogg' and 'gororg'). Feast halls, for instance, are fashioned with such a purpose in mind. Dwarf eating habits vary but their known staples are red meat, stews, kuri and stone bread – a granite-like victual that only a dwarf could chew, let alone eat. (I once sampled a piece and it was not unlike swallowing a stone.)

Feasting is an opportunity for the clans of the hold to gather together, eat, drink and make merry, tell stories and sing of great deeds. As such, feast halls are often vast, enabling several hundred dwarfs to sit together at one time. Seating etiquette is strict and proximity to the royal table is an indication of status. During these occasions the king will be attended by his chief victualer, who is a chef, brewmaster and head taster in equal measure – it is his responsibility to ensure that the royal table wants for nothing for the duration of the feast.

**Drinking** – Drinking is the natural accompaniment to feasting and dwarfs take even greater pleasure in this than the actual feast itself. Indeed, such drinking binges or 'gorog', give rise to all manner of contestation and trials of dwarfen constitution and alcoholic endurance. After the ale has been





flowing for many hours and thoughts turn to days gone by, ancient deeds and grudges unreckoned, a sombre mood descends and the bawdy, light-hearted atmosphere is replaced by dour lamentation.

**Singing and story telling** – Singing and the recounting of great poetic sagas is very much a part of dwarfen feast culture. Drinking hymns are popular, so much so that it is not uncommon for the Brewers' Guild to have its own chorus line. *Four-and-twenty Firkins* is one recorded anthem – though I have yet to try to sing it – as are *The Brewmaster's Girth* and *Tankard with no End*. The Miners' Guild, too, maintains a great singing tradition and there are accounts of rivalry between them and the brewmasters in this regard. Most notable amongst these institutions is the Zhufbar Miners Close Harmony Choir led by Borin Bullroarer. It was during their infamous 'Tour of Reikland', during which they regaled the populace with ditties such as *She Was Only a Halfling's Daughter* and *Five Hundred Miles from Zhufbar* that the infamous Altdorf stampede occurred; an incident in which Borin was implicated as being involved – a fact duly noted in the Zhufbar Book of Grudges. Records show, however, that High King Thorgrim Grudgebearer interceded on Bullroarer's behalf and managed to strike out said grudge by getting 1,000 gold pieces from the Burgomeister of Altdorf as recompense for the damage done to Bullroarer's reputation. I have never been well-disposed towards said official, whose outrageous parchment taxes have cost this humble scholar much.

**Goblin Hunting and other games** – When not feasting or drinking, dwarfs like nothing better than hunting for goblins, which they consider little better than vermin. It is customary for a king to indulge in such a pastime, often taking a small group of warriors and rangers, all armed with cross-bows. Ears, teeth and other trophies are collected as proof of a hunter's tally and a wager made on who can accumulate the most.

As well as goblin hunting, dwarfs are known to indulge in all manner of other games. Drinking contests aside: ox lifting, goat chasing, stone hauling, beard weaving, bellowing, axe throwing, hammer tossing and anvil heaving are all particular favourites.

**Gold counting** – A dwarf, particularly a king, likes nothing better than counting the vast amounts of gold in his treasure hoard (I have known money lenders and pawn brokers with a similar predilection). The process can take several hours, even days, but it is done with painstaking accuracy and deliberation so as to derive as much pleasure from the experience as possible.

## Longbeards

Above all things, dwarfs value age most highly, for age is a measure of wisdom and with it comes wealth and skill, and upon such tenets is dwarf society founded. Every clan has its longbeards; the eldest and most experienced of that clan. A dwarf only becomes a member of this elite caste when his beard stretches to touch the floor while he is stood at his full height. Reaching such an important milestone is well marked by the dwarfs – in Imperial culture we have nothing to compare to it – and it is customary for a prestigious feast to be undertaken in the longbeard's honour.

Even amongst such a stern race, longbeards are known for their dourness, and are believed to grumble incessantly about the unworthiness of foes, decline in standards and faded glories. They carry with them the burden of the ages to be passed down to future generations and the knowledge of times passed. Dwarf kings have ever sought their wisdom; from their prudence in matters of wealth to their knowledge of tactics on the battlefield (much like the old warhorse generals of our great Empire), and many of these venerable warriors sit on a hold's council of elders.

In battle, longbeards display their heritage proudly and oft their long facial hair is bound up in gold ingot or copper banding (I have seen some templars of Ulric wearing similar affectations).





Many wear ornate face masks depicting ancestor symbols or the runic devices of their hold or clan. Whether this is to disguise scars, scare the enemy or part of some ancient tradition is not known to this scholar – likely, it is a measure of all three. They are hardy fighters indeed, their skin thick like leather, their ancient ancestral armour tested over many decades. There is little that can cause these grizzled warriors disquiet, for they have seen it all and no enemy will ever measure up to those they once fought in their prime, and as such they are a steady influence to all dwarfs around them. None amongst the *dawi* would ever risk such dishonour as to flee in the presence of a longbeard.

The oldest longbeards are known as greatbeards, but they are rare. Older still are the living ancestors. Their age is such that is impossible for me to determine, and they are wise beyond reckoning.

## Guilds

Dwarf society is predicated on guilds. Of the numerous dwarf clans that inhabit a hold, many of them will be expert craftsmen in some field and thus belong to the guilds associated with their given profession. Of all the guilds, it is the craft guilds that are the most highly respected and who enjoy a high pecking order in dwarf hierarchy. Goldsmiths, brewmasters, weaponsmiths, runesmiths, jewelsmiths, stonemasons, miners and engineers (one of the most powerful and highly respected craft guilds, whose principal shrine is at Zhufbar) are some of the most esteemed – only members of the royal clan are ranked higher. Each guild will set out the standards and practices that are to be followed by an initiate of the guild. Apprentices are taken on in varying frequency according to the craft being undertaken – runesmith apprentices are much rarer than that of weaponsmiths, for instance. Through journeyman and eventually to master, a dwarf will learn and become an expert in his trade. Expulsion from any guild is a very serious matter and each and every guild has a unique method of punishing those who fall short of the standards required or who fail to observe tradition.





## Beer and Brewmasters

Dwarfs place great importance upon beer and the practice of brewing; much more so than in our native Empire. It is a staple of their culture and regarded more as an art form than merely the process of fermenting grain crops to produce alcohol. The brewmasters are the chief exponents of this craft, and brewing itself is one of the loftiest craft guilds in dwarfen society. Highly respected, brewmasters are on an equal footing to jewellers, metal workers and stonemasons – a distinction lost on Imperial society. I'll warrant.

Brewmasters are possessed of a stout and bulky stature, thickset and perpetually red-faced, with a phenomenal constitution – it is a fool indeed who issues a drinking challenge to a brewmaster. Perhaps one of the most famous brewmasters of all time is Josef Bugman. His legacy stretches back to the Dragonback Mountain dwarfs. My researches reveal he was once a resident of the Empire and had a secret brewery located near to the foot of the Grey Mountains, and for a time the people of the Empire enjoyed some of the finest beers ever tasted: *Troll Brew*, *Bugman's XXXXXX* and *Bugman's Special Brew* are three of the most notable. This peace and prosperity was not to last, though. After the brewery was raided by goblins and destroyed, Bugman took up a reclusive life and was never seen in the Empire again.

Dwarfen ale is much stronger than that produced in our fair Empire, for dwarf constitutions are much more robust. Indeed, so potent is some dwarf ale that it is believed it alone could sustain a dwarf over long periods, without need for water or food of any description. Undoubtedly, such a potent draught would as likely blind or kill you or I. I have also discovered that some beers can be used to power the great machines of the dwarfs if the accounts of alcohol-combustion engines from the Engineers' Guild at Zhufbar are to be believed.

The brewing process is one that takes many years and evidence suggests to me that every brewmaster has his own secret recipes and differing views on such things as fermentation time and ingredients. Such is the importance placed on the brewing art, dwarfs have many words for it, such as 'grizdal' and 'hazkal'. Indeed, there are many famous types of beer such as *Thengeln's Golden Preserve*, *Durgrund's Hellfire*, *Old Fortitude* and *One-finger's Tar Drop*. Most of a brewmaster's work is done in the brewery itself. It is well guarded, but so too is the ale store, where the fruits of his labours are stored to mature, not only from their enemies but from the brewmaster's kinsmen also! I read accounts of some dwarfs, who have a particular 'weakness' towards ale, that suffer from 'brew-fever': an affliction that renders a dwarf insensible and utterly single-minded in the pursuit of a fine ale.

Once a beer is ready it will often be 'uncasked' at Brodag, an annual brewing festival of Grungni, which, alas, I have yet to experience.





## Chapter Two

# The Dragon Grudge



### The Ravages of Mordrak

The savage saga of the beast known only as Mordrak is a chilling tale and one that resulted in a number of grudges over a long period, spanning generations. It is typical of many such confrontations between the dwarfs and one of their oldest foes – dragons.

### Dwarfs and Dragons

Dragons are an ancient race, older perhaps than even the dwarfs. The two have much in common, despite their obvious differences, and this has led to a bitter history between them, fraught with death and destruction. Dragons, or 'drakk' as they are known in the Khazalid, make their lairs deep in the mountains, near the heart of the world where it is warm and dry. As is their wont, dwarfs will ever dig deep into the earth and there have been many occasions when the lair of a dragon has been discovered and the inevitable vying for territory begins.

Much like dwarfs, dragons covet gold and hoard it, making their nests of it. The dwarf hunger for gold is well documented and this has led many an expedition into the domain of such a beast in search of treasure and riches. As they are such formidable and deadly creatures, dragons are often sought out by devotees of the Slayer Cult in their quest to meet a worthy end. I have come across numerous accounts of such dwarfs being granted their wish when undertaking this perilous task.

So old is the enmity between dwarfs and dragons, and the frequency with which the two races have clashed bloodily, that runesmiths have devised many magic runes to slay, and protect against, dragons. The Master Rune of Dragon Slaying was forged long ago and since legend purports that one of Grinnir's axes bore it, only one of the ancestor gods could have first inscribed it. There are many others, such as the Rune of the Furnace, which offers proof against the ravages of dragon fire – all

arcane mysteries that baffle even the scholars of the Colleges of Magic.

Slaying a dragon is a great and mighty achievement. Few have done it. In my studies, I have unearthed several instances though. The Karaz-a-Karak Book of Days recounts the tale of Dorin Heldour and how he slew the dragon, Fyskar. Its skin was taken to High King Finn Soursowl, who had his runesmith, Heganbor, fashion it into a runic cloak. After the great city of Karak Azgal – then Karak Izril – fell it became inhabited by the dragon, Graug the Terrible. The creature was the spawn of the fearsome Skaladrak the Incarnadine that once tormented the northern hold of Karak Kadrin. After many failed attempts by the knights of Bretonnia, Graug was slain





## Reckoners and the Reckoner's Log

It is the role of a reckoner to mediate grudges between clans and holds, and he travels the length and breadth of the dwarf empire to do so. He bears a reckoner's log, a record carried by all reckoners – either in the form of a large and cumbersome book or of several stone tablets – of any grudges lodged by and against a particular clan, and the required recompense as dictated by the king of the hold or holds in question, in order to have the grudge annulled. In effect, this log is a balance sheet to ensure that fair remuneration is observed, agreed and provided, and that false claims cannot be made, nor those without royal sanction.

Once a reckoner is satisfied that recompense has been made by any clan or individual with a grudge lodged against them by another he has the authority to expunge that grudge, though then this must



be later verified by the relevant king. In annulling a grudge in this way, a reckoner will break the stone tablet upon which the grudge is inscribed. Where it is not practical to do so, he will instead strike out a parchment record. All stone tablets from the reckoner's log are kept, shattered or otherwise and it is the commonly held belief that any dwarf who is part of a clan that has outstanding business with the reckoners will bear any unshattered tablets around his neck in the Halls of the Ancestors. Thusly they are forever reminded of their unfinished accounts. Only a deed to make amends by one of the so-burdened dwarf's ancestors will result in the removal of a stone tablet.

by Skalf Dragonslayer who assumed kingship of Karak Azgal, now Dragon Crag, but Skalf made no effort to resettle it and instead established a small town in its foothills. If you believe rumour, it is still

inhabited by a dragon to this day, one of Graug the Terrible's offspring that Skalf overlooked. Legend holds that Mordrak, despoiler of Karak Azul, was imprisoned by Kurik Kaznagar and this account is related in a transcription by your humble scribe from the Karak Azul Book of Grudges in this very tome.

Over the years, dwarfs have learned to make a great many things from the slain carcasses of dragons. They do so proudly and such items are a measure of the dwarfs' defiance towards the beasts. Drongnel, a form of thick stew; dragon-scale shields and cloaks; bone helmets and even dragon-tooth necklaces are all fashioned from dead dragons.

### Kruzdil's Lament

Let it be known in this year that the overground farms at Kragvarn, Brakkzhuf and Gakzorn suffered ruination by fire. Herdmaster Kruzdil reports the loss of two score hruck and three fields of crops including wheat, barley and parsnips, rendered to ash. Of the goatherds, Jorli, Rukinn and Vagrik no sign could be found. A grudge is hereby entered against all three and the line of their clan is summarily besmirched until recompense is made for this negligence. Grobi are suspected of starting the fire. Kruzdil adds in his testimony that he did lead an expedition into the outlying lands, beyond the shadow





of the karak, and discovered a small tribe of green-skins encamped in caves to the south of Brakkzhuf. A grudge is hereby lodged against the Yellow Fang tribe. Kuzril vows to return with clan warriors to exact summary vengeance.

On this day does Kruzdil discover an entire herd of hrak bone carcasses at Kragvarn. A throng of warriors from Thane Burrdrik's clan accompanies Kruzdil. *This act satisfies an old debt incurred for a spate of hrak bothering by the thane's kin.* The Yellow Fangs are suspected of the slaughter but upon approaching their lair are the grobi's corpses discovered, similarly bereft of flesh and meat. The grobi are burned. *The aforementioned grudge against the Yellow Fangs passes to the Red Tooth tribe, known associates of the Yellow Fangs.* Thane Burrdrik hereby lodges a grudge against Kruzdil and his clan for the needless expense of boot leather and an outbreak of kruti amongst his kin. Fifty pieces of izar<sup>35</sup> are entered into the reckoners' log<sup>36</sup>.

## Collapse at Grunspire

Let it be known that on this day the northern mines of Grunspire collapse. Lodewarden Borri Threkkson records the loss of several rich veins of ore and no less than four tunnels. Kraggi Svengeln, Dorki Badrikson, Vorlkin Kakki, Drenk Fykison and Yorik Varnskan are all slain. May Grungni watch over

them. A grudge is lodged against prospector Svengeln by the Threkkson clan on account of braces described by the accuser as 'umgak' and their failure to shore up the tunnels. Recompense is set at two hundred pieces of silven. The Svengeln clan lodge a counter-grudge against the Threkkson clan on behalf of their departed kinsman, Kraggi, for wrongful besmirchment of honour in referring to previous works as 'umgak'. Recompense is unset until the veracity of the claim can be upheld.

## Besmirchment of the Svengeln Clan

Upon the clearance of the tunnels at Grunspire, Thane-King Kazgar's clan engineer, Fydor Ungulfson, accompanied by a throng of ironbreakers, does conclude that the braces used by the Svengeln were made of stout wutroth<sup>37</sup>, but weakened by aggressive gnawing. The Svengeln clan's (hereby referred to as the 'wronged') grudge against the Threkkson's is hereby upheld and thusly the wronged are awarded two hundred pieces of izar and two hundred pieces of silven as recompense for the aforementioned besmirchment by the Threkkson clan. Thane-King Kazgar hereby records a grudge against the rat-kin, clear instigators of the tunnel collapse at Grunspire. Fifty rat-kin tails for each of the slain is set as the promise price as recompense for this fell deed.

## Retribution for Grunspire

Ungaz Ironhammer, ironbeard of the Ironhammer clan does lead a throng of ironbreakers and warriors into the re-established tunnels at Grunspire. A dishevelled horde of rat-kin is discovered easily, whilst harvesting frongol in one of the larger caverns. A great battle erupts as many more of the filthy vermin emerge from hidden Ungdrin tunnels. Badrikk Stoneheart and a group of tunnel fighters of his clan do slay over thirty of the ratkin, pressing the creatures back with their broad-shield and long-mattocks<sup>38</sup>. Alas, Badrikk is slain whilst reloading his pistol, in a frenzied attack by the vermin. He Will Be Remembered. A hundred rat-tails for his passing.

Ungaz accounts for thirteen of the wretched rat things himself, whilst a tally of sixty-three tails is reaped in all, for a loss of three more warriors. Kurik, Badin and Ilfrik Will All Be Remembered. Thirty tails each as recompense for this act. Ungaz notes that the creatures are 'petrified' at the appearance his warriors, their fur 'scorched' as if by fire. A further foray into the hidden tunnels from where the vermin launched their ambush reveals rat-kin bone carcasses, at least four-hundred and thirty-one by the count of Loremaster Ruzik.



35. From the Khazalid, meaning 'copper'.

36. See 'Reckoners and the Reckoner's Log'.

37. See 'Wutroth'.

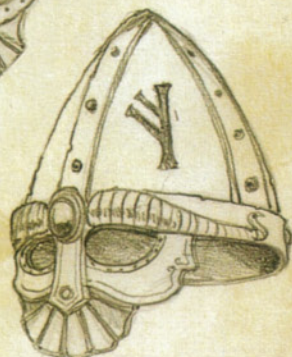
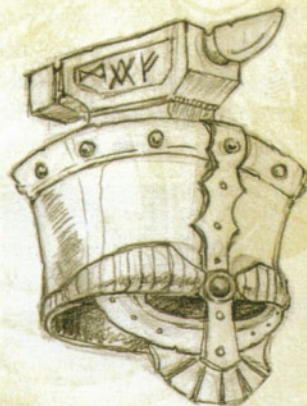
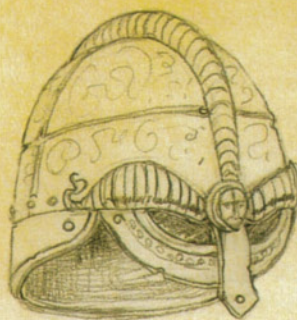
38. See 'Ironbreakers'.



## Ironbreakers

The warrior brotherhood of the ironbreakers have a daunting task; the defence and continued vigilance of the Ungdrin Ankor, the ancient subterranean road of the dwarfs that in times gone by once linked all of the major holds of the Worlds Edge Mountains. Much of this underway is now in ruins and dangerous creatures make their lairs within it. The gromril armour that ironbreakers wear, the hardest and most durable substance in existence, is not only a badge of honour but also a necessary precaution against the hazards they face.

Ironbreakers are expert tunnel fighters and occasionally they wield broad tunnel-shields. A narrow vision-slit is cut into each shield allowing pistols and other missile weapons to be discharged through it. The shield is designed to block narrow tunnels, effectively providing a temporary 'wall of steel' until reinforcements can be mustered or charges set to collapse the tunnel completely. A secondary use is to employ the shield as a herding tool to push goblins and so on into ambushes and larger chambers where they might be fought more easily. They also make use of long-poled mattocks that can be used to attack larger creatures from behind the safety of the broad shield, the two dwarfs – one with the shield, the other with the mattock – acting as a team to overcome their enemy.





## Gold

Dwarfs have a particular fondness for gold, which borders on the pathological. I have read of an affliction known as 'gold lust' or 'gilded fever' and it is most common amongst dwarf miners who reap seams of the lustrous metal from the earth itself. Symptoms vary: insensibility, coveting, desire for physical proximity to gold and even violence are all supported by accounts from the Miners' Guild.

In ancient times, before even our lord Sigmar was born and our Empire was made up of savage tribes, it was the hold of Karak Varn that proved to be the most prosperous in its gold reserves. Lucrative seams of the mineral ran long and deep into the mountain and for a time it swelled the coffers of the High King and ensured a position of prominence for Karak Varn. The hold was later destroyed in the earthquakes that wracked the dwarf realm, and many of its mines were lost to flood. Scattered accounts suggest that several attempts were made to reclaim them and resettle the hold but all ultimately failed, and to this day Karak Varn remains a ruin inhabited by orcs, goblins and fouler creatures.

Dwarfs have many words for gold in their language reflecting value, weight, lustre, colour and even the gold's history. It would be impossible for me to document all of them but I have compiled a few of the most common and their meanings: Bryn – particularly shiny and lustrous; Galaz – of decorative and ornamental value; Gorl – soft and yellow in colour; Gorlm – old gold, passed down through many generations and left undisturbed in guarded treasure vaults; Konk – ruddy, reddish in colour; Ril – gold ore or new gold, recently mined; Frorl – lucky gold, known to bring good fortune and prosperity; Kurz – unlucky gold, that which has been used in misadventure or in which the recipient has fallen foul of circumstance, such as gold that has been used to pay for inferior goods.

When dwarfs gather for an evening's drinking, which is most evenings, a popular entertainment is the *Gold Song*. During the *Gold Song* the dwarfs sing about gold and each drinker sings a verse in turn. Each dwarf must use a different word for gold when he sings his verse, and any dwarf who repeats a word already sung or who is unable to think of another word for gold pays a forfeit. As the forfeit is inevitably to buy another round of drinks a dwarf will often invent a new word for gold rather than admit defeat. If this new word goes unchallenged then he avoids the forfeit and another word for gold is invented.





## Calamity at the Cave of Mordrak

Engineer Godrikson and a party of miners and sappers do venture forth into the tunnels around Grunspire. Many miles into the earth do the dawí dig, many blessings to Morgrim, leading to the discovery of an ancient, long forgotten Ungdrin road. Godrikson describes a mighty girt with walls ground smooth, first believed as if by the frequent passage of some large drilling engine or other such device but clearly not of dwarf manufacture as the tunnel is crudely made and seemingly without function. A mile further and the truth of the girt is revealed upon discovery of a cavern some ten-thousand beard spans, filled with rhun and gorl and galaz.

A grudge is lodged against Rittik Halfhand and Beldour Krunnson, rendered insensible by sudden gorl fever<sup>39</sup>, by the Halfhand and Krunnson clans. Rittik falls foul of a sulphur pool, hidden behind a vast treasure pile. Plunging head first into the foul smelling liquid, all that remains of Rittik are his stout boots; both his armour and rhun-pick – an heirloom of the clan – are lost. Beldour, churning through a vast pit of ghalaz, disturbs a mighty mound of gold and is crushed to death as it falls upon him, ignorant of the warnings of Godrikson, so intent is he upon the treasure hoard.

Overcoming their own gold lust, Godrikson and his party explore the great cave. The engineer provides the following testimony as to what was found there.

'Grungni's oath, never had these old eyes beheld such a horde: gorl, galaz, grenzil, silven and izor piled higher than the magnificent columned halls of Karaz—a-Karak. Rhun was everywhere; heirlooms of a dozen or more clans, so old the memory of them was lost to me. Such a prize could not be uncoveted and true as the wisdom of Valaya I saw a great many skulls and scattered uzkul: dawí, manling and elgi all in klad, their weapons clutched in bone fingers. Lesser beings, their remains chewed and bit, tarnished the cavern too: grobi, urk and more of the rat-kin.

With a prayer to Smednir, great shaper of ore, I felt the rock of the cavern. 'Twas warm; the blood of the mountain was close. The stench of gold was thick but so too was a rank odour emanating from the many pools throughout the cave – brave Rittik lost his life to one. I was forced into wielding my hammer to drum the gorl lust from the rest of my kith and kin.

Crags, worn and scratched by the tooth and claw of some mighty drakk – for now I had no doubt this was the lair of such a beast – rose up out of the hoard like the many spiked peaks of the mountain. Several more tunnels stretched out from the cavern, all of them wrought smooth by the passing of the creature.

We did not linger, not for lack of courage, but out of urgency at bringing such dire news to the king.'

## Edict of Kazgar

This day does Kazgar, Thane-King of Azul declare the drakk<sup>40</sup>, discovered by Godrikson, be found and slain, and the stolen treasures of its horde brought back to the vault of the king<sup>41</sup>. A grudge is also made against Engineer Godrikson for failing to return the treasure hoard to the karak. The shame of this deed is set at the worth of four of Godrikson's finest cannon.

Thane-King Kazgar does name the beast Mordrak for it is surely a mighty creature, and old beyond reckoning, given the evidence of its hoard and the size of its lair. An expedition of the clan's mightiest warriors

is gathered immediately to avenge the deaths of those dawí slain by Mordrak and a grudge is hereby entered against it and all its kind for this fell deed.

By the reckoning of ancient Runelord Varic Forgehand tis the very same beast that caused much damage to the former realm of Eight Peaks and a further grudge is lodged against the creature on behalf of the Eight Peaks clans. As such, Thane-King Kazgar has deemed it fitting that warriors representing the wronged clans of Eight Peaks be allowed to join the expedition.

*Dreng Tronni!* A horn is sounded in the deep this most bleak of days for the loss of twenty-five warriors of the Silvenback, Stonecutter and Stoutpeak clans of Karak Eight Peaks; seven slayers of Kadrin; thirty-one brave dawí of Karak Azul from the Dunrakin, Firehand and Ironfinger clans; and for Thane Durik Kaznagar whose oath it was to slay the dragon, Mordrak. None returned from the expedition. Their fates are unrecorded. May Grungni watch over them and Gazul guide them back to the Halls of the Ancestors. A grudge is writ against the beast for the loss of all. *May its foul flesh*



39. See 'Gold'.

40. Meaning 'dragon'. I have discovered much concerning these ancient creatures. See 'Dwarfs and Dragons' for a solid discourse on this subject.

41. See 'Kings and Wealth' for an expansive discourse on this subject.



adorn the walls of the Hearth Hall of Azul and its skull be mounted above the great Zhar!

Let it be known that upon this day, Thane Kaznagar is entered into the great kron for failing to uphold his oath to slay the beast. May the weight of this deed and the shame of his failure be passed down to his kin and the oath be fulfilled before he may sit at the grand feast table of Grungni.

On this day does Thane-King Kazgar order a second expedition into the Ungdrin to discover the fate of Thane Kaznagar and his warriors. Thane Borri Brakkson and some thirty of his most

veteran warriors venture into the unknown deeps, together with twenty ironbreakers of the Ironbeard clan and engineers from Clan Flinthand who bring with them an organ cannon drawn by six stout lode ponies. A mere twenty-five winters, Kaznagar's only son, Kurik, was made to stay behind by King Kazgar himself in an effort to becalm the wailing of the long-departed thane's maiden-queen. The journal of Norgrin Nagsson, a lorekeeper<sup>42</sup> who had joined the expeditionary force and submitted for consideration, makes for grim reading.

We followed the route scribed upon Godrikson's<sup>43</sup> map to the cavern of the beast and the last known destination of Kaznagar thane and his clanswarfs. As the Ungdrin opened wide before us the air became thick with the stench of sulphur and soot, the walls black and fire-scorched. Lodefinder<sup>44</sup> Ungafel muttered an oath to Grungni, remarking on the condition of some of the rocks around us as if the very blood of the mountain had flowed here and cooled. In places there were great furrows ripped out of the stone — claw marks of the drakk — as long as a hammer haft and as broad as a hammer head, with space enough between for a great axe blade.

We reached the edge of the cavern at last — a deep, glow bathing the wall from the gold lustre within. Here, the stink of the drakk was at its strongest — the creature had returned.

Stood upon the threshold of its lair, I saw the beast and muttered oaths to Valaya, Grungni and Grinnir. Ancient evil flowed from eyes as black as tar pits. Its gnarled and thorny hide was like the razor crags of the karak, red and luminous as the blood of the mountain with thick lines run through it like veins of black ore. Claws the length of swords, twice thick, scraped the ground, pulling the glittering hoard in piles of hundreds. Seeing us, the beast reared up on its haunches; its bloated gut, filled with dawis dead, was yellow and barrel-ribbed.

Thane Borri bellowed orders, with Grinnir's courage. Ten of the Ironbeard clan came forward and made a thick wall with stout shields. The Flinthand clan dragged the mighty organ cannon into position behind them — for the ponies drawing it had long since slipped their bonds and fled, doubtless spooked by the presence of the drakk<sup>45</sup> — and more warriors moved left and right. Some wavered, the lure of gori filling their senses but Borri's voice was a hammer strike and their purpose was renewed. The shield wall came forward, locked tight like the Great Grimgrong<sup>46</sup>, advancing upon the drakk. The beast gave no ground but spread its tattered and torn wings, great spikes curving from each. At once the sulphur stink of its breath was no more and the air was sucked away. Its bloated gut filled. Thane Borri cried out a warning but his voice was crushed by a roar of flame. Those of the Ironbeard clan were engulfed. Black-red fire surged through them and once it had abated the Ironbreakers were no more, their flesh flayed, muscles cooked and bones turned to powder within the smoking husks of their fire-scorched armour.

Without delay, the beast came down onto four legs, and a tremor wracked the cavern. It roared a challenge, assailing us with its sulphur breath but no fire came this time. It was enough for the Flinthand clan, Grungni curse them. They fled their war engine with not a shot fired, scattering from the cavern. May their beards be hewn and kruti afflict their nethers!

Borri and his veterans would not be denied and charged the beast. Three of the Brakkson clan were crushed immediately beneath the drakk's claws, another three swept away by its tail. Borri barked orders and slowly the beast was encircled. Dawi blades fell against drakk hide but all rebounded such was its thickness.

For an hour did they battle the beast, Borri and his kin, but it was to no avail. I watched as the last of the clan warriors was bitten in two and only Thane Borri remained, his armour dented, the great rhun helm of the Brakkson clan no longer upon his head. Borri bade me take word back to the Thane-King, "I have failed, send others to avenge me!" At that the beast lunged at Borri, but he dodged aside and struck a mighty blow, the blade of his rhun axe tasting flesh as it carved out the drakk's eye. A geyser of black blood erupted from the wound and for a moment, I thought Thane Borri had at last the besting of the creature. But it turned quickly, with a deafening roar of pain, and Thane Borri was unbalanced and undone. He fell, his axe clattering far from his grasp. The beast blew an inferno from its broad nostrils and Borri was no more. I fled, heat searing my eyes, the stink of burning meat in my nose. The drakk did not follow — I shall honour Valaya for that.

<sup>42</sup> As apprentice loremaster.

<sup>43</sup> Why the engineer does not accompany the mission, or the reason that his fate is not recorded, is not known to me. Though it is likely, based on my rudimentary understanding of dwarf culture, due to his failure to return the treasure hoard, he was ejected from the Engineers' Guild of which he was undoubtedly a member. It is also possible to suppose that Godrikson was subjected to one of the many punitive expulsion rituals practised by the guild of which I submit the following examples: The Trousers Legs Ritual — an archaic practice of which little is known, save for the name; Cogging — in which the punished is stripped naked and must heft a chain of heavy cogs around the entirety of the hold's workshops; Blackbearding — in which the punished must use his beard to wipe down oily or soot-stained machinery, resulting in an extremely unkempt beard (hence the name) and abject humiliation; Quaffing — in which the punished must consume several gallons of oil (something only made possible by the stoutness of dwarfen constitution as you or I would be killed by such an act) and in so doing the dwarf suffers a long, painful bellyache and is unable to taste or enjoy ale or food of any description.

<sup>44</sup> Lodefinder is a very experienced miner. I have come across many such names, all describing the same thing, which vary from clan to clan and from hold to hold. Such conventions, therefore, should not be treated as prescriptive.

<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note here that the dwarfs would rather drag a hefty war machine, despite the loss of the draught animals, rather than leave it behind.

<sup>46</sup> From the Khazalid this literally translates as, 'Unyielding Anvil' and I believe could be referring to one of the great gates that guard the way into Karak Azul. See 'Anatomy of a Hold' for more details about great gates.





A grudge against the beast, Mordrak for the slaying of no less than fifty-one dwarfs of the clans Ironbeard and Brakkson. A lament is sung in the Third Deep for the passing of Thane Borri Brakkson. For the loss of an organ cannon, the Engineers' Guild does hereby demand five hundred pieces of gorl and two hundred of izor from the Flinthand clan. A further grudge is lodged by the Flinthands against the dwarfs of Grey Mountains and the Goldhoarder clan for the supply of weak-willed lode ponies. Recompense for this deed is set at five hundred pieces of izor and a grudge by the Engineers' Guild, formerly the responsibility of the

Flinthand clan, deferred to the Goldhoarder's for the loss of the aforementioned organ cannon.

### Kurik makes his Oath

Kurik Kaznagar does on this day take the slayer's vow<sup>47</sup> and swear to avenge the death of his thane and father by vanquishing the beast, Mordrak, and fulfilling well-remembered oaths. He is joined at the shrine of Grimmir by dwarfs of the Flinthand clan as penance for their lack of courage when facing the drakk.

Thane King Kazgar does agree to an expedition, led by Kurik, into the Ungdrin beneath the karak to

<sup>47</sup> See 'The Slayer Cult'.



## Council of Elders

Every hold has a council of elders. They are the wisest and most highly respected dwarfs, appointed from amongst the many clans, and chief advisors to the king. A queen, should a dwarf king have one, will have a seat upon the council. Her role is that of moderator rather than being afforded a say in matters of import, such as the appointment and training of an heir to the throne or affairs of war – it is the belief that dwarf men are less inclined to argue should a woman be present. Should a queen not be present, this task is given to the matriarch of the hold – the eldest female dwarf.

The other dwarfs that might be afforded a position on the elder council are the longbeards of the clan, but only the very oldest or richest – together with any living ancestors, the high priestess of Valaya, the high priest of Grungni, master engineer of the hold, runclord, chief victualer and king's treasurer, amongst others I have noted.

Though not true of all holds, when discussing matters of great import the council is arranged thusly; the king will sit upon his throne, occupying a central position, while his council is arrayed around him below in a semi-circle as befits dwarfen tradition. Though the king of a hold is master in all things, it is rare indeed for a liege-lord to go against the will of his entire council, but it is equally true that an elder council will seldom question an edict of their king.

For particularly contentious issues, decisions are occasionally made democratically and vote strength is in direct proportion to wealth. There are accounts, in some instances, of a scale being used to decide some particularly weighty debates with each council member afforded a representation of their wealth in weight and the side that the balance favours will be deemed the correct course of action (note, it is usual for the king's measure to be such that it eclipses all of the council's combined).

at last destroy the beast. After meeting with the council of elders<sup>48</sup>, it is decided that the rhun vaults of the karak be opened. Venerable Rune Lord Ganngrim Ironforge awakens the fabled Drakkaz-

trengr<sup>49</sup>, and invoking the favour of Thungni does present it to Kurik. *May it taste dragon-flesh again!*

<sup>48</sup> See 'Council of Elders'.

<sup>49</sup> From what sources I have been able to gather on this artefact, Drakkaz-treng literally translates as 'Slayer of Dragons' and is a rune axe of some age and reverence. Its significance to the Donarkhun clan and its previous history are lost, but to reopen a vault to 'awaken' (the meaning of this is unclear, but studies into the runic magic of the dwarfs – see 'Runes, Runic Magic and Runesmiths' – suggests that some, particularly venerable, artefacts require re-imbuing by a powerful rune lord to make the ancient runes forged upon them potent again) such a treasure, one whose value to the dwarfs is greater than the wealth of some entire clans, denotes the seriousness in which the Karak Azal dwarfs took the presence of the dragon, Mordrak.





## THE SAGA OF KURIK KAZNAGAR

And lo did Kurik, son of Durik reach the nest of great beast, Mordrak. With Drakkaz-treng in hand and the wards of great Grimnir as his klad, did the slayer step before the drakk's terrible glare. Grimnir's war cry in his mouth, his fellow slayers at his side, Kurik did charge the beast without fear in his heart.

A gout of fire, thick and hot like mountain's blood, and two slayers fell; a third to the swipe of a mighty claw; a fourth swallowed whole into the sulphurous pit within the beast, 'til only Kurik remained. Drakkaz-treng flashed, its wicked edge promising blood and pain as it carved a slab of dragon scale. The beast roared its anger and sought to smite the slayer with its barbed tail, but Kurik was its equal. Cunning was this warrior, as well as brave. Planting his feet at the beast's ill-favoured side — where the axe of Borri had ruined its eye — he raked wing and forelimb.

Enraged, the beast cast another sheet of searing flame all around it and Kurik would have been slain were it not for the dragon scale he had hewn. Taking up the creature's hide and hefting it as a shield, did Kurik endure the drakk's hellish breath.

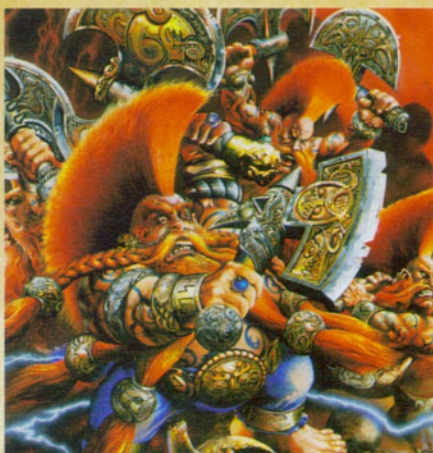
Into the inferno did Kurik stride, and when the dark pit of its remaining eye loomed large, Drakkaz-treng spoke again, cleaving down upon its nostril. So torn, Mordrak could no longer spit flame and death, and so it was that slayer and beast fought ax, tooth and claw atop the highest peak of lustrous gold.

There upon the peak did the battle rage for three days and three nights, until finally, body broken, cut and smashed, did Kurik strike his last. Mordrak, bleeding, great patches of scales ripped from its hide did prepare to deliver Kurik's final doom and by so doing, the fulfilment of his father's oath. But as the blow was about to fall, the slayer cried out. Thunder answered his call. Casks of blackpowder, carefully placed by engineers when the beast only had eyes for slaughter and not caution, nor wisdom, did rage with fuses lit. By the will of Grungni did the cavern fall, all ways in and out buried beneath the weight of the mountain. And so was the beast Mordrak forever entombed, Kurik with it and Drakkaz-treng.









## The Slayer Cult

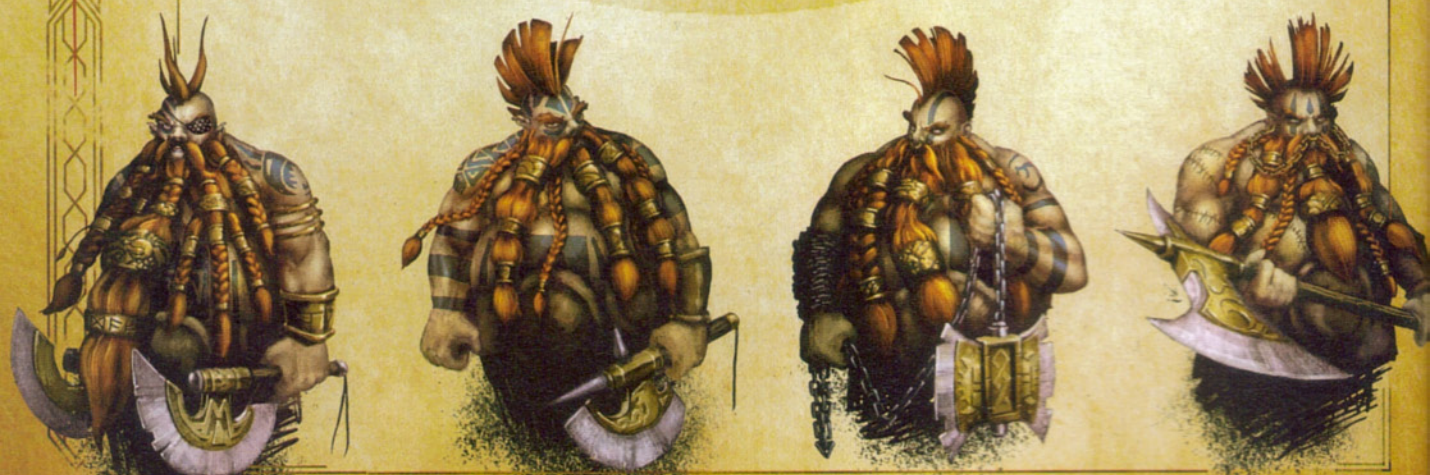
It was Baragor, the first of the Slayer Kings, who dedicated the Shrine of Grinnir in Karak Kadrin as a haven to all slayers and thus brought about a steep rise in the Slayer Cult. Oft times, it is here in the northern reaches of the Worlds Edge Mountains that a dwarf undertakes the solemn slayer vow. Only a great act of shame or a broken oath can drive a dwarf to seek redemption at the Shrine of Grinnir, and solace in an honourable death. Upon undertaking the slayer vow, a dwarf will dye his hair bright red or orange and shave it into a great crest made stiff by animal fat or lime. They forsake armour

and wield the weapon of the slayer, an axe, whilst their bodies are daubed in tattoos dedicated to the Ancestor God Grinnir, in the hope of garnering his favour in battle and ensuring a mighty doom.

Slayers do not speak of the terrible shame that led them to seek out this course, for that too would only bring further dishonour. They are reclusive loners, even amongst their own folk, and not given to song and feasting as are many other dwarves. In battle they will be the first to sing their death-songs – a dour lamentation that acknowledges their demise is inevitable.

**The Slayer Throng** – My studies show, in times gone by, it has been known for an entire army of slayers to muster in facing some great doom. Though it is difficult to tell (I have spent many hours divining this very fact), there is a hierarchy even amongst the Slayer Cult. The Brotherhood of Grinnir represent the most dedicated of all the slayers, and are often the most experienced (and therefore unsuccessful) of their kinsmen. The status of other slayers is dictated by deed; the larger or more deadly the beast they have slain, the greater the respect afforded by their contemporaries, though this is a fairly loose system.

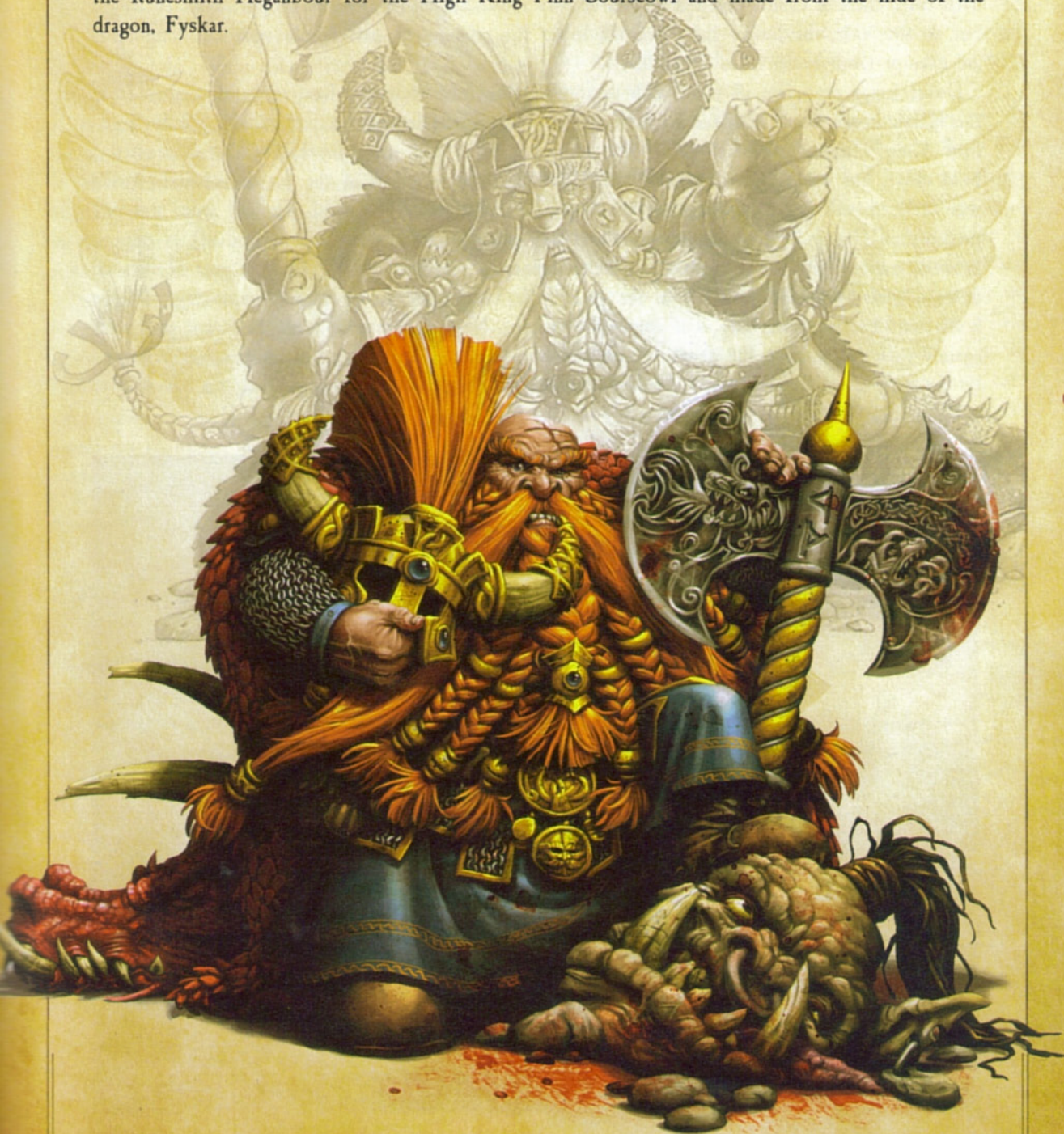
**Wards and Crests** – There are many varying crest designs adopted by those of the Slayer Cult. It is my belief that certain designs denote the foes a slayer has bested. A single crest for instance could indicate the slayer of dragons, whilst a three-spiked crest may mean that the slayer hunts down daemons and other servants of the Ruinous Powers. There are also many wards of Grinnir. It is believed that certain slayer tattoos possess the power to deflect missiles, it being the will of Grinnir that the dwarf be allowed to seek his death at close quarters against the mightiest foe possible.





## Ungrim Ironfist

When the muster of Slayer Keep marches to war it is led by the Slayer King, bearer of the Slayer Crown, and the current incumbent of this title is King Ungrim Ironfist, descendant of Baragor. The role of Slayer King is a unique one, for Ungrim (whose name means unfulfilled oath or oath-bound) has both a duty to follow his calling as a slayer and that of serving and protecting his people. Baragor was the first of the Slayer Kings. His death in a cave-in prevented the fulfilment of his oath and thus it passed to his son Dargo and so it continued until it fell to Ungrim, who still bears the rune axe of his forebear to this day. Of his many great deeds, it is the defeat of the orc warlord, Gnashnak, at the Battle of Broken Leg Gulley that has come to this scholar's attention and is mentioned frequently. For this feat, Ungrim was gifted with a cloak fashioned by the Runesmith Heganbour for the High King Finn Soursowl and made from the hide of the dragon, Fyskar.





## Kings and Wealth

In a dwarf hold, territory – amongst other factors – is often proportionate to status, and as his domain it is the king who has the most. Clan halls, forges, even mines are all effectively 'leased' by the king and this is how the income of the royal clan is generated. In addition to land leasing, the hold's king will also place levies upon all of the craft guilds; a request for a proportion of all gold and precious minerals excavated from the mines to be provided to the royal coffers as well as remuneration for pickaxes, helmets and even lanterns. Dowries, too, are subject to royal duty and a king's blessing upon any union is often subject to the amount afforded (not an uncommon arrangement in the courts of Altdorf, either).

In short, the liege-lord of any hold, by the right of tradition, is entitled to tribute from any and all trade, land usage and the mining of any and all precious minerals. No dwarf is free from such tolls, there is even a taxation on beards (my researches tell me this is proportionate to length but, in this case, the longer the beard the lower the tax – some particularly venerable longbeards are exempt from beard taxes altogether!).

Dwarf kings prosecute all taxes with great vigour but one account I have read, transcribed from the Karak Norn Book of Grudges in the Grey Mountains, describes a particularly greedy liege-lord, King Thagar Goldhoarder, and the instigation of a 'beer tax'. To this scholar it seemed a bold move, but was inevitably short-lived. Upon the announcement of the tax an industrial strike was declared, and heavy support lent the way of the Brewmasters' Guild. The 'all stop' was unprecedented (I can find no record of one in any other dwarf history I have studied) as miners, brewers, masons, smiths, engineers, victualers, armourers, artisans, scribes and even goat herders all downed their tools and gathered in the great hall. There they sat in silence, unmoving, and the hold itself became ghostlike, as if emptied overnight. Neither hammers upon anvils nor pick axes against rock sounded in the deeps. Though stubborn, after a day King Thagar became maddened by the utter quietude and finally relented, reneging on the beer tax and beseeching his kinsmen to take up their tools once more.





## Chapter Three

# The Elf Grudge



### he War of the Elves and Dwarfs

The first of the grudges presented here is typical of those that concern the entire dwarf race. So great is the wrong presented here that it is written in the words of the High King himself; Gotrek Starbreaker at the time. It takes the form of a letter to the kings of all the holds, which each painstakingly transcribed into his own book of grudges, with his own blood, so that all accounts of this momentous event are the same across the dwarf empire.

As can be seen by the contents of the letter, it provides a summary and appraisal of events spanning many years. During this period, the Karak Eight Peaks Book of Grudges records such instances as were pertinent to the hold and its clans, as one assumes do all of the books of grudges of the other holds. However, the issuing of this letter and the

grudge it represents stands out as marking the beginning of one of the most important events in history, not only in the annals of the dwarfs but of all the people that dwell in the Old World. Thus, it seems a most suitable place with which to begin the tale of how the dwarfs and elves came to wage war upon each other.

The War of Vengeance, as the dwarfs record it, was a turning point in the history of these lands. For centuries the dwarfs and elves had lived in relative peace, their empires covering what is now The Empire, Bretonnia and further afield. By the power of their armies were the dark beasts, the greenskins and the savage hordes kept at bay. Though perhaps we men played little part in these great affairs, it was through the diligence of these two races that we were, perhaps without conscious purpose, kept safe from the greatest harms. When both civilisations exhausted themselves in this war, the creatures of the woods and the orc tribes preyed upon us as they had never done before, and we were most beset as a people. Yet also, with the retreat of the dwarfish and elven armies, man was able to grow and prosper under his own strength and inherit the lands that we now hold. From then, history trod its inevitable path until the coming of great Sigmar and the Time of Men.





# The War of Vengeance

Be it known that a most grim and worrisome event has taken place, which threatens the prosperity of our realms and the lives of our peoples. We hereby lay down this decree so that the truth be known to all our folk, for all time to come<sup>50</sup>.

Some years ago<sup>51</sup> our merchants were hindered most foully during the lawful conduction of their affairs. Knowing that the lands are perilous and many dangers confront our warriors daily, it is not unusual that we should not hear frequently from those of our subjects who labour far from our hearths and halls<sup>52</sup>. Indeed, were it not for the risks undertaken by our brave subjects, our realms would not delve so deeply, stretch so widely and glitter so brightly as they do.

As we have sworn, we offer our protection to the furthest lands, and stretch our arm long indeed to guarantee the safety of our loyal subjects. Thus it was that upon being worried by the loss of communication with the caravan of Gungran Axebearer, may the Ancestors welcome him, four weeks out of Karak Azgal bound for Tor Alessi of the elves, we despatched such scouts and forces as were necessary to obtain information regarding their fate.

Our messengers brought back dire news, news that will shake our empire like the fiercest earthquake, and will light a fire in the hearts of our people hotter than the raging furnaces of all the smelteries of Karaz—a-Karak. Our folk were slain. Not by grobi misdeed did they fall, nor by beast of the woods, nor dark warrior of the north. Arrows were found piercing their bodies — many arrows. An ambush, wicked and unannounced, had caught them unprepared and they had been slaughtered. These arrows, these hated weapons that so callously ended the lives of our noble kin, were fashioned by the hands of elves.

Faced with such news, we were much distressed. Long and bountiful has been our relationship with the folk from beyond the sea. Much they crave our wares, and for our part we have always accorded ourselves with honour and good graces. Though they are a strange race, much given to odd ways and outlandish customs, we welcomed them into our holds<sup>53</sup>. We offered the hand of friendship and they grasped it. In our own chambers have we hosted banquets in due ceremony for their lords, and lavished upon them all the hospitality of our people. We have ignored the slights and ill-manners for the sake of prosperity and peace. We have shared the spoils of our hard labours and divided the lands. Yet it seems that these misguided elves care not for the respect of alliance, and have dealt us an underhand blow that we deem beyond countenance.

For all our anguish, we listened to the counsel of our wisest advisors and cooled by their words, as the steam cools the newly forged blade, we did not act rashly. Tempered by this wise advice, we despatched more of our kin to ascertain the extent of the elvish treachery, hoping perhaps that this incident was isolated and disavowed by those who rule the elves. Our hopes were to be dashed. Missing parties from all holds were found slain, some of them with their remains despoiled in a callous manner, their chins left naked so that their spirits will wander the dungeons beneath the Halls of the Ancestors wailing and weeping in eternal shame. This was no petty act of spite, but a concerted and deliberate attack upon our people by those we had called comrades<sup>54</sup>.

Still counselled for caution, and believing the elves perhaps had some shred of dignity remaining, we sent them word of our anger and gave them opportunity to account for their actions and offer just restitution for the offences they had committed against our people. We offer here a portion

50. Note that elven chronicles differ widely from the events as outlined here.

51. Eight years, by other accounts.

52. See 'Ancient Trade Routes of the Dwarfs'.

53. See 'Snorri Whitebeard and Malekith'.

54. Or possibly not. Dwarfs and elves have never been that friendly as a whole, even during their greatest period of cooperation. See 'Of Dwarfs and Elves'.



of the response we received to this diplomatic request, so that all might judge for themselves the character of the elves.

'We are unconcerned with your baseless threats. That you seek to treat with us as equals under the guise of allies whilst contemplating violence against us is proof that you offer no guarantees as to the good conduct of your people. The glorious and mighty Phoenix King of Ulthuan does not answer to the demands of a king of gravel, muck and coal. We, unlike the people of the mountains, are not uncouth, and the Phoenix King is happy to receive any pleas for assistance made with due reverence, polite language and humble civility<sup>55</sup>.'

They attack our people and speak of civility! Less twisted is the axle that warps in the mould! The provocative and untrustworthy nature of their king was revealed, and yet we would not be remembered as a warmonger and lover of slaughter. Again we offered opportunity to make right what had been done, and to recompense our peoples for the slights of the king's reply.

Word was sent and embassy was made to the Phoenix King, who speaks for all the elven princes. Undemanding were our questions. We sought the truth; to know whether the bonds that have tied our peoples together were to be truly cut. It is not in our nature to seek bloodshed when peace will profit us greater, and so it was with the elves.

Such civility went unrewarded. No, not unrewarded, openly mocked! In the arrogance of their kind, the elves deigned not to answer our earnest and honest inquiries. Not content with besmirching our honour with this petty rebuke, the Phoenix King added injury to insult in the most dire manner possible. They shaved our ambassador and cast him from the court! He has since sworn the oath of Grinnir and seeks the solace of the slayer's death. This is a deed that cannot go unpunished. The slaughter of our folk and the embarrassment of our representatives is nothing less than the most calculated attack, designed to undermine our strength and humiliate our authority. They shall find our resolve not so easily shaken!

It is thus my grave duty to announce that we must wage war upon the elves. We must wage a war to reclaim our honour, and if that debt must be paid in the blood of elves, then so be it!

From the greatest king to the doughtiest smith and hard-working miner, we owe our glory and wealth to all who fight and work under the banner of our empire. Now a time has come that we might all be so sorely tested that we doubt the right tunnel to follow. Heed our words and know that we are right. We shall lay low the white towers, and we shall burn the fields, and we shall hew the trees, until the elves bend their knee and offer us that which they owe. They are a weak people, with no stomach for hardship! We shall see what becomes of the arrogance of elves when their cities burn and their sons are heaped upon a pyre of their own making!

There is strength in these mountains that has weathered the elements for untold years. We are from the mountains hewn. Our hearts must be as rock, our arms as untiring as the mountain stream, our backs as sturdy as any ridge, if we are to bear this burden. The elves are weak, and like wayward cousins must be taught that they are in error, and punished so that they will learn the lesson well<sup>56</sup>.

Stoke the furnaces, oil your armour and sharpen your axes, for war most bloody is upon us!

- High King Gotrek Starbreaker, Bearer of the Dammaz Kron, Karaz-a-Karak

55. The exact wording here is doubtful, having been translated twice - from elvish to dwarfen to Reikspiel. Much of the original meaning and subtlety may have been lost. In addition, the original translation from the elvish must be considered suspect, and perhaps 'massaged' by the 56. High King for propaganda purposes.

56. Most dwarfen punishments are mental and spiritual rather than physical in nature, due to the dwarfs' sturdy constitution, so the High King's analogy may be mis-translated.



## The Throne of Power

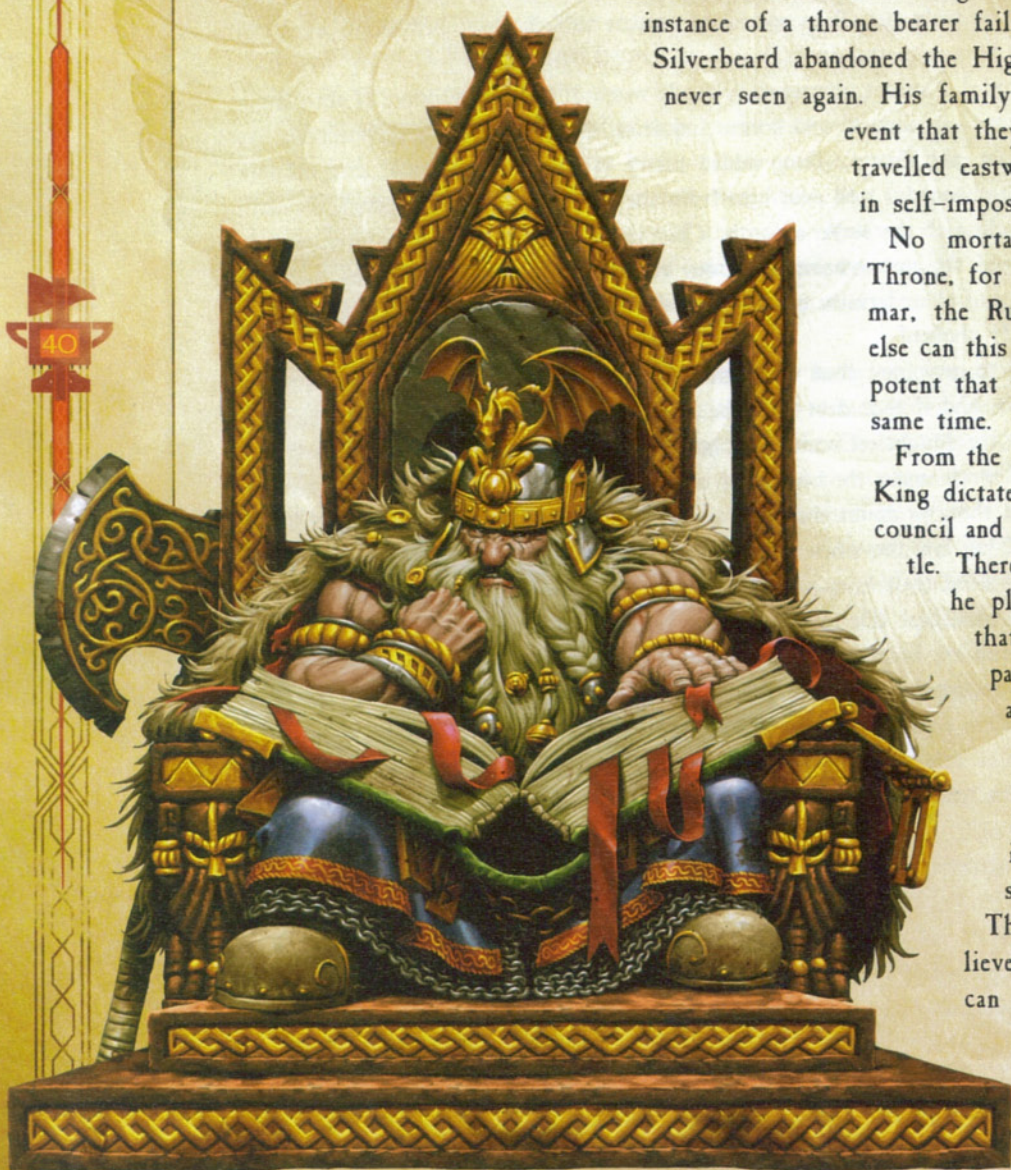
The High King of the dwarfs is the keeper of the Throne of Power. Its current incumbent is Thorgrim Grudgebearer of Karaz-a-Karak, though at the time of the War of Vengeance it was Gotrek Starbreaker who assumed the mantle of High King and was borne aloft on the mighty throne to the many battles that ensued during that conflict. Along with the Dammaz Kron, this venerated artefact is a symbol of the High King's status, more than any crown, suit of armour or weapon he may have inherited from his forefathers.

The Throne of Power was created more than four thousand years ago, an ancient wonder of craftsmanship and runic magic. It usually sits upon a great dais in the audience chamber of the High King, reachable only by a set of steep steps that visitors must climb whilst the High King stares down upon them. It can be lifted from the hall, and is used to carry the High King about on his business – including war! These throne bearers are chosen from amongst the strongest longbeards and hammerers, and it is a great honour for them to bear the weight of their lord, just as he bears the weight of the whole dwarf empire. The throne bearers are bound by long oaths of loyalty and courage and are sworn never to abandon their charge. There is only one recorded instance of a throne bearer failing in his duty. Forkhelm Silverbeard abandoned the High King in battle and was never seen again. His family were so shamed by this

event that they quit Karaz-a-Karak and travelled eastwards into the Dark Lands in self-imposed exile.

No mortal weapon can harm the Throne, for it is inscribed with Azamar, the Rune of Eternity. Nowhere else can this rune be found, for it is so potent that two can never exist at the same time.

From the Throne of Power the High King dictates his policies to his elder council and oversees his throng in battle. There is a lectern upon which he places the dammaz kron so that he can read from its pages and still wield his rune axe. In times of peace, the throne bearers must always accompany the High King, for tradition dictates that if ever the king wishes to sit, it must be upon the Throne of Power – it is believed that no ordinary chair can bear the gravitas of the High King of the dwarfs!





## The March to Tor Alessi

Some 1,335 grudges are recorded in total concerning the elves and the War of Vengeance. Those that follow are just a few of the most interesting, the first few pages of which detail the first mustering of the throng of Karak Eight Peaks

Gadri Borrisson is reprimanded for failing to provide six hundred hogshead of pickled eggs required for the provisioning of the throng by the time of the throng's mustering, by a shortfall of some twenty-eight hogsheads. He will make up the difference and transport them to the throng at his own expense<sup>57</sup>.

An unknown elf who spied upon our workings this morning was shot by our sentries. We took his mail coat and it is has been smelted down and will be worked into belt buckles to be presented to the sentries for their due diligence<sup>58</sup>.

Urk of the Badlands bearing the symbol of a jagged fang waylaid the vanguard of the throng, near to the silver mines of Ghazak-kan in the workings of Barak Varr. The king is most perturbed that he cannot prosecute his vengeance against these vile greenskins, for such action will cause delay that will hinder our arrival at Tor Alessi and imperil the High King's throng awaiting us there. The Jagged Fang tribe will be dealt with once the matter with the elves is resolved.

There are several water-stained pages followed by this entry:

*I, Grudgemaster Goldbrow, do humbly apologise to the king and his ancestors, may they feast forever in their Halls, for dropping the book of grudges into the water whilst the crossing of Blood River was made. By atonement I am to escort the mule train until I learn from them how to carry my burden with due consideration and care.*

Thane Hangist Grobkul of Barak Varr is to pay for the damage done to the king's shield caused by Thane Hangist during his clumsy inspection thereof<sup>59</sup>.

Dammin Cloudy-eye is to make recompense for the loss of four wagons, lost in a storm as we cross the Vaults, for failing to secure them properly in camp.

A party of some fifty elves have harried the rear-guard for six days, causing the deaths of eighteen dwarfs. Our rangers have yet to locate them, for which they humbly apologise.

We took to hewing the trees of the forest to make fires, and horrid spirits of the woods attacked our logging parties. Unnatural creatures in the form of walking trees attacked our camp and firepots were used to drive them back. In retaliation, Thane

Unggrim Shaftcleaver built a great pyre and burnt many trees. A great shrieking has echoed through the night and all in the throng are eager to move on at dawn and leave this haunted place. The king has bid us to quit these dour trees and camp on the meadows.

Messengers from the High King are to offer full apology and three locks of beard for their impolite urging of the king to speed our progress. Kargun Stormfist, Brin Frongaltromm and Zaki Rockbearer are to return to the High King and convey the king's regards to the High King and his understanding of the need for urgency.



## The First Siege of Tor Alessi

The city of Tor Alessi is garrisoned by some twenty thousand elves, and Kundi Firebeard has taken the oath of Grimnir for his woeful underestimation of the enemy forces in his reports to the king. Upon the walls the elves mustered many archers, the arrows of whom were as a steel-tipped storm upon our throng. By the western gate we mustered our crossbows and engines of war. Fifteen hundred stones inscribed with runes of vengeance and wall-breaking we hurled at the walls of the citadel, all the while under the attention of the elven archers and bolt throwers, which took a heavy toll of our crews and quarrellers.

Three times the elves sallied forth from the gate to attack our engineworks and saps, and their knights pierced many of our throng with their lances and then retreated swiftly to safety beneath the bows of their kin, before retiring within the walls once more. Thane Dumbrin, hereafter taking the name Thane Wazzokrik as ordered by the king, lead an ill-judged pursuit after the retreating elves during which a full quarter of his clan were slain or seriously injured to the point of being unable to fight, for no gain on our part. Thane Wazzokrik<sup>60</sup> has been despatched to liaise with the mule train for the future provisioning of the throng.

On the second day the king has ordered the beginning of three mineworkings, to undermine the towers of the gatehouse. He has named them Thom, Grik and Ari. Work proceeds well, concealed from the view and arrows of the elves by pavises made of sturdy wutroth<sup>61</sup> brought from the Grey Mountains to the east.

57. Note that each clan and guild equips and feeds its warriors for the throng, for which the king covers part of the expense. See 'Mustering the Throng'.

58. Note that Dwarfs do not take trophies directly, although they are not above taking precious metals and gems and reworking them into designs they find more pleasing or practical.

59. Reports from Barak Varr, unconfirmed, suggest that the thane in question dropped the king's shield into a firepit and was forced to quickly retrieve it with his bare hands.

60. Literal translation - King of Fools

61. See 'Wutroth'.



## Dwarf Siege Tactics

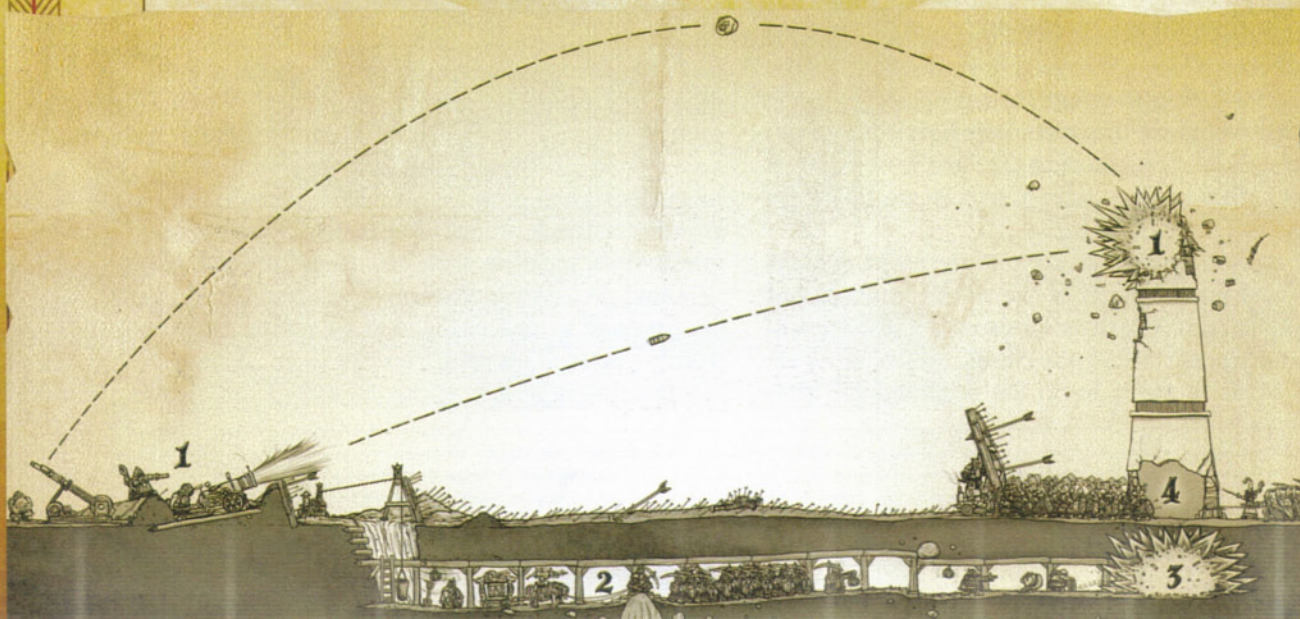
Given their competence at engineering and sturdy constitutions, dwarfs make excellent siege troops. While their holds are designed and constructed in such a way to thwart any besieging force, their armies are well equipped for the besieging of enemy fortifications. Dwarfs do not usually use direct assault against an enemy castle or city, for they are mindful of the waste of lives such bloody battles accrue. Instead, a well-formed timetable of siegegement, reduction and undermining is undertaken.

(1) Firstly, the dwarfs set up batteries of their great war engines, and with these they target the most formidable defences, such as gatehouses and towers. Counter-battery fire against the besieged forces' war machines is also given priority, so that the next stage of works can begin.

(2) When safe from enemy fire, sappers begin to create earthworks, behind which the defences of the batteries can be strengthened and miners can begin their work. The miners dig beneath the walls of the enemy fortification, using wooden props to support their tunnels. As expert diggers, the miners can carve a tunnel some four hundred paces or more long and still undermine a specific stretch of wall no larger than a half dozen paces across. These sections of wall are surveyed at distance by engineers to locate the areas of greatest weakness, both from natural shoddy build and the effects of the cannons and catapults. The miners will dig their tunnel underneath the chosen wall section, cutting through soil and rock at speed, and with surprising stealth so that the enemy remains unaware and cannot build a counter-mine. (3) When the mine reaches its target, it used to be that a fire was set that would burn away the props and collapse the tunnel. In recent centuries, the dwarfs use black powder explosives known as blasting charges to bring down their tunnel. With its foundations collapsed, the wall will give way under its own weight and create a breach.

While these labours continue, the dwarfs encircle the settlement and cut off all supply, led by the rangers. Access by river and road is intercepted, and usually guarded by well-armed beardlings as an introduction to battle. The enemy starves from this isolation, which can sometimes last for months on end if the dwarfs feel no hurry to end the siege – as might be necessary should enemy reinforcements be approaching.

(4) Lastly, once breaches are affected, usually three or four at least, the dwarfs will begin their assault. Hidden behind great pavises, thunderers and quarrellers advance into range and pour fire upon the defenders of the breach with handguns and crossbows. Whilst the enemy is pinned back by the volleys of these regiments, the hardest dwarf warriors storm the breach, often led by the hammerers or, more preferably, ironbreakers. The miners have also continued their labours and will have dug side tunnels or entirely new workings. As the besieged troops rush to defend the gap in their defences, the miners will break through to the surface and attack from within the castle. Caught between these forces, the garrison is quickly overwhelmed, and dwarfs show little mercy in such situations. Time and time again has this strategy proved insurmountable to the defenders, and it is now common practice amongst the wisest commanders to surrender with whatever terms are offered upon the moment of the commencement of the first bombardment!







On the sixth day magical fire has blasted the workings of Grik and forced a collapse. A sally led by an elven prince destroyed many of the workings of Thom, though we captured the prince before he could retreat. He names himself Prince Arlyr of Eataine, and we have sent word and ransom to the commander of the garrison in Tor Alessi. Alyr has asked for no parole and we have offered none. He is currently caged with the mules, while his warriors have been set to work gathering wood for the furnaces.

The king has ordered work on Thom and Grik to be halted and all efforts to be concentrated on Ari.

Under covering bombardment of enchanted bolt and rune-carved boulder, we set the fires in Ari

beneath the right-most tower of the western gatehouse. The tower, elf-made and weak, collapsed within minutes, crushing a great number of elves and opening a breach for us to attack. At the forefront strode the ironbreakers and a great skrund erupted in the debris as elven spears met the axes and hammers of our kin. The footing was unstable and our folk laboured badly to effect entrance, but were successful for a few hours to hold back the elves. In doing so, we have drawn forces that would have fought the High King's assault on the eastern gate in the last hours of light. We were forced to withdraw at dusk having lit many fires in the city, which now illuminate the night sky like day.



Word has reached us from the High King that an elven fleet has been sighted several miles off the coast, heading west and south. We are to lift the siege lest our forces become trapped between this newly arrived host and the walls of the elven city.

The elves rose a great jeering and clamour as we departed, yet they were soon silenced as we sent back Prince Alyr to his people, his head removed and packed in a pickling firkin to accompany the corpse. A great many engines have been abandoned on the field, for the elven reinforcements have landed and we must swiftly seek the sanctuary of the mountains while we judge their number and keenness for battle.

Some fourteen days past, the warriors of this hold did wage honourable war in the seeking of righteous compensation for the wrongs done to us by the fickle elves. Hereafter entered the names of those who did lay down their lives for the prosecution of our endeavours and the protection of the king and High King<sup>62</sup>.

It has come to the attention of the king that the frivolous elves are referring to this great and bloody conflict as the War of the Beard. This facetiousness is typical of the disdainful manner with which the elves view us, and another example of their facile and inappropriate humour.

62. Thus ends the first siege of Tor Alessi.



## The Longest War

Dwarfs and elves are both long-lived folk and so it is no surprise that the War of Vengeance lasted over many generations, for hundreds of years. The ending of the first siege of Tor Alessi marked the end of the opening dwarf offensive and the two sides continued to build their forces, the elves centred upon Tor Alessi, the dwarfs mustering at Karaz-a-Karak and Karak Kadrin in the north. A period of some twenty-three years passes between the last grudge I have included here and the next. This time saw sporadic fighting in many parts of the dwarfen and elven realms, and two more sieges of Tor Alessi, as well as an attack on Karak Azul by the elves. In total, I have calculated that the dwarfs of Karak Eight Peaks lost some eighteen thousand warriors in the fighting.

The next grudge is another letter written by the High King and delineates a new phase of the war. The personal loss of the High King certainly invigorated the war effort of the dwarfs, and for the next generation, the dwarfs launched offensive after offensive against the cities of the elves. However, this eventually exhausted even the resources of the dwarfs and the momentum

could not be maintained. The elves swiftly retook what lands had been lost and launched a counter-attack that lasted for some one hundred and fifty years.



Many have been our brave and honourable warriors who had laid their lives upon the altar of battle and joined our ancestors in their hallowed Halls, may their flagstones never weather<sup>63</sup>. Each will be remembered for their valour and steadfastness. Each shall be avenged upon the elves. Yet none is such a loss as that of our own blood, our son and heir, Snorri Halfhand.

Upon the bloodied heath at Angaz Baragdum, the vain Phoenix King, Caledor the Oathbreaker<sup>64</sup>, took the field for the first time. The craven lord of the elves cowered behind his host while elf and dwarf died for his conceit. The noble Snorri, in whose veins the richest blood of kings flowed, saw that perhaps the darkness that has descended upon our realms might be ended. With due form and tradition, Snorri issued a personal challenge to the Phoenix King, so that this matter might be settled. Displaying integrity and bravery beyond all call, Snorri deigned to offer the Phoenix King an honourable means by which this devastating war might be brought to proper conclusion. For his part, the Phoenix King accepted, with words full of pride and arrogance, dismissive of the skill at arms of our kin. Yet his was not the choice of honour but of fear, for the army of the elves was sorely beset and surrounded by our folk.

As Snorri observed the proper preparations for single combat, the despotic Caledor struck him a mighty blow with his spear, breaking apart Snorri's helm and casting him to the ground. Though dazed and confounded, Snorri ably used his shield to fend off the vicious blows of Caledor to regain his feet. Then, undoubtedly bewitched by the subtle sorceries of Ulthuan, Snorri's guard failed and the Phoenix King's spear found its mark once more, piercing Snorri's thigh and pinning him to the bloodied dirt. Drawing his sword, Caledor cleaved open the gromril breastplate of our son's armour and opened up his chest with a great spilling of blood. Though the victory was clearly his, the Phoenix King did not relent with his assault, and did strike the arm from Snorri<sup>65</sup>. Lifting it as a trophy, Caledor pranced pompously in front of his host holding aloft the severed limb. It was Snorri's guard who intervened lest more ruin be laid upon the remains of our son, and Caledor withdrew, casting the arm of our beloved heir into a deep pool from which it has not yet been recovered. Snorri's shade will wander the corridors of the Halls of the Ancestors in torment, with no axe arm with which to bear his weapon, and ashamed he will be swallowed by the mists of time. Be it known that the wealth and debt of the High King is pledged to our subject who slays Caledor and revenges us against the vile Phoenix King of Ulthuan. Long may his shade rot in the Cellars of Indignity.

<sup>63</sup> See 'Losses in Battle'.

<sup>64</sup> See 'Phoenix King Caledor II'.

<sup>65</sup> Before the War of Vengeance, the nobles of both races dealt with each other in more civilised fashion and in military disputes clemency had usually been shown and ransoms exchanged for hostages. As the war progressed it became ever more bitter, and by the end prisoners on both sides were generally slain without second thought.





## The Doom of Imladrik

There are more battles for the next six years, during which Karaz-a-Karak itself was assailed twice, though the armies of the elves were beaten back with heavy cost in lives. The next event of note was a major victory for the Dwarfs.

Prince Imladrik, brother to Caledor II, is slain and his dishonour revoked. At Oeragor, in the foothills west of Karak Izril, the High King's cousin, Morgrim Elgidum, led a victorious throng against the hosts of Saphery and Yvresse<sup>66</sup>. For the ills done to our people, Morgrim exacted a bloody vengeance. Five thousand elves paid with their lives for their hubris. With bravery uncharacteristic of an elf, Imladrik led a charge against the shieldwall of Morgrim, and slew many of our finest warriors with his gleaming blade. Yet for all his valour, Imladrik is of the blood of the Phoenix King and of equal blame for the woes that have beset our people. With one blow of his rune axe, Morgrim

beheaded the griffon on which Imladrik rode, He has sent this head to the High King as a gift, mounted on the elven prince's shield. Imladrik's sword could not break the warding runes laid upon Morgim's armour by the great Ranuld Silverthumb, and Morgrim dealt the elf princeling a deadly blow to the head. Though great was the temptation to despoil the body in the same manner ignobly heaped upon that of Snorri Halfhand, Morgrim satisfied himself with the simple removal of the elf's nose, and then allowed the prince's retainers to remove the remains for whatever fawning burial ceremony awaits them.

A messenger was brought down by rangers near to the workings at Godtrek-bin-Gazan, carrying mis-sives from the Phoenix King for the elven army camped upon the banks of the Shadowmere. It offers the hand in marriage of Caledor's sister Alaine to whomsoever brings him the beard of Morgrim Elgidum. Caledor will be brought to answer for this heinous commission of vile assassination intended to humiliate the lords of our folk<sup>67</sup>.

66. Two princedoms of the elven isle of Ulthuan, one assumes identified by heraldry upon shields and banners.

67. Some 437 grudges in total are recorded against Caledor II.



## The Destruction of Athel Maraya

As the war drags on for another twenty years, there are numerous grudges pertaining to poor supplies, lack of weapons and ammunition, and further battles with the elves. The tide truly began to turn after the dwarfs' assault on the fortress at Athel Maraya.

In defiance of the law of the High King, the elves of Athel Maraya refused to return the lands they have usurped these past two hundred years. Now their usurpation has been eradicated, along with the towers and halls that they built upon the lands of our people. A great train of war machines, brought together from Karak Eight Peaks, Karaz-a-Karak, Karaz Azul, Karak Varn and Karak Kadrin, has laid waste to the city of Athel Maraya. The elves of the city refused free passage offered them, foolishly believing us as weak-willed as themselves. They were slain by hammer and crossbow bolt for their folly.

The orchards have been burned and the fields razed. The meadows have been ploughed and salted, and the stones of the buildings ground to gravel to pave the Undgrin Ankor. The statues of marble have been broken and their pieces used in the privy tanks at the new brewery in Karak Kadrin. The keystone of the great gate has been taken by the masons to fashion into an oathstone<sup>68</sup> for King Grundin. No small amount of gold was reclaimed from the vaults and has been cast afresh as proper coin. Many gems were found, some ground to dust for they contained elvish enchantments, the others now adorn the sky-dome of King Hrrallson's chambers in Karak Azul. Here in Karak Eight Peaks, the door to the Engineers' Guild now proudly displays a badge of honour, fashioned in the likeness of Grungni<sup>69</sup>, may his candle never dim, cast from the tips of two thousand elven spears taken from the bodies of the dead.

## The Final Siege of Tor Alessi

Another 346 years pass and Caledor II arrives in the Old World to supervise the fighting having become frustrated with his generals. Being neither particularly willing to listen to others nor a sound strategist, this brings disaster upon the elves, although the dwarfs were not without their losses.

As a smith beats upon his anvil, our armies have hammered at the resolve of the elves, and now the task is done. At Tor Alessi we once again tested our mettle against the pernicious elves, this last and fourteenth time at the city on the coast, may its foundations shatter and plunge it into the waves. High King Gotrek, Axe of the Elves, the Starbreaker<sup>70</sup>, led

the throng and brought the despicable Caledor to battle. Upon a dragon red of scale and fiery of breath, hoarder of gold and despoiler of our lands, the so-called Pheonix King led his army. Great were the sorceries unleashed by the conjurers of Saphery, so that fireballs and lightning wreaked havoc upon our engines and filled the eye with multi-coloured light brighter than the star-lanterns of Karak Eight Peaks. The ground was rent with fissures that opened beneath the bolt throwers, plunging our crews into jagged chasms, which then sealed tighter than a king's vault.



With a glitter that pales only to the shining waters of the Okzhuf-a-Azgal, the elven arrows rained down upon the helmets of our throng, white-flighted and deadly. Thane Burakson was slain by a shaft that pieced his stokktromm<sup>71</sup> and a great grievance settled upon our hearts. As the turning of the wheel in the stream that drives the mill, our axes were unrelenting in their work and hewed a great many elves. Three of the Anvils of Doom<sup>72</sup> had been brought forth, and their runes burned with power and the striking of the Runelords. Trommi Ironfriend swore that the shades of the fallen of the thirteen earlier battles of Tor Alessi rose from the Halls of the Ancestors, may their walls be hung with golden banners.

Thrice the host of Caledor the Coward sallied forth, in arrogance trusting to their spears and not their walls. Thrice they were hurled back by the throng of the High King leaving behind a carpet of their fallen.

68. See 'Oathstones'.

69. See 'The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods - Ancestor Badges'.

70. I am unsure where this honorific comes from, though it predates the War of Vengeance.

71. Note literal translation means 'beard that protects'. I am unsure to what this refers.

72. Literal translation, see 'Runes, Runic Magic and Runesmiths'.



On a fourth assault the Phoenix King took the field himself, and our bolts and quarrels tore the wing from his mount as he charged the High King's position. The Starbreaker, Lord of the Mountains, Hammer of the Ancestors, was swift and unyielding in the prosecution of his duties. He cut his way through the elves that rushed to aid Caledor the Friendless, and hefted the Axe of Grimnir as mightily as the great Ancestor, may his beard ever grow. He smote the neck of the Phoenix King and the edge of the axe cut as smoothly as a hotly forged blade through kruchufi<sup>73</sup>. From the severed head of the elf king Gotrek took the golden crown of Ulthuan, in payment of the debts incurred to our people for the past centuries. The elves, upon seeing their pitiful leader cut in twain like a sawed log, allowed the High King to withdraw with his just recompense, and thus the war has ended.

## The War Ends

Just as with the start of the war, the High King himself marked its conclusion with a letter to every hold and fastness in the dwarf empire.

Due price has been levied for the wrongs done against our people. Let it not be said that we were of failing heart or of bending back under the burdens laid upon us. Through the hard work of all our subjects and the axe blade in our own hand, Caledor the Irredeemable lies dead and his crown taken as gild for our immense pains and expense. The three towers of *Tor Alessi* have been cast down and with the stones we shall build a vault to house our prize. We can retire in peace to our lands, to rebuild our families and homes, to lay aside our axes and shields and look to the future with hope. If the elves fail to accept the graciousness of this final act of mercy, we stand prepared to repel their assaults and cut down each and every one of them.

## The Elves Leave the Old World

With the death of Caledor II and the taking of the Phoenix Crown, the dwarfs believed that balance had been restored and the wrongs of the elves rectified. With their prize in hand, the dwarfs marched back to their holds, prepared to continue their lives as though the last few hundred years had not passed.



It is reported that the elves had different plans. Insulted by the capture of the Phoenix Crown, and what they saw as the murder of their king, the princes of the elves gathered together what forces remained for an assault on Karaz-a-Karak. Perhaps fortunately for the elves, the attack never took place. Had it done so, it is hard to see what end other than the slaughter of the elves could have occurred.

As it was, some unknown disaster befell the elven homeland and a proclamation from Caledor's successor halted the assault before it began. The elven armies embarked upon their ships and left these shores to return to Ulthuan to address whatever problems were occurring there. That was the last of the elves of the Phoenix King to be seen in the Old World for some four thousand years, until the time of their return shortly before the Great War Against Chaos.



<sup>73</sup> 'Goat-fat' - perhaps some kind of lard or cheese?



## Ancient Trade Routes of the Dwarfs

Through diligent research of these grudges, by matching those that concern the dealings of traders and merchants, and with reference to ancient maps, I have been able to make this approximation of the extent of the dwarf and elf empires. Upon this map I have marked the major cities of both races, such as I have information for, as well as other major trading posts. Through logical deduction and consultation with traders of the present day, I have estimated the routes by which wares are most likely to have travelled between these places.

Some of these routes were dwarf-built roads, which still survive to this day and are used by the caravans that cross our Empire. Others follow the rivers, as merchants do today, for the elves in particular were highly skilled in the manufacture of sail craft, while the dwarfs built trading vessels of their own, as examined later. One can immediately see that these routes were extensive indeed, for this was a time of expansion and exploration for both races. Dwarfs and elves traded on fairly even terms. The elves, for their, part greatly prized dwarf-made goods, mostly for their function even if the design was not necessarily to their liking. It is said in some accounts that the dwarfs even fashioned items after the aesthetics of the elves on occasion, to fetch a higher price, though such a thing is unthinkable these days.

The elves brought goods that the dwarfs could not procure for themselves, such as spices from the east, finely woven silks, ivory of Southlands elefaunts used by the dwarfs in decoration, as well as a considerable amount of gold and gems from distant lands. The free trade between the peoples of the two races flowed well for hundreds of years, and it was in the interests of both to keep these lines of trade open and free from raiders. Thus, one can see that man's earliest settlements are also concentrated close to those places where trade was highest – where man was safest – and several of our cities and those of other nations are built upon literal and figurative foundations laid down by the elves and dwarfs.



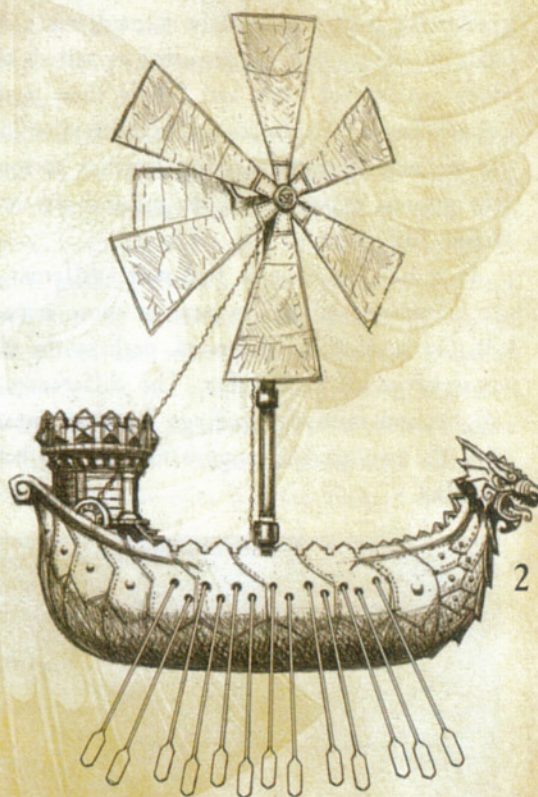
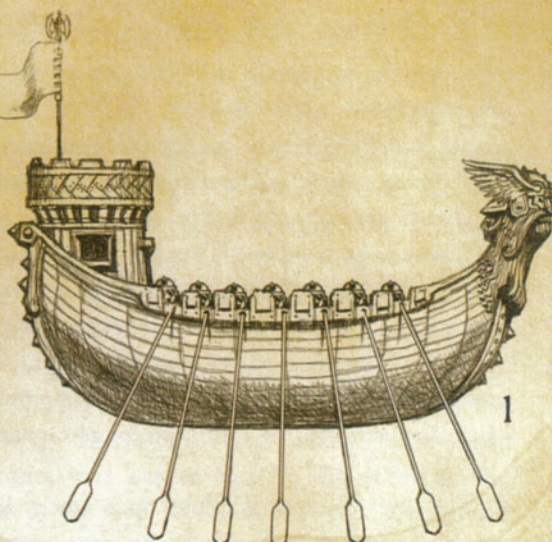


## Dwarf Shipping

Just as they still do for the Empire today, the great rivers of the Old World provided the dwarfs with their main means of moving shipments from their holds in the mountains to the elven colonies amongst the forests to the west. The earliest dwarf boats were simple designs, rowed by a series of sweeps down each side, each crewed by a dwarf. As contact between the dwarfs and elves grew, the dwarfs learned more of ship design and sailing, and adapted it in their own unique way. For much of the earliest period of trading, 'grubarks' were used (1). This vessel used an ingenious yet simple gearing system to allow a handful of dwarfs to operate a whole bank of sweeps. It was at this time that the first paddle ships began to appear on the rivers, the true precursors to dwarf vessels of this day. These were 'ghazan-harbarks' (2).

Not only on the rivers did the dwarfs ply their trade. In the northern Badlands, the hold of Barak Varr grew from strength to strength. Built into cliffs overlooking the sea, Barak Varr has a vast cave to act as a natural harbour, and it is to here that many of the elven ships from the far west and distant orient came with their goods. Buoyed by this mercantile wealth, Barak Varr grew rapidly, and many dwarfs there, of perhaps a more outgoing and cosmopolitan nature than many of their kind, began to experiment with sea-going vessels of their own. Dwarfs have never been overly fond of sails, although some ships used rotary sails as a means of power, much like the windmills found in the Wastelands and elsewhere across our Empire.

The advent of steam power for the dwarfs was to revolutionise ship-building forever. This led to the construction of heavier-than-water ships, such as the ironclads and dreadnoughts that can occasionally be seen in Marienburg and sometimes as far up the Reik as Altdorf (3). Powered by coal and coke, these marvels of engineering hold closely-guarded secrets that I am sure the College of Engineers would dearly love to examine and replicate. Most are based upon an evolution of the paddlewheel design seen in the ghazan-harbarks, though a few enterprising souls have tried using powered oars much in the same fashion as the original grubarks. There are even rumours of some dwarf vessels being able to submerge completely for a short length of time, much like the frost whales of the Sea of Claws.





## Of Dwarfs and Elves

Though the magnitude and bitterness of the War of Vengeance may surprise most, that it occurred is, regrettably, not so unlikely. As both empires grew, the elves and dwarfs become natural opponents, and though they conducted themselves civilly for many decades, the two races were as chalk and cheese – or as grik and chuf as the dwarfs would say – and conflict between them was inevitable.

Dwarfs are naturally thrifty, workmanlike, terse and stubborn. They value the things of the ground, the mountains and stone. They are intractable and utterly loyal, yet also implacable and single-minded. They prefer strong ales and bawdy songs, and see hard labour as worthy endeavour. When around other races, dwarfs are serious, quiet folk who prefer silence to intimacy, and are, at their heart, suspicious of anything not of dwarfish origin. They can be insular and brief, which to some can seem rude. Their language is harsh and uncompromising, their bodies short and sturdily built. The dwarfs are also distrustful of magic except as captured by their runes, and suspicious of those that delve in the mystical arts.

The elves, in contrast, love open spaces and the sky. They are garrulous and naturally inclined to gossip and scheming, even on petty matters. They have delicate sensibilities and refined tastes, preferring poetry and softly scented wines. The elves as a people are prone to arrogance and disdain of others, and are regarded as selfish and vain by outsiders. They can appear capricious, for they are free of heart and follow their desires, and duty is often forgotten in the heat of passion. They are explorers and wanderers, who feel few ties to home and hearth and instead prefer to see new lands rather than familiar surroundings. The elves are also steeped in magic, perhaps the greatest exponents of the magical arts in the world. They are tall and graceful, and move with feline-like grace.

It is hard to imagine two more different peoples, and that the dwarfs and elves ever managed to cooperate and ally is perhaps more remarkable than the divisions that eventually befell them. As the lands were conquered, perhaps the elves and dwarfs began to look with more envy at the possessions of each other. The differences in their personalities could easily exaggerate small slights and misunderstandings. By these means, the races followed their own nature and so it was that the two greatest empires to have ever held sway over the Old World became locked in bloody conflict.







## Snorri Whitebeard and Malekith

The first of the High Kings of the dwarfs after the passing of the Ancestor Gods was Snorri Whitebeard. It was he who forged the alliance with the elves, and even fought alongside them against the beasts of the dark powers that assailed the lands at that time. Foremost amongst the elves was Malekith, their ambassador to the High King and the greatest of their generals. Some say that he was the son of the mythical Phoenix King Aenarion and an elven enchantress.

Both Snorri and Malekith were capable warriors and great leaders of their armies. It is through their might that the hordes were pushed back to the north and the wildest areas of the Old World, as it is now, were tamed. There are tales of them saving each other's lives on several occasions, as they and their hosts confronted the evil things of this world and set about building the empires of their people.

The oldest dwarf tales, never spoken of now, say that Malekith and Snorri were not just comrades in battle and representatives of their people, but were as close to friends as any two individuals of these two very different races could ever be. Some unknown peril beset the elves and Malekith returned to the island of Ulthuan to intervene. It is said that Snorri gifted Malekith with a great many things upon his departure. Among them were a silver-chased horn of a mountain ox almost as long as the king was tall; and a bridle for Malekith's steeds gilded and inlaid with a hundred polished gemstones. Snorri was most disturbed that his companion might not return. For his part, Malekith pledged his undying support to Snorri, and also gave such gifts as would now be beyond price and avarice. A cloak of fur taken from the fabled white lions of Ulthuan was amongst these, as was an ithilmar drinking goblet that Snorri was to use in favour of a dwarfen tankard until the day he died.

The two parted fondly and never met again.

## Oathstones

Dwarf legend claims that it was during the Battle of Bryndal Vale that King Ironhandson of Karak Varn created the first oathstone. Whilst returning to their hold after the unsuccessful sixth siege of Tor Alessi, the throng of Karak Varn was ambushed upon the road through the Bryndal Vale. As the dwarfs attempted to retreat north towards their hold, the elf attack grew in strength and threatened to break through the rearguard. The retreat was in danger of becoming a rout, during which the elves would surely kill or capture a great part of the throng. To forestall this doom, King Ironhandson marched his bodyguard to the fiercest fighting, upon a boulder-strewn ridge near the mouth of the valley. The king chose the highest rock he could find and climbed atop it. In view of all the dwarfs and elves, he took his rune axe and carved his personal rune into the granite block. His voice a bellow above the din of fighting, he uttered his immortal oath:

'Fight on, brave sons of Grimnir! Here I shall make my stand, proud king of Karak Varn, son of Thorgil Ironhand, grandson of Hraddi Ironhand. With the ancestors as my witnesses, I vow I shall not take one step back from this rock. Like the cliffs of Barak Varr, I shall be the buttress against this elven wave. Should I fall, remember my words and deeds, and bury me beneath



this unyielding stone, for I cannot return to my hearth with honour should I fail. Fight with me, warriors of Grungni! Fight 'til our doom comes upon us!

With this brave act of defiance, the king rallied his wavering warriors, and the dwarfs set to against the elves with renewed vigour. The king was true to his oath, and even though he was surrounded and grievously wounded, he fought with every ounce of his strength. The king eventually fell and the dwarfs were defeated, yet the greater part of the throng managed to escape the now-weary pursuers. In a rare magnanimous act, so impressed were the elves with the dwarf king's display that they allowed their prisoners to fulfil their king's oath and bury him under that rock. A dense forest of trees has filled Bryndal Vale, but still the occasional dwarf party makes the difficult pilgrimage to pay homage at the site of the first oathstone.

The story of King Ironhandson's oath and sacrifice spread quickly through the dwarf empire and rekindled their lust for battle. The High King commissioned his runesmiths to create a stone upon which he could stand also, and to inscribe it with silver runes of sturdiness and courage so that his heart would not waver, and with runes of protection to watch over his grave should he fall. Ever since, oathstones have been used by dwarf lords and kings to signal their intent to die fighting, and they can be found as grim reminders of battles fought long ago across the length and breadth of the Old World. Wherever a traveller might come across a rune-etched stone, there lie the remains of a great dwarf lord, protected for eternity by the magic of the oathstone. Some claim that nearly five hundred oathstones dot the slopes of Black Fire Pass, from the time when King Kurgan and Sigmar fought back the orc hordes; a fitting and telling memorial to the lords of the dwarfs that answered their king's call on that bloody day so many centuries ago.

## Losses in Battle

Dwarfs are hardy folk from birth, not given to disease or easy injury. In battle, though many may be temporarily incapacitated, they recover quickly from their wounds if allowed to recuperate for a few days. Their blood is thick and clots easily, and their bones are exceptionally sturdy and hard to break. By means of this the dwarfs have survived millennia of battle against all manner of foes. During the outset of the War of Vengeance, it was accepted practice for a throng to begin its retreat once it had sustained one third or more of its number as casualties, taking the wounded with it. However, as the war progressed the fighting became harder and more prolonged, and some throngs even fought to the last dwarf during the latter stages of the conflict.

As with the mustering of the throng, it is the duty of each clan to look after its warrior-folk, and see to their funerary rites and the treatment of their wounds. Dwarf maidens and priestesses of Valaya are all taught simple but effective techniques of battlecare, and can patch up an injured dwarf and send him back to the fray in a surprisingly short time. The list below shows this, and is taken from a record of casualties sustained by the throng of Karak Eight Peaks during the seventh siege of Tor Alessi.

Notable Survivals – In reference to the same battle, I read several tales of extraordinary survival, even by dwarf standards. Thane Dammin Firehearth was pierced by seventeen elven arrows and yet recovered fully and went on to fight at the eighth, ninth and tenth sieges of Tor Alessi. Engineer Alfi Starforger was left for dead with the crew of one of his bolt throwers, having been stabbed twenty-six times with spears, lost his right hand and suffered a grievous wound to his head. A rune-etched mechanical

Clan	Casualties	Recovered	Notable dead
Firehearth	234	213	Thanes Fendri and Hrusti
Skandigrar	453	289	Thane Bathik, Runcelord Silvernose
Borvak-Barin	12	12	
Grumbak	486	475	Thanes Bandrok, Stubbi and Krandor
Hakbaki	322	297	Thane Furstus
Gol-kabanak	52	35	Engineer Gabrik

facsimile, created by Alfi himself and Runcelord Thorsti Ironhammer, said to have been capable of even quite delicate manipulation, replaced his hand.



## Battle Trophies

Dwarfs prefer quiet, hard work to the din of battle and the shedding of blood. However, once their anger is roused they are a fearful foe. Yet when the battle is over, the war is won, the dwarfs are not a boastful people and do not glory in their victories as perhaps some men do. The dwarfs do, however, like to remember and commemorate the sacrifices they have made and the achievements their ancestors accomplished. To this end, the dwarfs take trophies from their defeated enemies.

For all this, dwarfs are not impressed by the gear and wares of other races, either in look or reliability of function, and as such these prizes are not kept in their original form. Instead what suitable materials can be taken are used to create new and wonderful artefacts of dwarfish design. Some might consider this simple looting, but records are kept diligently noting the location and time when such trophies were taken, and the means to which they were put. Beardlings are taught the origins of all of these trophy-artefacts that belong to a clan, known as 'drengrorlaz'. By these means, a dwarf can walk about the tunnels and halls of his home and, should he have a mind, give not only a tour of the geography, but also a history lesson of the clan.

The only trophy the dwarfs have taken and not remade is the Phoenix Crown of the elves. The dwarfs claim it is of dwarf manufacture anyway and, on top of this, is the hope that it may well be returned to the elves when other full recompense and apology is made for the events of the War of Vengeance. Though this seems the most unlikely event to ever occur, and has not yet happened for thousands of years, the dwarfs as a race are nothing if not patient.

The Phoenix Crown is not always kept in one place but rather is passed amongst the clans who took part in the final battle that saw its capture. Every decade or so, it is taken under heavy guard from one hold to the next, so that the dwarfs can see this mighty prize. It is brought out at dour festivals of remembrance, where the dwarfs curse the elves and laud the dwarfen warriors of ages past, in sight of the Phoenix Crown of Ulthuan.





## Phoenix King Caledor II

Some four hundred and thirty-seven separate grudges are recorded against King Caledor II, most for dwarfs slain by his hand. During this time, the dwarfs came up with a great number of insulting titles for Caledor II, which I have gathered here for interest:

✦ The Oathbreaker (the worst name that a dwarf can give another being, never used elsewhere in this book of grudges);

✦ The Coward

✦ The Friendless

✦ The Irredeemable

✦ The Thin

✦ The Beardless

✦ The Goat Lover

✦ The Pale; The Princess

✦ The Ale-Sniffer

✦ The Goat Worrier

✦ The Goldless

✦ The Unnecessary

✦ The Broken

✦ The Long-nosed

✦ The Slayer of Kin

✦ The Untrustworthy

✦ The Nervous

✦ The Frightened of Loud Noises

✦ The Dark Fearer

✦ The Child

✦ The Fragile

✦ The Laughable

✦ The Beard-thief

✦ The Pointlessly Tall

✦ The Honourless

✦ The Intruder





## Chapter Four

# The Undead Grudge

### The Depravities of Konrad

Dwarfs revere their dead above all things, for they are the mortal remains of their ancestors<sup>74</sup>. Dwarf funerals are long affairs concerned with the remembrance of the deceased's deeds. Necromancy and the undead fill dwarfs with a particular loathing and horror, and to disturb the remains of the dead or interfere with souls in the Halls of the Ancestors is one of the gravest crimes in dwarf law.

Here follows a selection of grudges pertaining to the undead and, notably for scholars of the Empire, the dwarfs' involvement in the dreadful Wars of the Vampire Counts.

### Dealings with the Undead

An unknown manling was chased from the second lower burial tiers in the west reaches, having gained access via an undiscovered crack in the sub-sub-vaults of the funerary cellars. He is being tracked and shall be brought to justice. Implements of ghost-bothering<sup>75</sup> were found, including a receptacle of what appears to be goat's or chicken's blood, a small number of ironwood nails, a painting brush made with human hair and a silver mirror of ancient design and patina. Various scrapings on the protective runes of Thane Furginsson's sepulchre reveal that the manling was attempting some vile incantation. Runesmith<sup>76</sup> Bakkar Greyhammer inspected the runes and was satisfied that their wardings were still intact.

Grievous news has arrived from Zhufbar. The king's cousin Goghbad, betrothed to the daughter of King Barrin of Zhufbar, is dead<sup>77</sup>. Whilst visiting his bride-to-be, Goghbad joined the throng of Zhufbar investigating recent destruction wrought upon

the barley fields west of the hold. Accompanying a contingent of rangers<sup>78</sup> knowledgeable of the area, Goghbad travelled to the trading outpost of Duraz Urbazund to ensure the safety of his kin-to-be. Duraz Urbazund was found to be ransacked and desolate, and not a body found. At first suspecting vile grobi, Goghbad sent word to Zhufbar for a hunting expedition to be mustered. Before greater numbers of warriors could arrive, Duraz Urbazund was attacked once more. A great and unnatural storm befell the hillside, obscuring all light and bathing the mountains in eerie twilight. Flocks of gigantic bats fell upon the outpost and with flaming brands and burning quarrels Goghbad and the rangers drove back the swirling cloud of fell bats without loss. Those who had taken the folk of Duraz Urbazund then returned. It was not greenskins, but a host of the restless dead, led by a monstrous 'blood-drinker'<sup>79</sup>. Amongst the unliving throng stood the



74. See 'Pantheon of the Gods - Ancestor Worship'.

75. Literal translation, one assumes necromancy.

76. See 'Runes: Runic Magic and Runesmiths'.

77. The king's family, like many others, extends to most of the surviving holds, as can be seen in the summarised genealogical chart included elsewhere in this volume.

78. Rangers are dwarfs who spend the majority of their lives above ground. They are the first line of defence against attack, and knowledgeable of the surrounding area. Frequently they are used as scouts and ambushers, to stall an enemy advance or to attack enemy supplies.

79. 'Zanguzaz' - literal translation, presumably a vampire.



## The Wars of the Vampire Counts

The first of the vampire counts was Vlad von Carstein, who usurped power in Sylvania and used his magic to unleash an army of the dead against the Empire in a bid to become Emperor. He was eventually slain whilst besieging the city of Altdorf. He was succeeded by Konrad von Carstein, a mad butcher in life and equally insane as one of the Undead. His barbaric slaughter of thousands forced the claimants to the Imperial throne to finally unite and defeat him, though they only succeeded at the second effort after they attempted to assassinate each other during the Battle of Four Armies. The final, and perhaps most dangerous, of the vampire counts was Mannfred von Carstein. Steeped in necromantic power, his army was beaten back by its own magic when the Spell of Unbinding was used at another siege of Altdorf. Mannfred's army terrorised the Empire for many years but was finally destroyed, as was the vampire, at the Battle of Hel Fenn. It must be noted that from the time of Konrad onwards, the dwarfs responded to calls for aid and armies were sent from Zhufbar, Karak Kadrin and other holds to fight alongside troops of the Empire.



bodies of the folk of Duraz Urbazund. Incensed beyond imagining, Goghbadd attacked and attempted to fight his way to the blood-drinker in order to strike its head from its body and destroy its remains. The attack stalled swiftly, and to avoid being surrounded by the uncountable horde, Goghbadd and his warriors retired to the fortifications of Duraz Urbazund. Here they mounted a staunch defence, and were able to hold the walls for many hours, despite the never-ending tide of undead that assailed them. However, upon the fall of true night, the blood-drinker itself led the next wave of unliving creatures, and none of Goghbadd's throng could stand before its strength and speed. Goghbadd met this unnatural beast with rune axe and shield in hand, and dealt it a mighty blow to the chest. The creature fought on despite the gaping wound in its torso, and tore the throat from Goghbadd with its fangs. Goghbadd's companions fought hard but could not rescue

the body of the king's cousin, and his fate is unknown. This is as related by those few rangers who escaped the massacre. The king has ordered the thanes to muster warriors for a march north, for a reckoning with the blood-drinker, and has sent emissaries to Zhufbar announcing his intent.

Word has arrived from Zhufbar that all is not well in the lands of the Empire. For many centuries strife has riven their accord, and our folk have been content to leave them to their own affairs. Our merchants have dealt with all factions and claimants to the throne without bias or favour, and much profit has been made. Though it be at the expense of the woes of the manlings, it is not our place to judge their internal problems<sup>80</sup>. Yet now it has become a matter for our kings, for a new claimant to the throne of the Emperor has declared himself. Count Vlad von Carstein of Sylvania, bordering on the realms of Zhufbar, is revealed as a blood-drinker,

80. Though the Time of the Three Emperors was a trying one for the Empire, the dwarfs profited highly. Without favour, they sold weapons and dwarf-made items to any and all nobles willing to pay their prices, which were considerable even by dwarf standards. Black powder made by the dwarfs, in particular, was much sought after and the greater efficiency of firearms from this period onward no doubt led to increasingly bloody battles.





and a powerful one at that. The king is convinced that it is this Vlad, or one of his infernal get, that was responsible for the slaying of his cousin Goghbad, and has redoubled his efforts to mount an expedition to the north to battle this monstrosity.

## The Rise of the Blood Count

The king is fraught with wrath, for the accursed Vlad is slain, outside the walls of the manling town of Altdorf. Who now shall be held in account for the marauding of Duraz Urbazund and the disappearance of Goghbad?

A new creature has arisen to lead the thrice-cursed coven of blood-drinkers ruling Sylvania. Konrad is his name, and by all reports he is a mad and violent beast. The king passes on the debt of Vlad to Konrad, and will hold him to full account with flame and axe.

The king has razed the village of Gratelsperg on the borders of Hunger Wood. Seeking shelter and wares for his throng, he took sanctuary near to the manling hovels. As custom dictates, the king and a small retinue of hammerers announced themselves to the leader of the settlement, a strange manling named Kharl Vennegheist. At first all was well and the welcome, though sparse due to the destitute nature of Gratelsperg and the depredations

of the undead, was warm and good-natured. The hostelry of the village was put at our king's disposal, and a bed chamber in the master's own house was offered up for use. As the king slumbered after sampling a great deal of the local brew, which by all accounts was fair for manling drink<sup>81</sup>, a cabal of villagers sneaked into the chambers and bound the king with sheets and gagged him with a pillow case. Thus restrained, the king was unable to raise the alarm and was carried to a dung cart outside and hidden underneath its malodorous contents before being conveyed to the ruins of an ancient tower on the outskirts of the village.

By this time, by dint of the king's observance of strict tradition and routine, his chief victualler Hynthyng Goldenspoon arrived at the king's resting place to enquire as to his appetite for a mid-night supper. Upon finding the inn deserted and the king missing, Hynthyng bore these grave tidings to Thane Garbarak, who roused the throng and set about a search of the village and surrounds. They came upon the ruins of the tower where the king was concealed and were set upon by a great horde of filthy, bloodstained manlings, naked but for loincloths and feral in manner<sup>82</sup>. Smeared with blood as these debased creatures were, Thane Garbarak feared the worst had befallen the king and stormed the ruins with haste.

<sup>81</sup> Beers of Sylvania are considered near-undrinkable by most folk, so whether this place was remarkable or the observations of the king merely royal courtesy is debatable.

<sup>82</sup> Crypt ghouls as known to men. The Dwarfs have no equivalent in their language and are utterly abhorred by the concept of cannibalism.





Within the dungeons they found a long hall, decked out in macabre fashion, in dark parody of a banquet. A monstrous vampire<sup>83</sup>, fully thrice the height of a sturdy dwarf warrior, officiated over the bleak proceedings from a high-backed chair at one end of a table lit by candles made of human fat.

Our king lay trussed with twine, a withered apple placed in his mouth, upon a tarnished silver platter at the centre of the table, while villagers laboured at a firepit, over which a roasting spit was built. The beast fled the wrath of Thane Garbarak, disappearing by hidden ways, and its tracks vanished with the coming of dawn. The king was gratefully freed from his bonds.

The cannibalistic villagers were hunted. Those that resisted were cut down and a great pit was dug for their bodies, a dozen score of them at least though none of us had the stomach to count for sure. The rest were bound and transported to Delverzheim six miles to the south, and handed into the custody of Captain Valgin of the army of Stirland. Searches have been conducted for the whereabouts of Kharl Vennegheist but he as yet remains at large and unaccounted for. The village was destroyed with fire and black powder, and the ruins of the tower consecrated by a human priest<sup>84</sup> as well as Runesmith Jarlbik.

## Hunger Wood

This day we remark upon the frailties of the manlings, and in particular their lack of honour. But also let us recognise their courage, for not all of the children of men are cowards and oathless.

Let us start with the former, for today the alliance in which our king has participated was shattered by the weaknesses of the manlings. Our partners upon this bloodied field were three: the leaders of the Empire lands of Reikland, Talabecland and the Wasteland<sup>85</sup>. An assassin struck, no doubt sent by Konrad von Carstein to sow disorder amongst this fragile coalition, for surely not even a manling would be so beardless as to slay his allies on the very eve of a battle against the hateful undead. The assassin or assassins struck at the Countess of Talabecland; her throat was slit from ear to ear<sup>86</sup>. Much aggrieved were her

<sup>83</sup> I have read several corroborated reports of such creatures, sometimes called varghulfs, or the Beasts of Strigos.

<sup>84</sup> It is likely that this was a priest of Morr.

<sup>85</sup> More specifically, Marienburg – all rivals to the Imperial throne at the time.

<sup>86</sup> Some accounts back the claim that the Count of Reikland employed the assassin, and perhaps it is merely dwarfen disbelief at such treachery that disputes this.



people, and much afear'd too that their self-declared Empress would be raised from her death by the minions of the blood-drinker. Though we offered to prepare the body by the means that protect our ancestors, may their beer forever froth, such distraught and black thoughts had clouded the manlings' hearts that they simply hacked apart the unfortunate body and buried the separate pieces. Such disrespect is so typical of the manlings, for whom death is something to be greatly feared. Perhaps it is because they do not have our surety that their lives have been spent in honourable and noble pursuits, and thus they forever doubt that they will be accepted by their ancestors.

The death of the countess started a veritable riki-graz<sup>87</sup> of accusations and counter-accusations. All this took place whilst the hosts of Konrad the Blood Count were gathered for the attack. The fleshless dead of ancient wars marched upon us with green-slicked bronze shields and swords, while formless wailing things of terror beset our throng with their chilling touch and disconcerting shrieks. Whilst the armies of men fought amongst themselves, it was to the axes and shoulders of our throng that the burden of battle fell. If not for the courage of all of our kin, the battle was sure to have been lost, for the manlings were as eager to spill each other's blood as to hack at the foe<sup>88</sup>.

Come the end of the fighting, after a day's long and weary war work, it was the courage and strength of men that was to be credited. Helmar of Marienburg in the Wasteland, son of Helmut and orphaned by the hand of the Blood Count, did avenge his father, in a way most honourable and fitting. Aided by the doughty Grufbad, who himself

owed debt of blood for a father's death, Helmar dealt the fatal blow to Konrad von Carstein. Grufbad twice cut upon the beast with axe blows that would have felled trees. Upon seeing the creature rise from these grievous wounds, Grufbad pinned the blood-drinker to the ground. Let it be known for posterity that he did not, despite some unflattering accounts of the manlings, sit upon Count Konrad to restrain him<sup>89</sup>. With his runefang, heirloom of his position, forged many centuries past by the genius of Alaric the Mad, Helmar decapitated Konrad von Carstein and thus ended his reign of terror<sup>90</sup>, and Helmar did even the score for the day's earlier tribulations. The king is satisfied that retribution has been made for the death of Goghbad.



87. A cave-in or landslide that swiftly gathers momentum.

88. A few regiments did not participate in the infighting and assisted the dwarfs, including several war machine crews who had spent time with dwarf engineers the previous night preparing range markers and receiving technical advice on their guns.

89. It is unknown what source this is disputing.

90. The end of the Wars of the Vampire Counts saw many dwarfs remain in the Empire, the second of three general waves of expatriation to the Empire. The first was during the time of Sigmar, may he forever protect us, following the Battle of Black Fire Pass. The latest was directly after the Great War Against Chaos. In particular, dwarfs of fallen holds sometimes prefer not to live in another hold, for fear of some nameless shame, and instead create new lives for themselves in the lands of men. As a result dwarf quarters in many cities are sizeable and their tradecraft more readily available here than in other lands.



## Runes, Runic Magic and Runesmiths

The dwarfs do not have wizards, like those of our Colleges of Magic, nor the mages of the elves nor even crude shamans like the greenskins. Their magical lore was, they claim, taught to them by the greatest of the Ancestor Gods, Grungni. In the ancient past, Grungni showed the dwarfs how to trap the power of magic into items they crafted, using runes and long rituals. He taught this skill to a chosen few, who became the first runesmiths. Once in his life, each runesmith will choose an apprentice to learn the secrets of the runes, and in this way rune lore is passed from generation to generation.

Like other apprentices, a runesmith's student will learn the most fundamental facts of runic magic, and over the course of many years, dozens by my reckoning, he will learn to inscribe his own runes, starting with the simplest. Those who are diligent and dedicated will eventually become runesmiths, and may even go on to create new runes of their own. A runesmith's power and learning continues to expand throughout his life, and the oldest are known as runelords. The runelords know the secrets of the most potent runes, the Master Runes, and can bind the most powerful magic to their will.







In the ancient days of the dwarf empire, rune items were commonplace, or so the dwarfs say. Lanterns that shone without flame, boots that could be walked in for a day without tiring the wearer, packs and bags that could carry the possessions of an entire family; all these and many other marvels once belonged to the dwarfs. There are records even of the most humble objects inscribed with runes, including a tale that Snorri Whitebeard owned a runic smoking pipe and wore runic slippers in his bedchambers. Now the secrets of their creation have been lost, and they are highly prized, so that what was once a trinket is now worth a king's ransom. The most ancient and puissant runes can no longer be created and exist on only a few items in the whole of the dwarf empire; their making has been forgotten and the millennia of wars and invasions has seen the oldest rune items destroyed or stolen.

Most of the rune items found today are articles of armour, and weapons. There are a great many runes whose purpose is to smite enemies and protect the wearer from harm. Some bear the names of their creators, such as Skalf Blackhammer and Stromni Redbeard; others are straightforwardly named for their purpose such as the Rune of Cleaving, the Master Rune of Adamant and the Rune of Fury. Other runes exist, on amulets and talismans, to ward away evil magic, protect the bearer from the fire of a dragon's breath, allow a dwarf to move unseen, and many other strange abilities. The most highly prized battle standards of the dwarfen throngs are also marked with runes, bound with magic of courage and honour, or resolution and determination.

In days of old, the greatest runelords forged their items upon magical anvils, known as the Anvils of Doom. Such is the magic possessed by the Anvils of Doom that only the most venerable and skilled runelords can unleash their power. Through the magic within an Anvil of Doom, an army can march speedily, the ground can be split asunder or fireballs can be rained down upon the enemy. Most of the anvils were lost along with the holds that housed them, others were destroyed by the power they contained, wrongly released by runelords who lacked the exact rituals needed to use them safely. Only a handful have survived to this day.



## Provisioning the Throng

When a king of a hold calls a war, he lays down duties upon a number of clans. This may be a single clan, or all of the clans of the hold, or any number inbetween, depending upon the size of the undertaking. Each clan is responsible for the mustering and supplying of its own warriors. All dwarfs are taught axecraft from an early age, and practise their battle skills regularly against goblins and other intruders. It is thus that the greater proportion of a clan is made up of able-bodied fighters, and from these a due amount will be called to the throng to fight for the thanes and their king. The guilds also are called upon to provide materials and supplies, from cannons to ale to carts. In desperate times when all of a hold is at war, the king may open up the coffers of his treasury to loan gold to clans that are having difficulty raising the necessary wares, at a rate of interest much lower than is usual in such arrangements. Of course, the king is head of a clan too, and so this arrangement is not as one-sided as it may first appear, for he must arm and armour his own warriors, hammerers and often the long-beards of the hold at personal expense.

A dwarf army can forage as it marches when necessary, but to operate at its full capacity each throng is accompanied by a supply caravan, protected by warriors from the clan. Such baggage trains are much smaller than those of Imperial armies, for each warrior in the throng can bear a heavier burden and still march, in comparison to a soldier of the Electors. As an example, I have included on the following page an itemised list of the provisions made for an Engineers' Guild gunnery train that operated in Sylvania during the Wars of the Vampire Counts. This is sufficient for some five hundred warriors and guild members on a campaign of at least six months, in addition to personal belongings.





Item	Amount	Item	Amount
Cannons	10	Shovels	4, 871
Major cannons	4	Woodaxes	510
Swivel guns	6	Pickaxes	2,762
Cannonballs	3,993	Spades	5,561
Major cannonballs	352	Spare tool handles	600
Swivel gun canisters	674	Scythes for pony forage	150
Black powder	2,759 quintals	Small sickles	600
Saltpetre	396 pounds	Horseshoes	3,600
Sulphur	650 pounds	Horseshoe nails	150,000
Charcoal	2 cartloads	Water <sup>91</sup>	1003 barrels
Matchcord	286 quintals	Beer (ordinary) <sup>92</sup>	332 hogsheads
Lead	975 quintals	Beer (superior)	127 hogsheads
Frames for cannon—lifting	3	Salted meat	30 tons
Tents and pavilions	23	Greenstuffs	13 tons
Barrels	185	Butter	2 tons
Iron bolts with nuts	500	Oatmeal and cereals	4 tons
Nails	150 gross	Goat's cheese	4 tons
Raw iron for working	28,015 pounds	Stonebread	40 tons
Hammers	72	Dining chisels	1,216
Pincers	34	Flour	10 tons
Bellows	10	Road gravel	90 tons
Stoves	4	Tinder boxes	492
Grappling	3	Firepots	98
Crowbars	22	Matches	4 quintals
Anvils	17	Beard combs	1,298
Wooden trunks	38	Boot nails	2,007
Distilled cleaning spirit	2 barrels	Lubricant oil	22 barrels
Strongboxes	2	Oil for burning	47 barrels
Lanterns	50	Parchment or paper	423 sheets
Baskets	600	Grindstones (heavy)	7
Tow ropes	290	Grindstones (light)	34
Tow chains	201	Ink	948 pots
Sickles for fascines	750		

<sup>91</sup> Dwarfs are deeply reluctant to drink water of uncertain origin, believing this to be a major contributor to the 'rutz'.

<sup>92</sup> Though listed as 'ordinary' and 'superior', it is likely that several variant brews would be taken on campaign such as Wisebeard (a thick, dark brew for the venerable) and Jung'uns (a lower strength, bearding brew) to name but two.



# THE PANTHEON OF THE ANCESTOR GODS

Chief amongst the deities worshipped by the dwarfs are the ancestor gods. Ancient legends suggest that they were carved from rock and once walked the earth, protecting the race of dwarfs when the foul power of Chaos first swept into the world. The dwarfs believe they are descended from the ancestor gods, and that they still watch over and judge them by their deeds to this very day. But the dwarfs have other gods too, lesser deities, believed to be the children of the ancestor gods.

There are three chief ancestor gods described in dwarf history: Grungni, Valaya and Grinnir.

**Grungni** – The most important of the ancestor gods and husband of Valaya. He is the god of mining and smiths, and his greatest shrine resides at the hold of Karak Azul, known for its abundant iron reserves, its forges and armouries. According to ancient scripts I have translated (with varying success, I might add), it was Grungni who first taught the dwarfs how to dig minerals from the rock and to shape metal. It was also Grungni who first instructed the dwarfs in the inscribing of magical runes and gave them the tools and the means to defend themselves against their enemies. Chief amongst the credos of Grungni are oath and honour, the bulwark and the rock upon which dwarf society is founded.

In many representations, Grungni is depicted in full chain-mail armour, with a forked beard and wielding a miner's pick

– one of his chief symbols. He has a martial aspect too, and in this case he carries Drongrundum (translated as 'Thunderhammer'), an ancient and powerful rune hammer.



**Valaya** – The goddess of healing and protection, and the wife of Grungni. She is the only dwarf goddess but is rumoured, from some conversations I have had, to be the founder of Karaz-a-Karak and her name is often invoked as a ward against evil sorcery. Indeed, her rune is inscribed upon banners and armour and reputedly acts as proof against harmful magic.

Valaya's gift to the dwarfs was the rune of hearth and hold, echoing the corner stones of her

power within dwarfen society.

Depictions of Valaya are often simple in nature; she is a dwarf woman with long braided hair and wears chainmail over purple robes (echoed in the attire of her priestesses, with whom I have had the honour of speaking), and bears the rune-axe, Kradskonti (translated as 'Peacegiver').

**Grinnir** – The warrior god of the dwarfs, also known as Grinnir the Fearless, and the brother of Grungni. While the other ancestor gods of the dwarfs are believed to be waiting in





the afterlife, Grimnir is not present, having vanished long ago when legend purports he ventured northward to close the gate of Chaos through which the servants of the Ruinous Powers were spilling forth and infecting the land. In this task he was gifted two runecaxes, crafted by Grungni himself, and rumours persist that said artefacts have been rediscovered, but of the fate of Grimnir nothing is written or at least known to this scholar.

Grimnir is the very embodiment of courage, fearlessness and the warrior spirit of the dwarfs. He is the patron god of slayers and the great shrine at Karak Kadrin, the Slayer Keep, is dedicated to his honour. Wrath and ruin are the tenets of Grimnir, somewhat fatalistic in nature but also possessed of a grim and unyielding defiance. He is depicted bare-chested and heavily muscled, much like the slayers who venerate him, covered in ritual scars (which legend holds, at least the ones I am privy to, were inscribed by Grimnir himself with the claw of the mighty dragon, Glammendrung), with a spike of orange hair jutting from an otherwise glabrous scalp. He bears the runecaxe Az-Dreugidum (translated as 'Waraxe of Doom'), his other blade rumoured to have been given to his son, Morgrim.

**The lesser gods** - There are a number of other, lesser, dwarf gods and their worship is restricted to certain clans and holds. Gazul, the younger brother of Grungni and Grimnir, is the Lord of the Underearth and protector of dwarf dead. Smednir is the Shaper of Ore and forged many of the rune weapons of the dwarfs, under the tutelage of his father, Grungni. Thungni is the Ancestor God of Runesmiths and the younger brother of Smednir, while Morgrim is the Ancestor God of Engineers and son of Grimnir. It was Morgrim that first taught the dwarfs how to construct war engines and who accompanied Grimnir into the lands of the north but was bidden by his father to return, taking one of his axes with him.

## Ancestor Worship

The Dwarfs do not worship the gods as we do. They are a down-to-earth folk, and prefer to put their faith, and trust, in things more solid than distant, uncaring deities. For dwarfs, life is but the first part of existence. Not for them the bleak underworld of Morr. The dwarfs believe that, upon their death, their souls are pulled down into the earth, to the very roots of the mountains, where they reside in the Halls of the Ancestors. This spiritual home was carved by Grungni, and he settled it with the other Ancestor Gods after his death. All dwarf souls end up in the Halls of the Ancestors, but where they dwell within those halls depends upon how a dwarf lived his life. See 'The Pantheon of the Ancestor Gods' for more details of Grungni and his kin.

The greatest dwarfs - kings and mighty warriors, learned runelords and vaunted smiths - sit close to the head of the great feasting tables, near to the Ancestor Gods. Dwarfs of lesser honour and deeds sit correspondingly further down the table, or at one of the side tables reserved for their clan, hold or guild. Those dwarfs who have not atoned in life for some shame or misdeed must act as servants in the Halls of the Ancestors, bringing beer and food to those who banquet at the tables. Only when their debt is cancelled are they allowed to take their own seats.

Outside the feasting hall is a great chamber where the souls of slayers end up. Here, the greatest slayers hold forth with their tales of fighting and war, and an endless tide of goblins streams in to be hacked down. Should a fighter fall, he will reappear in the feasting hall, where he can have a sup of ale and a quick bite to eat before rejoining the endless fighting. Though this may seem a curse to lesser races, to the dwarfs it is great entertainment to be allowed into this eternal battle.

Dwarfs tend their dead with great care, as they believe that any damage to a corpse will be mirrored by the soul in the afterlife. For some, these battle scars and war wounds are badges of great pride. For others, these disfigurements drive their spirits into the dark dungeons



beneath the halls, into lightless caverns untouched by dwarfen hands. Here they wander for eternity, forever seeking to be whole again.

The dwarfs do not seek favours from their Ancestor Gods, but instead honour them and pay homage to their deeds. Perhaps only Sigmar is as close to His people as the Ancestor Gods are to theirs, for like the Ancestor Gods he once walked amongst us and so knows our hearts and minds. An ancestor may look kindly upon the deeds of his descendants, and will put in a good word for them with Gazul to get them good seats at the tables. If proper respect has been paid to an ancestor's memory, hoard and tomb, this is much more likely! If not, the dwarf must stand in the judgement of the Ancestor Gods when he arrives. First a dwarf is judged by his wealth. Secondly, he is judged by his deeds in battle. Third and lastly, he is judged by his deeds in peace and the achievements in his life. His grudges are weighed against his honourable conduct and he is given a suitable seat at the benches.

He awaits this before the great gate in Gazul's Chamber and the entrance to the Halls, and some dwarf souls remain in this waiting room forever if their bodies are not properly interred into the earth. If it is impossible to recover a dwarf's remains, or bury them properly at the time of death, the dwarfs perform a very secretive ceremony to imbue a personal token of the deceased with his soul. This object effectively becomes his physical form and he can be buried by proxy at a more convenient time.

## Ancestor Badges

Dwarfs make a great many decorative pieces, out of gold, silver, bronze and gems. Of these, perhaps the most important are the ancestor badges, carried upon standards, carved into shields, fashioned into helmet designs or worn as brooches and necklaces.

The ancestor badges each depict one of the dwarfs' antecedents. The most common are those of Grungni, Grimgnir and Valaya, as well as some of the minor Ancestor Gods. However, each hold and clan also has its own ancestor badges to commemorate the lives and deeds of famous and lauded kings, thanes, engineers and other dwarfs of the past. As a bearding grows up he will learn the identification of the various ancestor badges used by his clan, and as he comes of age he will choose those he feels best represent his skills and values. Thus, a learned eye can tell much about a dwarf and his attitudes from the ancestor badges he wears.





## Chapter Five

# The Rat-kin Grudge



## The Fall of Karak Eight Peaks

One of the longest and most bitterly felt grudges of the dwarf empire is that of the destruction of Karak Eight Peaks. So heinous was this act that several enemies of the dwarfs are implicated in the great hold's fall. The grudge you see transcribed below details the actions of the first of these enemies, what the dwarfs term 'thaggoraki', a strange race of rat-like beasts.

### Dwarfs and the 'Rat-kin'

Rumours persist even within the Empire of rats the size of men that walk on two legs (though I have yet to witness such a creature, personally). The dwarf legends and books of grudges make mention of rat-kin or thaggoraki, though I doubt such things are related to the so-called skaven that allegedly plague the Empire in secret.

My research has revealed to me that the history between the dwarfs and the rat-kin is long indeed. Several entries in the Karak Eight Peaks Book of Grudges speak of protracted tunnel battles against these creatures, of the poisoning of wells, and of the 'dark technologies' that they possessed. Further entries are evident in extracts from the Karak Azul Book of Grudges in the discovery of the dragon, Mordrak, and from the reports reaching Karak Azul of the fall of Karak Varn and the rat-like things that emerged from the depths to claim it. Most infamous is the period when the Black Plague swept the Old World and the thaggoraki emerged from their burrows to attack the dwarf realms en masse. Entire chapters in the books of grudges of many holds are devoted to it.

Save for these testimonies, little is known to this scholar about the existence of such creatures and the veracity of claims that something akin to them walk beneath the very streets of the Empire itself! It would appear that the rat-kin have a labyrinthine tunnel network that spans the Old World,

intersecting the dwarfen Undgrin road at several points, even completely subsuming it at others. What is apparent though is the growing canker of the dwarfs towards this race of intelligent rat mutants.











## Rat-kin Warrens are Discovered in the Fifth Deep

On this day miners of the Grimstone clan, excavating a lucrative seam of gold, break through into a vast warren of tunnels. Upon closer inspection, the tunnels are revealed to be of thaggoraki<sup>93</sup> manufacture, crude and foul of stench as is the rat-kin's mark. Prospector Henkil does report the tunnels are impossible to map and stretch for many miles.

A war party of rat-kin broke through into the undgrin and did slay Zorbin Firehelm and sixteen miners of his clan. Clan warriors are mustered but the thaggoraki flee into the warrens and pursuit is impossible. A grudge is hereby lodged against Henkil Grimstone, and the Grimstone clan, for failure to shore up the breach discovered by them in the undgrin. Fifty rat-tails each is demanded as recompense against the rat-kin for the deaths of Zorbin and his kin.

## Karag Zilfin Mines Destroyed

The attacks of the rat-kin grows daily in frequency. The vermin are emboldened by their increasing numbers. They appear oft without warning, striking from their tunnel warrens. Grungni's lament, as three mines at Karag Zilfin<sup>94</sup> fall.

At Varkund, clan dwarfs of the Copperback, Flint-hand and Bronzefist are slain, fifty in all, as a great poison cloud engulfs them, wrought by a band of rat-kin with strange contrivances strapped to their

flea-infested muzzles and clutching globes of greenish gas. Lodemaster Ankmar Bronzefist shoots one with his crossbow and quickly musters quarrellers to slay the others. In their wake come scores of rat-kin, led by a bigger, black-furred warrior wielding a broad-bladed halberd and clad in thick armour. The mine is overrun. Sappers collapse the tunnels at the behest of Lodemaster Ankmar, the vermin kept at bay by quarrellers, and the mine is abandoned to the hated foe. *Teeth of Vålaya!*

At Runkarn the very mine workings themselves are attacked. Wooden supports are rendered to ash by a fire-throwing engine of the rat-kin, as are numerous dwarfs of the Ironback clan, and the mine itself collapses, burying all but a scant few survivors. Those that do escape to tell of these deeds most foul die quickly afterwards. *By Grungni's oath, such crude machineries are an affront to any dwarf!*

At Undkar black-garbed skaven do fall upon the prospectors there with poison blade. The cowards attack from the shadows and slay a great many daw before any retaliation can be meted out. With typical vermin courage, the rat-kin flee as soon as they are met by stern dwarf resistance but not before poisoning a great many wells. Immediately after the attack, the underground river beneath Undkar is inspected, the prospectors discovering shards of green-black glowing rock – the pure stuff of Chaos! In short order, blasting charges<sup>95</sup> are set for a mile long stretch beneath Undkar and both mine and river are buried beneath rock. A thousand rat-tails for this deed!

93. The literal translation is 'Assassin' or 'Footpad', but it also appears to refer to the rat creatures. See 'Dwarfs and the Rat-kin'.

94. Meaning 'Windswept Mountain'.

95. See 'Miners'. Note that some records I have read suggest that blackpowder was not discovered by the dwarfs until around a hundred years later. These 'charges' were most likely alcohol-based and designed to remove 'key stones' placed through the hold to collapse specific tunnels and gateways in the event of invasion.





This day does Rikti Ironback, sole survivor of the Ironback clan, take the slayer vow. After consuming a great many firkins of *Duric's Best*, the dawī slept through his shift at the Runkarn mine in the clan hold and thus avoided the fate of his kinsmen. He wanders into the long dark of the underways and is never seen again.

## The Citadel of Eight Peaks is Lost

With the eyes of the hold upon the vermin beneath, the grobi horde of the mountains grows unchecked. The horn at the East Gate<sup>96</sup> is sounded across the peaks as the surface citadel of the hold is attacked by a vast greenskin horde. Over a hundred grobi perish as the first attack is repulsed, but not without the deaths of twenty-one clan warriors. King Lunn hereby declares a grudge against the greenskin tribes of the Snarling Sun and the Howling Moon for this latest wrong.

The royal hammerers of the king reinforce the citadel but it is for nought as the garrison is forced to give up the outer wall to the greenskins. Over a hundred dawī fall in this latest attack alone. Their names are scribed in the book of remembering.

Attacks from the rat-kin below continue unabated and no further troops can be spared to bolster the citadel. Many of the outer buildings of the city are abandoned: ale stores, drinking halls, brewhouses and clan halls that have stood for ages are ruined, the art of their former creators lost forever. *Dreng tromm!*

The grobi employ crude war machines and gather a great band of trolls to launch rocks at the citadel keep. Though their aim is poor, such is the amount of missiles levelled that great destruction is wrought, including the tower-mounted bolt throwers and grudge throwers<sup>97</sup>. Thane Halkenhaf Stonebeard, Citadel Gate Keeper<sup>98</sup> is slain, eaten by a troll, and the inner curtain almost falls. King Lunn hereby declares a grudge against the creature and all its foul kind<sup>99</sup>.

The grobi assaults against the inner curtain wall are unrelenting and the tunnels of the upper deeps are also attacked. With a heavy heart, King Lunn declares all efforts to hold the great wall be abandoned. All remaining defenders are brought back into the citadel keep as a full retreat is ordered. King Lunn redoubles the defenders below at the Gate of Jewels. Reports reach the king's chambers that the rat-kin attacks intensify. All routes to the lower deeps of the hold are sealed.

96. The East Gate is one of the main approaches into Karak Eight Peaks and can be reached through Death Pass. It is still guarded to this day by a stout watchtower, recently reinforced by King Belegar and his kin. The gate itself is vast and impressive as is all dwarfen architecture, though it too has recently been repaired and refortified with additional towers and the inclusion of static war engines.

97. The citadel of Eight Peaks was well protected, heavily garrisoned and bore several war machine emplacements at key points around it. These defensive measures were to prove in vain, however, as the goblins and skaven attacked through tunnels. See 'The Demise of Eight Peaks'.

98. See 'Hammerers' for more details on gate keepers. In this instance, as the citadel of Eight Peaks was above ground, the gate keeper had the dual responsibility of ward of the king's chambers and the citadel gate.

99. See 'Trolls'.





## Hammerers

It is a great honour to be inducted into the warrior brotherhood of the hammerers, who perhaps most closely resemble our own greatsworders in their capacity as bodyguards. The hammerers are the chief guardians of the king and therefore trusted above all others. As befits warriors of the royal clan, hammerers enjoy a lofty status in dwarf society, the equal of any artisans or craftsmen.

To become a hammerer, a warrior of the clans must demonstrate fierce courage and determination in battle. The role of hammerer is bestowed only by royal appointment in a long and prestigious ceremony – which I could perhaps liken to bestowing a knighthood – that culminates in the gifting of a great hammer. This weapon seals the oath taken by the hammerer and is the symbol of the sacred duty he has undertaken.

Even by the standards of dwarfs, hammerers are stubborn, certainly beyond the grasp of my understanding. Should they be protecting a dwarf of royal descent, perhaps even the king himself, then they are even more intractable. From my research, I have also gleaned that hammerers even stand watch over the king's chambers and at all hours, never speaking, and forbidding entry to all unless ordered otherwise.

Chief amongst all the hammerers is the gate keeper. It is he who carries the key to the king's chambers around his neck – the only other dwarf of the hold besides the king himself that has such a key – so that none may enter there without his knowledge.

Some tomes purport that the appointment of hammerers as the king's royal bodyguard and protectors stretches back to the reign of King Morgrim Blackbeard in -1245 (IC). If such accounts are to be believed, it was Kadrin Redmane who was the very first hammerer. An obscure reference in the Mount Gunbad Book of Grudges relates a visit made by King Morgrim Blackbeard to the gold mines in an effort to bolster the morale of the embattled miners who had endured many punitive goblin raids.

Ironically, as the king was touring the forges, a horde of night goblins broke through the walls of the mine in their hundreds. The king's bodyguard, then warriors of the royal clan, were overwhelmed such was the ferocity and suddenness of the attack. It was Kadrin, then a master craftsman, sweating over the anvil of the forges, who reacted first to his king's plight. Taking up his forge hammer he went to the aid of his liege, the other smiths following his example. Together they fought their way free of the mines and escaped with their lives. For this valorous deed, the king bestowed a rune hammer upon Kadrin Redmane, and it is my belief that from this event the gifting of the great hammer to all inducted hammerers was first derived. Kadrin's tale does not end there, but suffice it to say that if it is true, a great tradition of the dwarfs was established that day and hammerers have been the protectors of the kings ever since.





Battle at the Citadel





## Varkund Avenged

Running battles with the rat-kin are now becoming an every day occurrence. On this day, a large nest north of Varkund is discovered by an ironbreaker patrol. Master Engineer Finbold Finkson orders charges set by sappers at every exit. It is slow work but achieved without notice of the rat-kin. In the ensuing explosion, several birthing chambers and a great many burrows are destroyed as the nest cavern is collapsed. Varkund is denied to the vermin and small measure of vengeance is wrought, so decrees King Lunn!

## Eight Peaks is Torn Asunder

Numerous earthquakes ravage Vala-Azrilungol<sup>100</sup>. *Wrath of Grungni!* Deep chasms open up in the earth and the vaulted halls of Eight Peaks come crashing down throughout the hold. Karag Zilfin is completely overrun as thaggoraki and grobi inundate the tunnels in uncountable numbers, great clefts rent into the walls of the hold allowing them passage. The ironbreaker patrols are insufficient to keep them at bay

and a desperate rearguard is ordered by the king. Dawi numbers are thinned by the cataclysm and Zilfin falls.

Karag Yar<sup>101</sup> is lost this day. Reports are scant as to the nature of its demise. What few survivors emerge from the peak speak of an 'ancient evil' that has awoke from beneath the mountain. King Lunn orders all routes into the karag magically rhun-sealed.

Further quakes are visited upon the hold and Karag Mhonar<sup>102</sup> bears the brunt. In the lower deeps, great rivers of lava consume entire mines as well as numerous workshops and forges. Word has reached the hold from Karak Drazh and Karak Azul that both Karag Dron and Karag Haraz<sup>103</sup> have erupted. Lava pits and chasms of fire make much of the peak impassable and hordes of skaven and grobi infest it. King Lunn orders the peak abandoned until the rat-kin and greenskins can be purged, and the extent of the damage wrought determined. Furthermore, a grudge against the rat-kin and the grobi is hereby entered into the kron for this latest sacrilege.

Karagri<sup>104</sup>, Karag Lhune<sup>105</sup>, Karag Rhyn<sup>106</sup> and Karag Nar<sup>107</sup> fall. *Dreng Tromm!* Much of the lower deeps of Karagril is swept away by flood, its upper

<sup>100</sup> Literally meaning 'Queen of the Silver Depths'.

<sup>101</sup> Meaning 'Sunset Mountain'.

<sup>102</sup> Meaning 'Shadow Mountain'.

<sup>103</sup> Meaning 'Thunder Mountain' and 'Fire Mountain', respectively. Dwarfs have long learned to understand the dangers of volcanoes and how to yoke their power for benefit. It is reputed in the studies of some of my contemporaries (so take this information with a pinch of salt) that some engineers' guilds have managed to tap into the energy produced by a volcano, creating an elaborate system of fans and copper pipes to funnel it into the hold, thus heating it. Furthermore, it is noted that dwarfs like nothing better than to spit-roast over the molten rock produced by a volcano, maintaining there is no better way to cook meat.

<sup>104</sup> Meaning 'Silverhorn'. Note that all the peaks up to Silverhorn guard the eastern approach to the city, whilst the remaining four peaks guard the west.

<sup>105</sup> Meaning 'Crescent Mountain'.

<sup>106</sup> Meaning 'Mount Redstone'.

<sup>107</sup> Meaning 'Sunrise Mountain'.



deeps are beset by urk. A great mass of trolls assaults Karag Lhune through one of the many giant fissures wrought by the earthquakes devastating the hold. The rat-kin attack from below, tainting wells and burning feast halls. The clan warriors of the hold fight in the tunnels and vaults of the peak but to no avail. At Karag Rhyn there are reports of a fearsome troll terrorising the

deeps, goaded by beastmasters of the rat-kin. Rumours reach Kvinn-Wyr<sup>108</sup> of 'a beast, chunks of glowing rock hammered into its flesh, larger and more terrible than any troll of old,' so ancient and deadly that no dawī can stand against it. It is the last message from Karag Rhyn. Nar is overrun by thaggoraki, their wizard-weapons burning and slaying as dawī fights grobi and rat-kin on two

## Trolls

Loathsome, dim-witted creatures, trolls have ever been a thorn in the side of the dwarfs. Though they are mindless, picking off small bands of travellers that they happen upon or hapless adventurers, when gathered together in a mass they can present a very real threat to any king or lord. Records from the Karaz-a-Karak Book of Grudges describe an incident during the period known as the Goblin Wars when a ravaging band of trolls and ogres advanced on

Everpeak. The settlements of Valhorn and Budrikhorn, south of Karaz-a-Karak, had been destroyed several years earlier by rampaging trolls. Eventually, Logazor Brightaxe destroyed the horde and the trolls were burned before any serious damage was done – the efforts made in containing and driving these beasts out was referred to as the Troll Wars.

More so than any other race, the dwarfs have found ways to utilise the flesh, bone and viscera of trolls. Troll-skin boots and coarse troll-hide cloaks and coats, called 'ragarin' in the Khazalid are common; fat acid, kept in a gromril vial, is used to etch weapons and plaques; troll brew, reputed to have regenerative qualities, is popular amongst many clans and drunk from 'nogarung' or troll-skull tankards; kuri, made from troll innards, is the staple diet of many dwarfs and the art of cooking it called 'kulgur' in the dwarf tongue (though I can only imagine what such a meal tastes like).



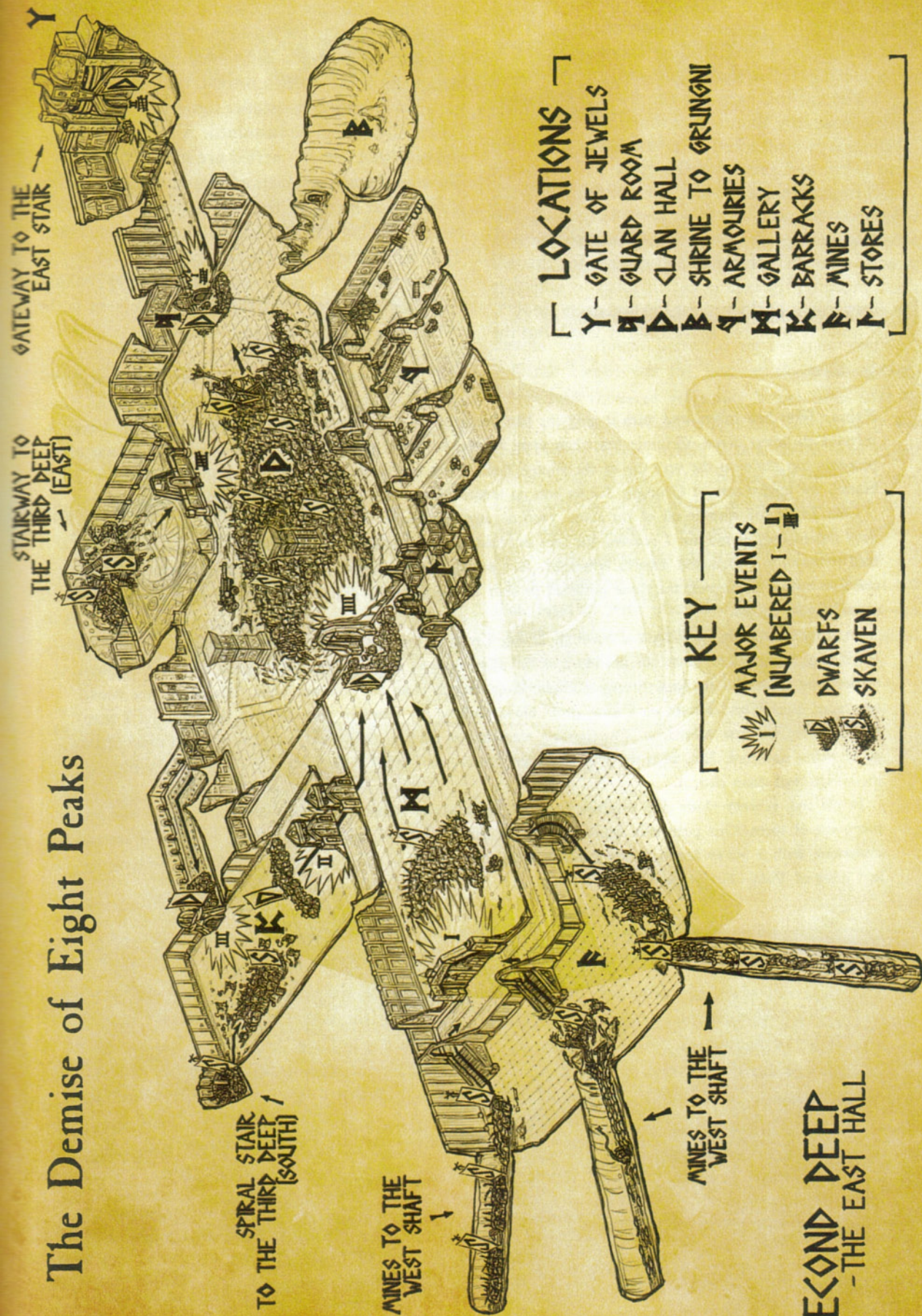
## The Demise of Eight Peaks

- I Rat-kin break through into the gallery from the mines.
- II Defenders in the barracks are forced back into the gallery.
- III Reinforcements surge into the barracks, but to no avail.
- III Combined attacks from the mines and the spiral stair force a retreat into the clan hall.
- III Rat-kin launch a flank attack from the Third Deep stairway.
- I III Beleaguered dwarfs quit the clan hall and are forced back to the Gate of Jewels.
- II III The battle for the Gate of Jewels is lost and the East Hall falls.

<sup>108</sup> The eighth and final peak, meaning 'White Lady'. It is here in this snow-capped mountain that the temple of Valaya resides.



# The Demise of Eight Peaks



- LOCATIONS**
- Y - GATE OF JEWELS
  - M - GUARD ROOM
  - D - CLAN HALL
  - B - SHRINE TO GRUNONI
  - A - ARMOURIES
  - M - GALLERY
  - K - BARRACKS
  - F - MINES
  - T - STORES

- KEY**
- MAJOR EVENTS (NUMBERED I-III)
  - DWARFS
  - SKAVEN

**SECOND DEEP**  
-THE EAST HALL



fronts. Poison gas fills the Undgrin, the stout armour of the weaponshops of Eight Peaks is no protection against it! *Thagi!* No quarter is given lightly but the defenders are overwhelmed. They Will Be Remembered. King Lunn's lament is recorded here as are grudges against the entire grobi and rat-kin race for the loss of the seven peaks. Now only Kvinn-Wyr remains<sup>109</sup>.

Kvinn-Wyr is attacked by a vast horde of ratmen from below and greenskins continue to assault the citadel from above, with still more attacking through unguarded tunnels. The lower deeps fall quickly, the forges and mines destroyed with little resistance. A grudge against both grobi and rat-kin for this fell deed! Steadily, the hold is lost chamber by chamber but every foot is paid for in rat-kin and grobi blood<sup>110</sup>. A last stand is mustered at the Gate of Jewels but the

rat-kin are many. Their war engines wreak a terrible havoc, their ranks buoyed by mutated rat beasts and other monstrosities. The Gate of Jewels falls and the way is laid open to the East Stair of Eight Peaks and the heart of the hold. With deep shame and regret does King Lunn order a retreat, realising that with such few numbers resistance against the grobi and the rat-kin cannot be sustained. All the treasures of the hold that can be carried are gathered together. Yet several runic artefacts are not accounted for. The shrines and tombs of the ancestors are sealed with rhun in the hope the enemy will not be able to enter. The route into the deeps is blocked.

King Lunn gathers the remnants of Eight Peaks in the King's Hall of the citadel. What follows is the personal journal of the king himself.

Kvinn-Wyr has fallen, and with it goes the last hopes of the Eight Peaks. From below the rat-kin have infested the lower deeps. Grimmir take their eyes! Above, the grobi tribes gather. Their stench has become a palpable fug staining the very air of the King's Hall. I can barely stand to breathe another breath of it. I beseech the forgiveness of Grungni, for we can no longer endure in this place of dark echoes and lost glories.

This day I did muster all of the clans, even as our very walls were attacked by grobi. As I beheld the dour expressions of my kin I realised the debt in blood paid by the daw of Eight Peaks in fighting for their hold – scarcely a thousand dwarfs remained. But proud were they still, clutching az and grund, ready for one last battle. So armed, the clans gathered in skor and sakdon<sup>111</sup>. I did then declare the great gates of the upper citadel opened.

In surged the grobi, wailing and hooting. Dreng Cromm – that we should abandon the hold to such filth! Their foul ranks broke upon our shields and the advance was ordered. Steadily, though the press of grobi bodies was great, did the last throng of Eight Peaks march from her hallowed halls. We gained the citadel courtyard quickly and I wept as I slew, grobi blood bathing my beard in gore. Not for the grobi did I weep, but for those we leave behind us. The fighting was fiercest beyond the curtain wall, for here had most of the grobi tribes gathered. But with the way to Eight Peaks open, many lost the will to fight and the ruins of the citadel was soon cleared.

In the end, seventy-four clan brothers lay dead, their names etched in my own blood – a grudge debt for every one of them. Our path was southward to the hearth-hold of noble Kazgar, King of Azul; a journey undertook with a heavy heart. Eight Peaks has fallen, the jewel of the Karak Ankor is lost. Are these the last days of Vala-Azrilungol<sup>112</sup>?

After a thousand years of resistance, once Karak Eight Peaks fell the dwarfs lost three strongholds in fifty short years. Indeed, from my research, it seems that 'Vala-Azrilungol' was the key to the defeat of all the southern holds in -469, barring Karak Azul. First Karak Izil, known now as Karak Azgal or 'Dragon Crag', was despoiled by the dragon, Graug the Terrible (see my treatise on

Dwarfs and Dragons for further enlightenments), then came the destruction of Karak Drazh, known now as Black Crag. Of course Karak Drazh was eventually to become the lair of the orc warchief, Gorfang Rotgut. For further enlightenments as to Gorfang's deeds and the grudge borne against him by the King of Karak Azul, Kazador of the Donarkhun clan, see Chapter One.

109. Note the frequency and terseness of these grudge records, suggesting a very rapid decline and usurpation of the hold. It isn't clear from my readings which of the holds fell first but fall they did and hard. It is known that the White Lady, at the time the sole bastion of King Lunn, was the last to fall signalling the end of Karak Eight Peaks. See my attached map, 'The Demise of Eight Peaks'.

110. See my attached map, 'The Demise of Eight Peaks' on the previous page.

111. See 'Khazalid - The Language of the Dwarfs' and 'Klinkarhun'. Based upon my knowledge of the dwarf counting system, skor refers to groups of twenty, while sakdon literally translates as five ten, meaning fifty.

112. Eight Peaks fell at the end of the period known as the Goblin Wars. See my discourse on 'Dwarfs and Greenskins' for further details.



# The Greenskin Grudge

## Part Two

### he Impudence of Skarsnik

This grudge details the second of the dwarfs' enemies that they hold most to account over the destruction and subsequent defilement of Karak Eight Peaks. The name Skarsnik appears to live long in the memories of the dwarfs, a greenskin for whom they reserve particular ire.

### Dwarfs and Greenskins

Ancient is the hatred felt by the dwarfs towards the race of greenskins. It dates back many hundreds of years to the time of the Goblin Wars. During this period, after the Karak Ankor had suffered the ruination of earthquakes and floods, orcs and goblins emerged from the dark beneath the world, sacking

and claiming many of the lost holds. The dwarfs felt this bitterly and the war against the goblins lasted for over a thousand years, until even the dwarfs were forced to eventually admit several defeats. It is a cause of much enmity, one felt most keenly by the dwarfs who reserve particular ire for these creatures.

Karak Ungor was the first of the holds to fall, nearly four thousand years ago. It was taken over by night goblins and renamed Red Eye Mountain. It was followed by several others. Karak Drazh, now called Black Crag; Karak Varn; Karak Azgal, or Dragon Crag, all fell, as did Karak Eight Peaks for a time. My records suggest it was not just the race of greenskins that caused the destruction of many of the dwarf holds, but they were certainly instrumental and that, together with many deeds perpetrated since and etched in blood in books of grudges, has ensured that the hatred felt by the dwarfs towards orcs and goblins will be everlasting.





# The Clan Angrund Royal Book of Grudges of King Belegar Ironhammer, Lord of the Eight Peaks

## Battle at the Citadel

This day does King Belegar Ironhammer of the Angrund clan<sup>113</sup> reclaim the citadel of Vala-Azrilungol<sup>114</sup>.

King Belegar, with an army mustered from Karaza-Karak, takes the northern route to the hold. Foul grobi totems befoul the edge of the road, the skulls of brave dawi adventurers adorning them. Belegar hereby declares a grudge against the night goblin tribes for perpetrating such a deed and for the filth their years of occupation has clearly wrought.

A thousand woes, as the citadel is sighted but in a state of ruination, proud dawi craftsmanship tainted by crude grobi structures. *A heavy toll of blood for this despoliation!* Grobi, bedecked in tattered robe and hood, are seen amongst the rubble and a discordant horn sounds. Battle is joined at the citadel gate. Grobi wielding ball and chain, crazed beyond reason, inflict tremendous damage upon the Grim Brotherhood. In anger do King Belegar's quarrellers dispatch the filthy grobi with crossbow bolts.

More grobi cowardice as the throng is assailed by missiles flung by ramshackle machineries from the watch towers of the curtain wall and boulders launched down the narrow defile in which the citadel lies. Dawi deaths are many at this latest treachery. Their Names Will Be Remembered. *A curse upon the grobi and all their kind!*

Belegar does advance to the citadel walls, a great trail of greenskin dead in his wake. He and his loyal warriors do carve a red ruin in the grobi ranks, slaughtering every foul one as they gain the keep itself. After many long years of greenskin occupation, the citadel is at last cleared and the taint upon it vanquished utterly as no grobi are allowed to escape or live.

Hastily, does King Belegar order the citadel re-fortified and all but one of the tunnels sealed. Ironbreakers are sent into the first deeps and treasures thought lost are recovered. Let it be known on this day, in the name of King Lunn, a blow was struck against the greenskin usurpers of Vala-Azrilungol. All hail Belegar, lord of the Eight Peaks!

## The Way into the Lower Deeps is Shut

Of three patrols sent into the lower deeps this day, only one returns with word that grobi and rat-kin dwell there in abundance. King Belegar hereby lodges a grudge against the murderers of Badri Grimson, Krudd Ironspike, Gorim Jorgson, Finbul Stoneback, Skalli Trollbiter, Vragni Yorrison and Mundri Skalfinnson. Their names are forever etched in the kron.



113. See 'Karak Azul - A Clan Record'.

114. It took many years for the dwarfs to mount a successful expedition into Karak Eight Peaks. At its fall, and until Belegar's occupation, the hold was disputed by 'rat-kin' and greenskins, neither possessing the strength to drive the other out. A stalemate was reached and steadily more and more creatures took up residence in the deeps. Many adventurers from the other holds, and indeed the Empire, mounted expeditions to rescue the treasures still housed within but little is known of what, if anything, was recovered during this time.





Attacks against the surface city are growing daily and King Belegar hereby decrees that the tunnels to the Second Deep be sealed. Much of the First Deep is now in our possession, honour to Valaya, but further raids into the lower tombs are now increasingly rare.

## Belegar allows Passage into the Deeps by Outsiders

On this day does King Belegar allow a band of men from the Empire, honouring the debt of ages past, to venture beyond the Barak Khatûl<sup>115</sup> in search of the lost fortunes of Eight Peaks. A toll of one-tenth of any treasure recovered is set as the promise price and agreed by oath. None of the adventurers return and the Barak Khatûl is shut.

On this day does Faragrim of Eight Peaks<sup>116</sup> enter the deeps to quest for the lost treasures of the hold.

Faragrim returns from the lower deeps, having ventured farther than any before him, with word of an ancient treasure and brooding evil at large in the dark beneath the world. Upon hearing of his deeds many others come to Eight Peaks, all seeking the gold and jewels of King Lunn. Many are never seen again.



Let it be known that on this day Gotrek, son of Gurni, with several men of the Empire in tow, is granted permission by King Belegar to venture beyond the Barak Khatûl and into the lower deeps of the Eight Peaks.

Gotrek, son of Gurni does return from the depths of Eight Peaks having slain a mighty troll, with one other survivor. The manling, hereby referred to as Felix Jaegar, recovers a magical blade of his ancestors. King Belegar hereby gives Felix Jaegar permission to take the sword without taxation in recognition of Gotrek, son of Gurni's, deeds and of old oaths sworn by High King Kurgan Ironbeard<sup>117</sup>.

## The Citadel is Besieged

Urk and grobi swell about the city walls of Eight Peaks in vast numbers. At the behest of Queen Kemma<sup>118</sup> does King Belegar order a missive sent immediately to Karaz-a-Karak to petition for aid<sup>119</sup>. He sends a small force of rangers, may Grungni guide and protect them, through a hidden tunnel that leads out onto the western slopes where the greenskin hordes are at their thinnest.

<sup>115</sup> Literally meaning 'Gate to Lurking Dangers' this door is the only route from what is known as the Explorer's Hall, or audience chamber, to the unclaimed areas of Eight Peaks. I have read accounts of the door being made of steel, barred and reinforced with protective rune wards.

<sup>116</sup> Some sources I have read suggest that Faragrim acted as Belegar's guide in finding a route through to the citadel and surface city of Eight Peaks, and that his knowledge of the tunnels and vaults of the deeps resulted in the recovery of several long lost treasures. I issue a warning however... such reports should be treated with caution, related second-hand from their original source: the poet and adventurer, Felix Jaegar – a wanted outlaw in Altdorf.

<sup>117</sup> Referring to the rescue of the high king by our lord Sigmar in ages past and the forging of strong relations between men of the Empire and Dwarfs. It is possible to suppose that as the blade was of Imperial origin, King Belegar was willing to part with it.

<sup>118</sup> See 'Dwarf Womenfolk'.

<sup>119</sup> I have transcribed Belegar's missive to Duregar on the following page.



To his most venerable Lord Duregar.

I trust this message meets you strong in mind and wide in girth.

'Tis a welcome change that I may send you news of our fortune, yet rejoice not early as though the message I send is of great tidings, the time of celebration has yet to pass. I will remind you of our last communication though I know I need not do so. My clan had spent many years gathering strength in preparation to march south. It was with high spirits that we set forth on the ancient pass. Once again the kinsfolk of Lunn were eager to feel the soil of our homeland beneath our boots. Far too many centuries had passed since Dwarf eyes have fallen upon Vala—Azrilungol.

The journey was swift and neither grobi nor gronti barred our way. We entered the basin where once the city stood proud and tall, via the pass that winds its way around Kvinn—Wyr. The sight of the fortifications, though they lay in ruinous form, stirred each warrior's heart with a passion that even I have never felt before.

A murmur grew up from the army and could not be quelled.

I wish I could claim that our route down the northern approach to the Kazad was met with the same joy, but the vile grobi totems of poor hapless adventurers brought down our spirits. Their skulls now hailed our arrival and brought swift reminder of the dangers we faced.

As we passed through the ruins of the north gate, a tide of black-robed night goblins poured from the walls and amassed before us. Forming into solid shieldwalls, my warriors prepared for the onslaught. Crazy fanatics fuelled by toxic fungi took a heavy toll of many of my kinsfolk, as did the vicious cave squigs whose huge teeth tore through even our strongest armour. Huge boulders crashed down upon our ranks and great spears were launched into our midst, yet with stout courage did the proud army hold fast.

We met the charge of the vile grobi whose numbers tripled that of our small band. Wave after wave of gibbering greenskins sallied from the ruins, but in our hearts we knew vengeance was at hand. With the names of our fallen forefathers on our lips each Dwarf amongst our clan took revenge. By evening there was not one greenskin who could draw breath remaining within the city walls.

As I write this message, my warriors and engineers are hastily constructing a barricade around the inner wall. Once word has spread, you can be sure as gold shines and elves lie that many more grobi will gather to try to retake what is not theirs to possess. Already my sentries have spied movement amongst the debris that litters what was once the outer walls.

If we are to stand any chance of holding our position within the city then we will need reinforcements. The time to reclaim the southern Holds is at hand but lies not within my power alone to do so.

My kin already owe you more than we can ever repay for your generous hospitality in letting us take refuge in Karaz—a—Karak. If you could send any help to aid us in this time of need then I can but dream that one day the proud city of Karak Eight Peaks will repay your friendship.

Honourably yours,  
Belegar





*Duregar's journey from Everpeak to Karak Eight Peaks*

## The Clan Akrund Book of Grudges, of Duregar Hammerfist, Lord of Karaz-A-Karak

### Battle of the Jaws

Lord Duregar Hammerfist and a throng of his kin are attacked this day at the western entrance to Varag Kadrin<sup>120</sup>. The king is travelling south from Karaz-a-Karak, word reaching him that his clan brother King Belegar is besieged at Eight Peaks.

Grobi riding wolves do engage the rear lines of the dwarf column and some stragglers are slain. Their names will be writ in the book of remembering. Quickly does Lord Duregar marshal his forces as a vast army of urk emerge from tunnels in the steep-sided valley. Runesmith Hurgar the Black does smite two skor greenskins with his hammer. A band of slayers led by Dorin Badaxe destroys a large group of urk and stone trolls. Wolfriders harrying

the flanks of the throng are brought down by quarrellers. A charge of some thirty clan warriors, led by Lord Duregar himself, breaks the back of the grobi horde who are sent fleeing into the rocky hills of the valley. The rest of the way eastward along the pass is made without further incident.

### Duregar reaches the East Gate

Leaving Varag Kadrin behind and travelling southwards, Lord Duregar does reach the East Gate of Karak Eight Peaks at the end of Uzkul Kadrin<sup>121</sup> and is ambushed<sup>122</sup>. Showing unnatural cunning, the grobi and urk encircle the lord. What follows is a detailed account of the battle, as transcribed from Lord Duregar's personal journal.

<sup>120</sup> Translated as Mad Dog Pass. This route goes through the Worlds Edge Mountains to the north of the Black Mountains and east of Averland.

<sup>121</sup> Translates as Death Pass, a route along the Old Dwarf Road, the likeliest means by which Duregar and his kin reached the East Gate.

<sup>122</sup> See attached map describing Duregar's route to the East Gate.



First sight of the grobi was upon the East Gate watch tower. The foul creatures had rebuilt it with rudimentary craft and stationed a war engine of equally coarse design upon it. Before the East Gate itself the cave grobi massed in great number, supported by urk.

The throng was making ready to face this foe when a debased war cry echoed across the valley. From the north and south, through the old mine workings of the peak and the ravaged tombs of my ancestors — curse the greenskin scum for their sacrilege — a second and third horde, at first concealed by rocks, poured into the narrow defile; cave grobi driving wretched fanged creatures and firing black-shafted arrows into our ranks. Borri, son of Thaggi was the first to fall, yet before the death rasp had escaped his lips the throng had been surrounded as a fourth army from the east blocked off our only line of retreat. It mattered not — no dwarf will give ground to grobi swine, so swears Duregar Hammerfist! The east-facing greenskins swiftly closed the trap; urk riding boars and lumbering stone trolls advancing at speed.

From the watch tower the grobi set their machinery to work, sending huge chunks of stone into our ranks. Many perished in this first onslaught. From the west, north and south the cave grobi charged, unleashing crazed ball and chain wielding maniacs into our ranks. Such demented war tactics! These wretched creatures took a toll on both grobi and dawī before they were brought down by bolt and shot.

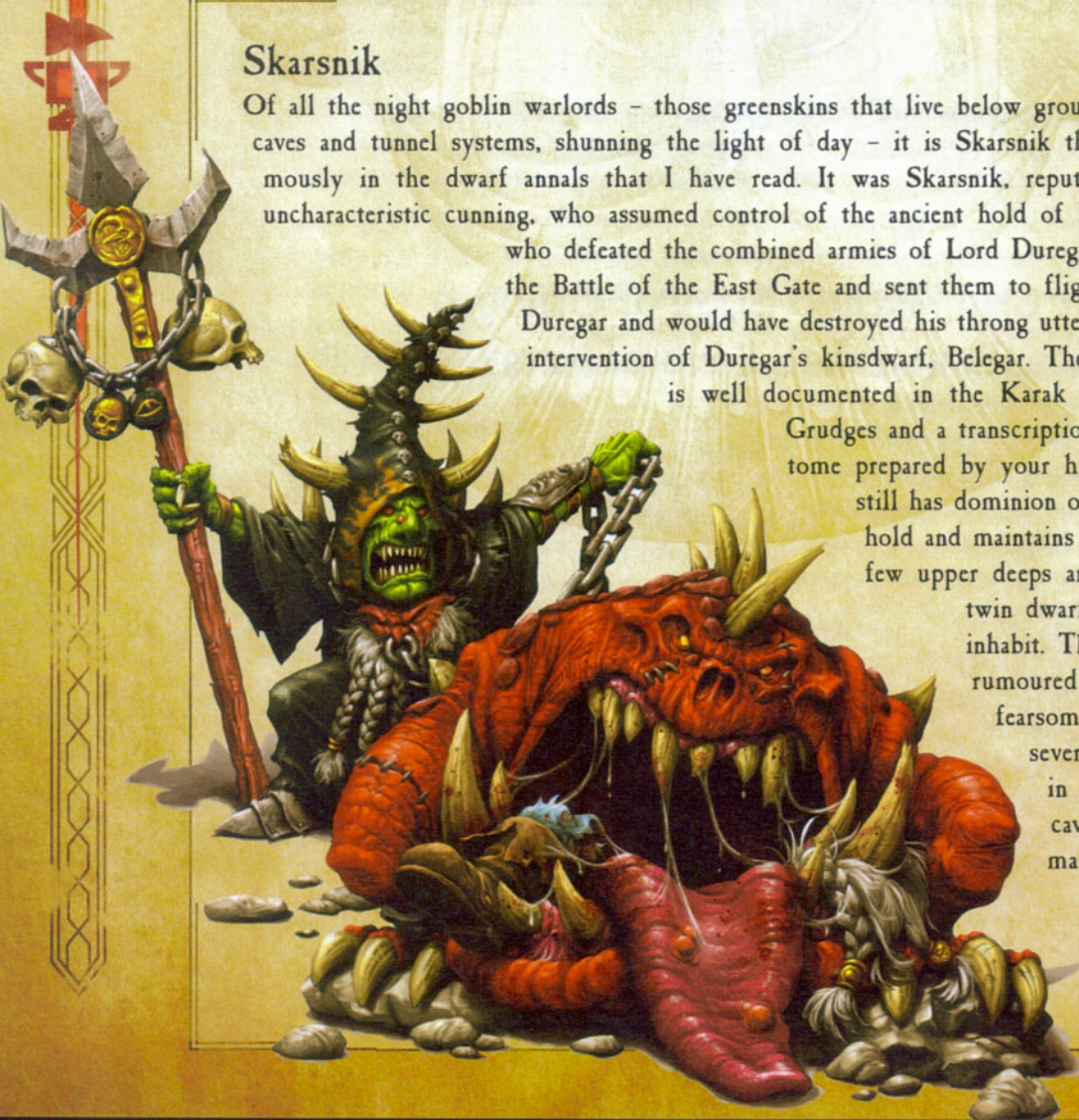
All around us the battle raged, one dawī for every four grobi. The throng was relentless and green-skin corpses littered the ground but for every one slain, another three would rush to take its place. Such numbers! Black arrows filled the air, striking down greenskin and clan warriors alike. In this first assault the throng had lost half its strength or more, so I led our forces to a great burial mound of the ancestors. Here we would make our final stand. There was no respite as the grobi and urk surrounded us and I thought the battle was to go ill for us when the East Gate exploded.

Praise Grungni, for out of the smoke emerged my clan brother, King Belegar and the throng of Vala—Azrilungol!

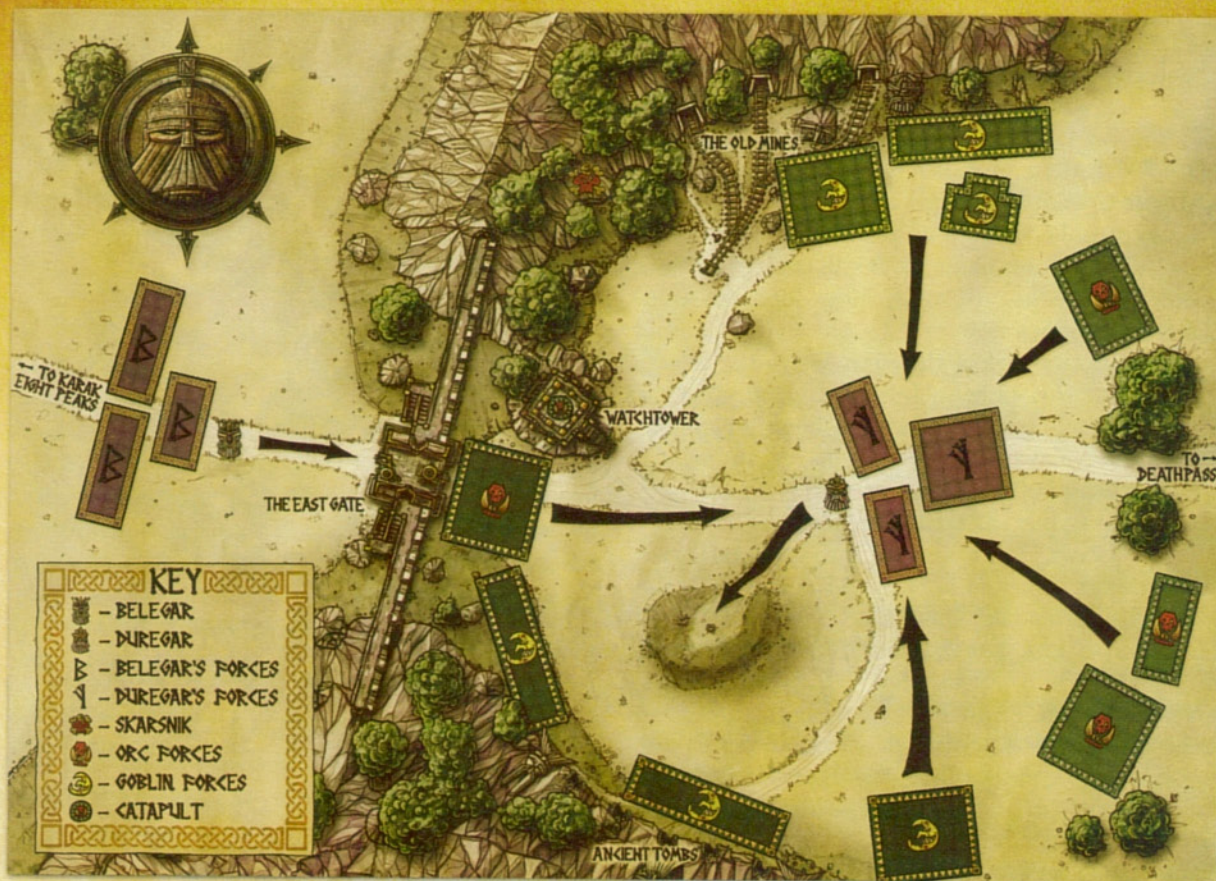
## Skarsnik

Of all the night goblin warlords — those greenskins that live below ground and in subterranean caves and tunnel systems, shunning the light of day — it is Skarsnik that endures most infamously in the dwarf annals that I have read. It was Skarsnik, reputed to be a goblin of uncharacteristic cunning, who assumed control of the ancient hold of Karak Eight Peaks, he who defeated the combined armies of Lord Duregar and King Belegar at the Battle of the East Gate and sent them to flight. Skarsnik outwitted Duregar and would have destroyed his throng utterly, were it not for the intervention of Duregar's kinsdwarf, Belegar. The account of the battle is well documented in the Karak Eight Peaks Book of

Grudges and a transcription can be found in this tome prepared by your humble scribe. Skarsnik still has dominion over the majority of the hold and maintains a constant siege of the few upper deeps and the citadel that the twin dwarf lords of Eight Peaks inhabit. The night goblin is also rumoured to be protected by a fearsome bodyguard (there are several incomplete accounts in existence), a gigantic cave beast nurtured by its master and fattened on the corpses of dwarfs, and any goblins that stray too close.







East Gate battle map

## The Clan Angrund Royal Book of Grudges of King Belegar Ironhammer, Lord of the Eight Peaks

### The rescue of Duregar Hammerfist

On this day, a great victory was won by King Belegar of the Eight Peaks and Lord Duregar Hammerfist against the grobi swine of Skarsnik<sup>123</sup>. What follows is a record of the battle as writ by our noble king in his memoirs:

*From the high towers of the citadel did our warriors espy clan brother Duregar heading into the grobi's trap. Thagi! Had I the means to forewarn him, I would have. Instead, I mustered the darwi of the Eight Peaks and went stealthily to the East Gate. The cave grobi had placed a rearguard there, but it was swiftly and mercilessly vanquished before any warning could be given to the rest of their foul breed.*

*Dragging aside the stinking corpses of the enemy, engineers and sappers quickly set about rigging the great east gate with black powder. The grobi would feel the fury of Grungni at their backs soon enough!*

*Though the gate was thick and broad, and it did cause me much lamentation to destroy it, the sounds of battle could be heard. No longer could I bear it and, our forces making ready with old grudges upon our lips, I did order the powder lit.*

*A great explosion rocked the very peaks and into battle did the darwi of Eight Peaks sally forth once more. All around us the grobi were in disarray and I sung the songs of Valaya, Grinnir and Grungni as I slew. Across a sea of greenskin blood did Belegar and Duregar unite at last, and well met it was! Now formed into a mighty square of darwi steel<sup>124</sup>, we began the slow advance back through the East Gate and from there to the safety of the city. Arrows fell amongst my kin as the grobi regrouped, the coward-warlord Skarsnik, an ever-present thorn in my side, screeching his orders from a lofty vantage point atop the valley. A frenzied pack of cave beasts, round and red with gaping maws full of fangs, did assail us but were repelled by slayers. Many of the Cult of Grinnir fulfilled their oaths in that brutal clash. Some small measure of atonement for previous misdeeds, no doubt.*

*The fire of the ancestors in our hearts, none could slow us now, the thickness of our klad repelling the worst of the grobi arrows, and we headed west. Harried all the while, we reached the citadel and the safety of Eight Peaks at last<sup>125</sup>.*

<sup>123</sup> See 'Skarsnik'.

<sup>124</sup> I believe this to be the 'avil' formation as described in brief in 'Dwarf Battle Tactics'.

<sup>125</sup> See attached map describing the Battle of East Gate.

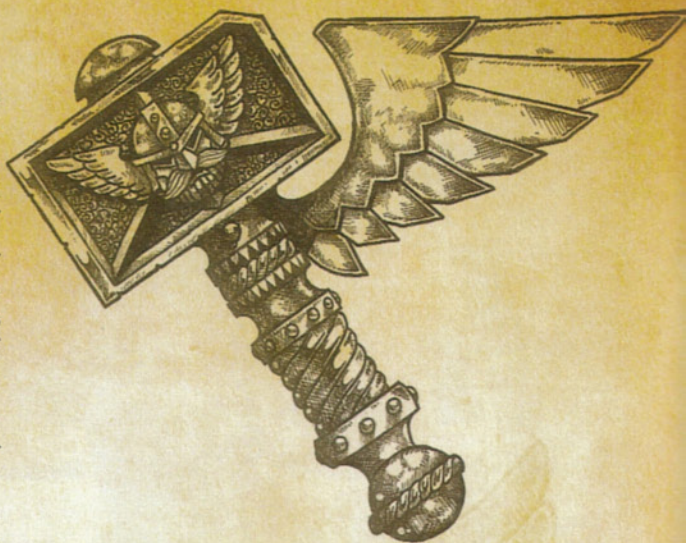


## Eight Peaks is reinforced

On this day is the muster of Eight Peaks bolstered with the return of Lord Duregar Hammerfist. *Praise to Grungni!* Though it is a moot celebration, for our numbers are few and the grobi warlord Skarsnik, curse his name, does still control much of the Eight Peaks. Belegar, liege-lord of Vala-Azrilungol, does now occupy the entire ground level of the city and of the First Deep, the King's Chambers, the Great Hall and a number of foundries and clan halls have all been reclaimed. Lament of Valaya, as the mines do remain sealed, the rat-kin and other, fouler, creatures an ever-present threat to our safety and freedom.

In the Great Hall a mighty throng is gathered, the Grimgar Miner's Chorus and the Baldrikksson Brewers in attendance, as *The Fall of the Southern Holds* does resonate about Eight Peaks once more<sup>126</sup>.

The forces of Eight Peaks are again bolstered today by clans, once of Eight Peaks in ages past, from Karak Azul, Karaz-a-Karak and the



umgdawi<sup>127</sup>. King Belegar does hereby strike out grudges against the Dourback, Craghand, Guttrik, Ironfinger and Flintheart clans. The return to Eight Peaks is deemed as fair recompense for the early transgressions of their ancestors in abandoning the hold<sup>128</sup>.

## The Underway is Reopened

At last the Undgrin road to our brothers in the south at Karak Azul is reopened after several successful ironbreaker expeditions to thin out the grobi and rat-kin nested there. A mighty gorog takes place in the Great Hall and it is a day of rare celebration in these bleak times. Alas, the way to the north, and Karak Drazh, is still not safe and remains sealed.

## Ambush at Death Pass

Three shipments of gold, kindly donated by the High King of Everpeak, fail to arrive this day and concerns grow as to what has become of the dawī escorting them. I, King Belegar, dare not risk an expedition of rangers into the pass for fear of them sharing the same fate<sup>129</sup>.

Grim times are these. Our allies lessen as our enemies become ever bolder. There are no more warriors and our gold is all but exhausted. No more settlers come to our halls. We are alone. Each day is a bitter struggle to survive. We must contest these halls, fight for them until we have given the last of our breath. We must prevail – for if not us then who? The light is growing ever darker though, I fear it will soon be eclipsed utterly...

For Skalf he was but short in size, in courage towered high,  
Unto the lair of Graug he stepped, no fear lest he should die.  
Fortune blessed him with her kiss, for thus the beast it slept,  
Over gold and rainbow stone, the youngest dwarf he crept.  
The bones of men of virtue high lay scattered where they fell,  
For honour had they met their death, did noble lives they sell.  
For many centuries had the dragon lain upon its cache,  
Little did the dread wyrm dream that it had met its match.  
In his hand the young dwarf bore an ancient runic blade,  
Upon the open neck of Graug, the deepest cut it made.  
In the cavern did it rain a shower of gem and gold  
As ancient beast formed dance of death, slain by a dwarf so bold.  
Dragonslayer and his kin did city lay their claim,  
In Karak Azgal to this day do Skalf clan dwarfs remain.  
To seek a fortune, risking death a small toll must you pay,  
But fare ye strong in courage then to Azgal make your way.

- Verse 24, taken from 'The Fall of the Southern Holds'

126. This solemn lament is sung upon the anniversary of the eve of the fall of Eight Peaks every year. See 'Dwarf Pastimes' for more details about dwarf choirs.

127. The name given to ex-patriot dwarfs living in the Empire. In order to reinforce the hold and bolster its survival prospects, Belegar welcomed all.

128. Many clans of Karak Eight Peaks, at the time of its fall, made their way to Karak Azul to seek solace there and as such the books of grudges of both holds bear much crossover as the fell deeds that befell each were subsumed together.

129. In an effort to supplement the hold's gold supplies, the High King Thorgrim Grudgebearer organised many such shipments but with varying success.



# Appendix

## Dwarf Battle Tactics

In battle, a dwarf army is intractable. We of the Empire have fought at their sides many times and are grateful of this tenacity. Each clan brother fights together, supporting each other; the dwarfs are the finest exponents of the irresistible shield wall in the Old World. In his *Incunabulum*, the scholar Old Weirde notes that it is a misconception that dwarfs are slow in battle; the contrary is true. Dwarfs march quickly and resolutely, without need for rest. They can shoulder great burdens and so make the extensive use of baggage trains and other cumbersome war paraphernalia unnecessary. This often means that dwarfs advance far quicker than their enemies suppose, able to adopt the most favourable battlefield positions such as natural strong points like hills or narrow ravines. They also make use of rangers and miners who are able to move ahead of the main throng and attack enemy weak points or engage in flanking manoeuvres. Once the foe is engaged, a dwarf throng will seek to withstand its initial assault and reply with a devastating counter-blow.

Military theorists of the Empire have identified several commonly used tactics adopted by dwarfs such as the Enduring Mountain, a defensive strong-point strategy and the Bear Trap, which is essentially a baiting manoeuvre. The Hammer is a rare, offensive tactic and the Anvil is a potent defensive formation, one that was adopted by King Belegar of Eight Peaks and Lord Duregar of Karaz-a-Karak at the Battle of the East Gate.

## Ages of the Dwarfs

The dwarfs are an ancient race, far older than men, and their time upon the Old World can be broken down into distinct ages (note that all dates given adhere to the Imperial Calendar used in honour of Emperor Karl Franz, praise his name). The following is translated from the runescrypt of the Karak Eight Peaks Book of Grudges.

**The Time of the Ancestor Gods** – Led by Grungni, Grimnir and Valaya, the slow colonisation of the Worlds Edge Mountains begins.

**The Coming of Chaos** – The end of the Time of the Ancestor Gods and the disappearance of Grimnir. The Chaos Gate is closed and the Old World is saved from certain destruction.

**The Golden Age** – Elves and dwarfs meet for the first time and establish trade to the mutual prosperity and benefit of both races. Many new holds are founded.

**The War of Vengeance** – The treachery of the elves signals an end to the Golden Age and the beginning of the War of Vengeance. The Phoenix King of the elves is slain and with that we are left to the Old World, but with our wealth and power much diminished.

**The Time of Woes** – Earthquakes ravage the land, destroying many holds and leaving them vulnerable to the predations of goblins and the creatures of Chaos. Many holds are lost, never to be reclaimed, and the lustre of the Everlasting Realm is dimmed further.

**The Goblin Wars** – The struggle for the Karaz Ankor is fought over a thousand years against the greenskins and a host of other foul creatures. Dragons, disturbed from their ancient slumber, sack many holds and the southern holds all fall bar one. The Everlasting Realm is left despoiled and in ruins.

**The Silver Age** – Contact is made with the race of men. In this age did the human prince, Sigmar, rescue High King Kurgan Ironbeard and a lasting alliance is formed. A vast orc horde is defeated at Black Fire Pass and with the creation of the Empire, an age of relative peace and prosperity is ushered.

**The Chaos Wars** – Men are warned of the dangers of Chaos and dwarfs fight side by side with the Empire once more during The Great War Against Chaos.

## Khazalid – Language of the Dwarfs

The ancient high language of the dwarfs is called Khazalid. I have spent much time poring over ancient scripts researching it and gleaned what I humbly describe as a rudimentary undersatanding of its form and rules. What is clear is that it is a deeply conservative language that has not changed noticeably in many thousands of years either in its spoken or written 'runic' form. The dwarfs, if the evidence garnered from those I have met is anything to go by, are very proud of their tongue, which they rarely speak in the company of other races and never teach to other creatures. This treatise, therefore, is a work of linguistic conjecture and nothing more. To most humans it is the 'secret tongue of the dwarfs', occasionally overheard, but never properly understood.

From my studies I have ascertained that the dwarf language includes very few words of obviously human or elvish origin. By contrast there are many loan words from Khazalid in the tongue of men. This is most obviously so in the case of words concerning the traditional dwarfish craftskills of masonry and smithying, skills which we



learned from the dwarfs many centuries past. These loans from Khazalid mean that some dwarf words sound very similar to equivalent human words, and this has enabled me to propose the theory given below.

Of course, some Khazalid words are all too familiar to the dwarfs' enemies – namely the fearsome battle-cries, oaths and curses of the dwarfs at war. Of these the most famous is the cry of 'Khazukan Kazakit-ha' or its common shortened form of, 'Khazuk! Khazuk! Khazuk!' which I have translated to mean 'Look out! The dwarfs are on the warpath'. It is also usual for dwarfs to call upon their ancestor gods during battle. I have heard it said that the guttural sound of dwarfs bellowing Grungni's name is enough to make an elf's knees knock and a goblin turn a sickly shade of yellow!

The sound of Khazalid is not much like human speech and very unlike the melodious sound of Elvish. Comparisons have been drawn to the rumble of thunder. All dwarfs have very deep, resonant voices and a tendency to speak more loudly than is strictly necessary. This can make dwarfs sound rowdy and irascible – which for the most part is a fair reflection of dwarfish temperament. Khazalid vowel sounds in particular are uncompromisingly precise and heavily accented. Consonants are often spat aggressively or gargled at the back of the throat as if attempting to dislodge a recalcitrant goblet of phlegm. A drinking hall full of loud, drunken dwarfs sounds like a frightening place even when fists aren't flying – which isn't often.

From what I can gather in my studies, the vocabulary of Khazalid ably reflects the unique preoccupations of the dwarf race. There are hundreds of words for different kinds of rock, for passages and tunnels, and most of all for precious metals. Indeed, there are hundreds of words for gold alone.

In their dealings with others, the dwarfs choose their words carefully. A dwarf will not venture an opinion on anything that he has not considered deeply, and once his mind is made up you can be sure his view will be as immovable as a mountain. Dwarfs don't change their opinions except in the face of overwhelming necessity – and not always then. Many would rather die stubbornly than admit to a mistake that costs them their life! For this reason dwarfs take oaths and promises very seriously indeed, and this extends to their business affairs, even those with other races. In all the dwarf language, the word *unbaraki* is the most condemning of all – it means 'oathbreaker'. I had the misfortune of mentioning said word in dwarf company and still have cause to regret it to this very day.

Given how seriously dwarfs treat words, I have found their sense of humour tends to be especially unnerving. A common jest takes the form whereby two or more dwarfs conspire to make another feel deeply uncomfortable by pretending to know something about his circumstances, state of health, or past life that in reality

they do not. This can go on for hours, days, or many years and is generally reckoned to be very funny indeed. More commonly a dwarf might make some provocative statement, wait for another to take offence, and then start a fight. Surprisingly these things tend to end in good humour, much back-slapping and mutual congratulations, with honour considered to have been satisfied all round.

## The Runic Script

Delving into what ancient lore I have been able to procure, most of which came from the Karak Eight Peaks Book of Grudges now in my possession, dwarf runes were invented for carving Khazalid onto stone, hence the letters are formed from straight lines which can be easily cut with a chisel. The script consists of a core alphabetic structure, which I believe can be used to express any words, and additional individual runes, each of which is a shorthand sign that represents a single word, idea or name. This means that many words can be written in two forms – though this is only commonly seen with the names of people and places. Magical runes always take this second individual form and, for this reason, all non-alphabetic runes are regarded as having special significance or power<sup>130</sup>.

From what I can gather, runes are usually carved from left to right, but can also be carved in alternate rows starting from left to right, the second row right to left, the third left to right and so on. Runes can also be carved vertically from top to bottom, this being a common form for monuments and important carvings. Written forms generally go left to right horizontally.

## Klinkarhun

The core alphabetic runes are called *klinkarhun*, which means 'chisel runes', and these are the most commonly used and easily recognised. Although the sound of Khazalid does not exactly match the sounds of human speech, the chart shown on the next page gives the closest approximations. The sounds should be pronounced with force and the 'r' and 'kh' sound in particular are made as if enthusiastically clearing the throat, whilst 'z' is always given extra emphasis as in 'buzz'.

In addition to alphabetical runes, the *Klinkarhun* also includes a numeric series as shown below. The dwarf words for numbers are different depending on what it is they are counting – which can be very confusing – but it all makes sense to the dwarfs and serves to baffle other races. Dwarfs also count many things in twelves or dozens multiplying up to a gross (twelve twelves or one hundred and forty four), and other things in twenties or scores, as well as counting things in tens in a more conventional manner. There are no words for thirty, forty or so forth, rather a dwarf will say 'six tens and five' and 'three score and seven' – or 'sizdonun sak' and 'dweskorun set'.

130. See 'Runes, Rune Magic and Runesmiths' for further details on the subject of magical dwarf runes.



## Klinkarhun

Y	A or I	Ƨ	Th
𐌶	Ak	𐌷	W or U
𐌺	Az	𐌸	Z or Zh
𐌸	B		
𐌹	D	I	1 Ong
𐌺	Dr or Tr	II	2 Tuk
𐌺	E	III	3 Dwe
𐌺	F or V	IIII	4 Fut
	G	𐌺𐌹	5 Sak
1	H	𐌺𐌹𐌹	6 Siz
𐌺	K or Kh	𐌺𐌹𐌹𐌹	7 Set
M	Kar	𐌺𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹	8 Odro
𐌺	L or Ul	𐌺𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹	9 Nuk
𐌺	M	𐌺	10 Don
𐌺	N	𐌺	12 Duz
Λ	Ng	𐌺𐌺	20 Skor
𐌺	O	𐌺	100 Kantuz
𐌺	R	𐌺	144 Groz
𐌺	T	𐌺	1000 Milluz

## Khazalid – Basic Structure

Whilst Khazalid undoubtedly has a formal grammatical structure, as an outsider I have found it very hard to discover what it might be. I theorise that in general Khazalid places the subject before the verb and the object afterwards, but I also maintain that emphasis of pronunciation alone can sometimes determine a word's position within the structure of a sentence. In other cases, the importance of a particular word can demand that it be placed first in the sentence. Such words are often placed first out of respect and then again in their proper place later on, for example, 'the king – I went to see the king.' When repeated words are written or carved, they commonly appear as individual runes at the start of a sentence and klinkarhun elsewhere.

The first principle of the dwarf tongue is that almost all of its words represent solid physical things. There are surprisingly few specific words for abstract concepts. As a result many words double up as both a physical thing and an abstract concept strongly associated with that thing. For example, the root word for 'big-stone' is kar and the most common word for a mountain is karaz – the 'az' ending denoting a single material thing or specific place. The same root word, kar, is also used to mean enduring in the form 'karak' – the 'ak' ending denoting an abstract concept. Thus Karaz-a-Karak, the name of the dwarf capital, means 'enduring mountain' or literally 'big stony stone place', though the name is more attractively rendered into human speech as Everpeak.

Curiously the dwarf word for the race of men is umgi, whilst its abstract form of umgak means 'shoddy' – the

dwarf word being equivalent to 'man-made'. This demonstrates just how important it is to look at the end of dwarf words – for it is these special 'signifiers' which usually tell you what the word actually means. There are many types of signifiers, some of which are given below, and by combining the different signifiers with root words it is possible to expand the basic Khazalid lexicon given in this book.

Although root words are often used on their own, many Khazalid words consist of a root word followed by one or more signifiers. So for example:

Root word	Signifier (1)	Signifier (2)
Kar-	-az	-i
Big stone	place	race, person, trade
Karazi a	Mountain	tribe/tribesman/mountain

Some root words don't exist in a separate form at all. If a root word consists entirely of consonants it is usually written with an extra 'a' at the end but this is dropped when a signifier is added. For example, 'Ska-' is the root for 'thief', 'theft' and 'to steal'.

Ska – az	Skaz a thief in general – 'a thief'
Ska – azi	Skazi a specific thief – 'the thief'
Ska – ak	Skak a theft
Ska – it	Skit a steal

As in the example above – verb signifiers usually appear at the end of words. In Khazalid almost every noun has a verb form which is usually denoted by '-it'. In the present tense and '-ed' in the past. Tenses other than the simple present and past are denoted by additional words before the verb rather than by different endings – the equivalent to 'will steal' (an skit) in the simple future tense. Although separate words these are often written together as shown.

Skit	steal
Sked	stole
Anskit	will steal
Adsked	had stolen
Anadsked	will have stole

## Common Signifiers

In the case of all signifiers, a 'g' or 'k' can be added immediately before the signifier if the preceding root or signifier is a vowel or weak consonant such as 'l' or 'r'. This avoids placing two vowels together – which is something Khazalid strenuously avoids. However there are no rules for this, and in many cases one of the vowels is simply missed out especially if it is the weaker vowel 'a' or 'i' (which are almost the same sound in Khazalid and the same rune in klinkarhun).



**-az** This is a very important and common signifier and it means the word represents a specific physical thing or place – a particular mountain not mountains in general. It is usually placed directly after the root before any other signifiers. That much is easy – unfortunately there are many things that the dwarfs regard as so real and solid that the -az signifier is used even though they are talking about something which is neither a place or a material object! For example 'galaz' which means 'fearless'. In this case the -az refers to the 'real essence' of the idea. So, from the root 'dur' which means 'stone that can be riven' comes duraz which means a stone slab but also durak which means 'hard like a stone slab'. Although it is perfectly right to describe a tough dwarf as durak (rock hard) it would also be correct to describe him as duraz (literally stone).

**-ak** This is the other major common signifier and means that the word represents a concept, something abstract such as honour, courage or fortitude. Of course, dwarfs being dwarfs, really important abstract concepts are accorded the status of real things, so 'a grudge to be avenged' is dammaz, not dammak, but dammak still stands for the general concept of outstanding grudges.

**-ar** This signifies something that continues indefinitely over time – usually an activity such as trade (urbar) but also an experience such as chronic pain (urtar) and natural forces such as the movement of the sun (zonstollar – sun-walk-ing).

**-en** This signifies something that is currently on-going but not indefinite such as journeying (strollen), marching (gotten) or carrying a heavy burden (hunken).

**-i** The signifier 'i' shows that the word refers to an individual person, or a profession, or race. In general it is most easily thought of as representing the definite article 'the' or even 'that person just there'. Many personal names end with this signifier too.

**-al** The signifier 'al' shows that the word refers to a group or band of people or creatures – rather like a collective noun. So, whilst the word for both the race of men and 'the man' is umgi a band of men is umgal. It is also used to encompass a person's kinsfolk in the form Grummal – Grumm's people often translated as Grummlings.

**-it or -git** This signifier when applied to a noun indicates something small or trivial. It is also used for a present tense verb – but dwarfs are used to such things and rarely let it confuse them.

**-ul or -kul** This is a common word ending for dwarf words and not always a signifier but often means 'the art of, understanding of, or master of', for example grungkul the art of mining, and kazakul the art of battle or generalship.

**-ha** This signifier always appears at the end of a word and is the equivalent to an exclamation mark. It is pronounced very abruptly and can be read as 'so there' or 'so watch it' – definitely fighting talk.

## Useful Elements

From my studies, I believe the following useful words are the dwarf equivalent of conjunctions, relative pronouns and other common grammatical elements. Although words in their own right, they are often appended directly before other words to form new compound words such as 'okrik' which means usurper king (literally: why-king) and aguz which means 'replete' (literally: with-food). I have listed these words below.

A	Of, with, within, to
Ad	Did, done, (preceding a verb)
Af	They, you (plural)
Ai, I, Ap and Ip	All forms of yes
An	Will/shall/am going to/with purpose (preceding a verb)
Anad	Will have done or shall have done
Bin	In, on, beside
Anu	Soon, very soon, any minute now!
Bar	But, bear in mind, except for (also the word for a fortified gate)
Ek	He, she, it, you (singular)
Nai, Na or Nuf	All forms of no, not and never
Nu	Now, at this time
Ok	Why, how
Or	I, me, myself
Sar	May, could, might (preceding a verb)
Um	Them, those, these
Un	And
Ut	Us, we, ourselves
Wanrag	Where
Wanrak	When (preceding a verb).





# MAGIC RUNES

## Weapons

- ⚔ Rune of Snorri Spangelhelm
- ⚔ Master Rune of Skalf Blackhammer
- ⊞ Master Rune of Alaric the Mad
- ↑ Master Rune of Death
- ⚔ Master Rune of Swiftess
- ⚔ Master Rune of Daemon Slaying
- ⚔ Master Rune of Dragon Slaying
- ⚔ Master Rune of Banishment
- ⚔ Master Rune of Flight
- Δ Master Rune of Breaking
- ⚔ Master Rune of Kragg the Grim
- ⚔ Rune of Cleaving
- ⚔ Curse Rune
- ⚔ Rune of Cutting
- ⚔ Rune of Fire
- ⚔ Rune of Fate
- ⚔ Rune of Fury
- ⚔ Rune of Might
- ⚔ Rune of Parrying
- ⚔ Master Rune of Smiting
- ⚔ Rune of Striking
- ⚔ Grudge Rune
- Δ Rune of Speed

## Armour

- ⚔ Master Rune of Steel
- Δ Master Rune of Adamant
- ⚔ Master Rune of Gromril
- ⚔ Rune of Resistance
- ⚔ Rune of Shielding
- ⚔ Rune of Preservation
- ⚔ Rune of Stone
- ⚔ Rune of Iron
- ⚔ Rune of Fortitude

## Protection

- ⚔ Master Rune of Stromni Redbeard
- ⚔ Master Rune of Groth One-Eye
- ⚔ Master Rune of Valaya
- ⚔ Master Rune of Grungni
- ⚔ Rune of Guarding
- ⚔ Rune of Stoicism
- ⚔ Rune of Determination
- ⚔ Strollaz's Rune
- ⚔ Rune of Battle
- ⚔ Rune of Courage
- ⚔ Rune of Sanctuary
- ⚔ Master Rune of Fear
- ⚔ Rune of Slowness
- ⚔ Ancestor Rune

## Engineering

- ⚔ Master Rune of Defence
- ⚔ Master Rune of Skewering
- ⚔ Rune of Accuracy
- ⚔ Rune of Burning
- ⚔ Master Rune of Disguise
- ⚔ Rune of Forging
- ⚔ Rune of Reloading
- ⚔ Valiant Rune
- ⚔ Rune of Fortune
- ⚔ Master Rune of Immolation
- ⚔ Rune of Penetrating
- ⚔ Flakkson's Rune of Seeking
- ⚔ Stalwart Rune

## Talismanic

- ⚔ Master Rune of Balance
- ⚔ Master Rune of Spellbinding
- ⚔ Master Rune of Dismay
- ⚔ Master Rune of Kingship
- ⚔ Master Rune of Spite
- ⚔ Master Rune of Challenge
- ⚔ Rune of the Furnace
- ⚔ Rune of Luck
- ⚔ Rune of Passage
- ⚔ Rune of Spellbreaking
- ⚔ Spelleater Rune
- ⚔ Rune of Fate
- ⚔ Rune of Warding

## The Rite of Rune Forging

Seek the mountain's heart.  
 Take it on third moon's last day.  
 Stoke the furnace at midnight.  
 When the ore glows red.  
 Hammer it before dawn.  
 Seven times bend the white hot metal upon itself.  
 Seven times sing the forging song.  
 Quench in dragon's blood.  
 Slake red hot in Karak Ungol's quicksilver  
 Do this in Haki the ancestor's name.  
 Temper in Varn's water.  
 Hone the blade upon a dragon's horn.  
 On winter's third moon, carve the slaying rune.  
 Anoint with blood of troll, slain on Grungni's day.  
 Bind the hilt with dragon's hide, with hornside inside.  
 Haft the hilt with Azgal's gold, bind with  
 Azul-metal.  
 Mark the Orc's fang pommel with Grinnir's sign.  
 Make the naming rite with ale upon Valaya's altar.  
 The slaying of a troll by night will make the rune to glow.  
 For a thousand years.



# THE DWARF REALM









# Khazalid Lexicon

This lexicon has been the result of almost two decades of diligent research and primary resource gathering. In the guest quarters of the hold of Karak Norn I spent many, many long hours with dwarfs of numerous clans, listening to their dialect, asking questions when appropriate and garnering as much as I could of the words and phrases of the Khazalid language. Doubtless, the extent of the Khazalid 'dictionary' is far greater than the sum of these few words and the meanings I have proposed are derived from well-informed supposition.

## A

Agrul	Stone carving; lines in face of very old dwarf.
Angaz	Ironwork.
Ankor	Domain or realm.
Arm	The Khazalid irregular verb to be (present tense arm - past tense urz).
Az	War axe.
Azgal	Treasure hoard.
Azul	Metal of any kind; dependable; a sturdy dwarf.

## B

Bak	Fist, punch.
Bar	A fortified gateway or door.
Barag	War machine.
Baraz	A bond or promise.
Boga	A candle which blows out unexpectedly plunging the tunnel into darkness.
Bok	Banging your head on the roof of a low tunnel; characteristic scar on forehead caused by same!
Boki	Slang word for dwarf miners.
Bolg	Large, fat belly. Also a state of extreme wealth, age and contentment.
Bozdok	Unhinged as a result of constantly banging one's head on low roofs and pit-props - 'crosseyed'.
Bran	Clever, alert, mentally sharp.
Brodag	An annual brewing festival of Grungni.
Bryn	Gold that shines strikingly in the sunlight; anything shiny or brilliant.
Bugrit	An invocation against ill-luck uttered by a dwarf who has banged his head, hit his thumb, stubbed his toe or some other minor misfortune. Usually repeated three times for luck.

## C

Chuf	Piece of very old cheese a dwarf miner keeps under his hat for emergencies.
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## D

Dal	Old, good.
Dammaz	A grievance, grudge or insult to be avenged.
Dammaz Kron	The Book of Grudges.
Dar	A challenge or bet.
Dawi	Dwarfs.
Dawr	As good as something can get without it being proven over time and hard use. Most dwarf words for 'good' imply age and reliability too but dawr simply means 'looks like it might be good'. It literally translates as 'like dwarf'.
Deb	New, untried, raw.
Dibnin	The act of tinkering with something that already works perfectly, out of a belief that it

Doh	Stupid, slow-witted, gullable.
Dok	Watch, observe, see, the eye.
Dongliz	The parts of a dwarf's body impossible for him to scratch.
Dork	Giant, tall, unstable.
Drakk	Dragon.
Drek	Far, a great distance; great ambition or enterprise.
Dreng	Slay in combat.
Drengi	Slayer, one of the cult of Slayers.
Drongnel	Dragon stew with cave mushrooms marinated in strong ale.
Drung	To defeat, vanquish.
Duk	Low, narrow tunnel.
Dum	Doom or darkness.
Dunkin	Annual bath traditionally taken whether needed or not.
Durak	Hard.
Duraz	Stone or slab.

## E

Ekrund	A stairway descending beneath the ground.
Elgi	Elves.
Elgram	Weak, enfeebled, thin.
Elgraz	Construction that looks as if it is about to collapse.
Endrinkuli	An engineer or mechanic (generally a dwarf engineer).

## F

Fleg	Banner, standard.
Frongol	Mushrooms that grow at the back of a cave.

## G

Galaz	Gold of particular ornamental value.
Gand	Find, discover.
Garaz	Fearless, rebellious.
Gazan	Plains, wasteland.
Gibal	Fragments of food enmeshed in a dwarf's beard.
Ginit	Small stone which works its way into your boot causing discomfort.
Girt	Broad tunnel with plenty of headroom.
Git	The Khazalid irregular verb to go (present tense git - past tense ged) the word is related to got (ibid).
Gnol	Old, reliable, proven, wise.
Gnollengrom	Respect due to a dwarf who has a longer and more spectacular beard.
Gnorl	An especially bright and obvious boil or similar blemish on the end of the nose.
Gor	Wild beast.



Gorak	Great cunning, uncanny.
Gorl	Gold that is especially soft and yellow; the colour yellow.
Gorog	Ale; high spirits; a drinking binge.
Got	March or travel quickly and with purpose.
Gov	Thane.
Gozunda	Practically anything kept under the bed 'for emergencies'.
Grik	Pain in the neck caused by continually stooping in low tunnels.
Grim	Harsh, unyielding.
Grimaz	Barren place.
Grindal	Long flaxen plaits worn by dwarf maidens.
Grint	Waste rock or spoil left by miners' excavations.
Grizal	Poor meat.
Grizdal	Ale that has been fermented for at least a century.
Grob	The colour green, also goblins and orcs - literally greenies.
Grobi	Goblins.
Grobkaz	Goblin work, evil deeds.
Grobkul	Art of stalking goblins in caves.
Grog	Inferior or watered ale; mannish brew.
Grom	Brave or defiant.
Gromdal	An ancient artefact.
Gromthi	Ancestor.
Grong	Anvil.
Gronit	The Khazalid irregular verb to do (present tense gronit - past tense gird).
Gronti	Giant (as in the creature).
Grumbak	A short measure of ale; trivial complaint or grumble.
Grumbaki	A grumbler or whiner.
Grund	Hammer (also sometimes called 'rikkaz').
Grung	A mine.
Grungnaz	Making or smithying.
Grungni	Dwarf ancestor, god of mines and smiths.
Grungron	A forge.
Gruntaz	Strip of cloth worn round the loins and supposedly eaten in extreme emergencies hence, down to his gruntaz.
Gruntitrogg	Secret coming of age ritual practiced amongst dwarfkind - details of this are amongst the most closely kept of all dwarf secrets.
Guz	To consume food or drink.
Guzzen	Feed, insert, push.

## H

Hazkal	Ale brewed recently; a fiery young warrior.
Hunk	Carry heavy rocks or other burden.
Hruki	Breed of mountain goat.

## I

Ik	Putting your hand in something slimy and unpleasant in the darkness.
Irkul	Pillared vault hewn in rock.

## J

Jifful	Process of careful and precise adjustment to fit - especially in respect of engineering or stonemasonry.
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## K

Kadrin	Mountain pass.
Kalan	Clan.
Karag	Volcano or barren mountain.
Karak	Enduring.
Karaz	Mountain.
Karin	Shield, temporary protection.
Kazad	Fortress.
Kazak	War or battle.
Khaz	An underground hall.
Khazhunki	Knight, cavalry, rider. Lit. 'carried warrior'.
Khazukan	Dwarfs - literally hall-dwellers.
Khrum	War drum.
Klad	Armour.
Klinka	Chisel.
Klinkarhun	Common runes.
Kol	Black stone, the colour black, sombre.
Konk	Gold that is ruddy in colour; large and bulbous nose.
Krink	Bad back due to continual stooping.
Kro	Crow, raven, dark bird.
Kron	Book, record or history.
Kruk	A seemingly promising vein of ore which gives out suddenly; an unexpected disappointment; a venture which comes to nothing.
Krunk	Underground rockfall; a disaster!
Krut	A discomfiting disease contracted from mountain goats.
Kruti	A dwarf suffering from krut; a goatherd; an insult.
Kulgur	The art of cooking troll.
Kuri	Meat stew boiled up by travelling dwarfs from whatever ingredients are at hand. Traditionally spiced with wild berries.

## L

Lok	Highly embellished or intricate; praiseworthy.
-----	--

## M

Makaz	Weapon or tool.
Mingol	Tall watchtower built on lowland.

## N

Naggrund	An area of great upheaval, devastation, or industry.
Narwangli	A dung collector or dwarf who smells strongly of dung.
Nogarung	Drinking tankard made from a troll's skull.
Nubungki	A dwarf child deformed at birth, shunned by its clan and exiled. A great shame to the clan and the hold.

## O

Ogri	Ogre.
Ok	Cunning or skilful.
Okri	Craftsman - a common personal name.
Onk	Comradely accretion of dirt and grime on a company of dwarfs who have spent many days underground.



# R

Ragarin	Coarse and uncomfortable clothing made from a troll's hide.
Rhun	Rune, word or power.
Rhunki	Runesmith.
Rik	King or lord.
Rikkazen	Crush, to beat to a pulp, to turn to rubble.
Rikkit	A small stone that falls on your head as you walk down a tunnel.
Ril	Gold ore that shines brightly in rock.
Rink	Command, to give orders, to lead.
Rinn	A lady dwarf or king's consort.
Rogwak	An improvised team game played underground and using anything to hand as a ball – often a rock, preferably a goblin's head, or even a whole goblin.
Rorkaz	Informal shouting contest.
Ruf	A large underground dome either natural or constructed.
Runk	A one-sided fight; a sound thrashing!
Rutz	Slackness of bowels caused by drinking too much ale.

# S

Skarrenruf	The colour bright blue, the day time sky.
Skaz	Thief.
Skof	A cold meal eaten underground.
Skrat	To search for gold amongst rock debris or stream bed; scavenge; sparse living.
Skrati	Poor prospector.
Skree	Loose rock on a mountainside.
Skruff	A scrawny beard; an outrageous insult!
Skrund	To hew rock; to get stuck in!
Skuf	A drunken brawl or skirmish.
Slotch	The sodden mix of water, mud and pulverised stone found at the bottom of a mineworking.
Smak	Punish physically.
Stok	To hit or strike.
Strol	Walk or travel leisurely.
Stromcz	Stream.

# T

Thag	Slay by act of treachery.
Thagi	Murderous traitor.
Thaggoraki	Skaven, assassin, footpad.
Thindrongol	Secret vault in which ale or treasure is hidden.
Thingaz	Dense forest.
Throng	Army; huge assembly of dwarfs; a clan.
Thrund	A hand gun.
Trogg	A feast or heavy drinking bout.
Troll	Troll.
Tromm	Beard; respect due to age or experience.
Tusk	Tooth.

# U

Ufdi	A dwarf overfond of preening and decorating his beard; a vain dwarf; a dwarf who cannot be trusted to fight.
Umanar	Roughly or approximately, and also indecision or vacillation.

Umgak	Shoddy, poorly made.
Umgi	Men.
Unbak	Break permanently.
Unbaraki	An oathbreaker – there is nothing worse in dwarf estimation.
Und	A watchpost carved into the mountainside.
Ungdrin Ankor	Underway, the ancient underground roadway of the dwarfs.
Ungor	Cavern.
Ungrim	A dwarf who has not yet fulfilled an important oath; an untrustworthy dwarf.
Urbar	Trade.
Urbaz	A trading post or market.
Urk	Orc or enemy (also fear, to be afraid of, to retreat).
Uzkul	Bones or death.
Uzkular	Undead.

# V

Valdahaz	Brewery.
Varf	Wolf, hound.
Varn	Mountain lake.
Vongal	Raiding band.
Vorn	A farm.

# W

Wan	On its own at the start of a phrase, wan shows the phrase is a question. It's the dwarf equivalent of a question mark. This is usually missed off where a standard wan – question word is used instead (wanrag, wanrak, wanrum). Wan – is also used immediately before another word to frame a question (ek wangit? 'are you going' literally 'you go?', wandar 'is it good?' literally 'good?').
Wanaz	A disreputable dwarf with an unkempt beard; an insult.
Wattock	An unsuccessful dwarf prospector; a down-at-heel dwarf; an insult.
Wazzok	A dwarf who has exchanged gold or some other valuable item for something of little or no worth; a foolish or gullible dwarf; an insult.
Werit	A dwarf who has forgotten where he placed his tankard of ale; a state of befuddlement.
Wutroth	Wood from ancient mountain oak.
Z	
Zak	An isolated hut in the mountains.
Zaki	A crazed dwarf who wanders in the mountains.
Zan	Blood, the colour red.
Zanen	A bleeding wound.
Zanguzaz	Vampire.
Zank	Cleave, cut, divide.
Zharr	Fire.
Zhuf	Waterfall or rapidly flowing river.
Zint	The metal tin – hence zinti, a tinsmith or tinker.
Zorn	Upland plateau or high meadow.
Zon	Sun.



# KARAK AZUL - A CLAN RECORD

Gathered from the partial and fragmented records of the Karak Eight Peaks Book of Grudges.

Karak Azul	Karak Eight Peaks
<p>Donarkhun Clan (royalty)</p> <p>Bael (ancestor)</p> <p>Kazgar (ancestor - father of Kazador)</p> <p>Hilga of Karak Azul (ancestor - wife of Kazgar, mother of Kazador)</p> <p>Kazador of Karak Azul (King)</p> <p>Kazrik (thane - son of Kazador)</p> <p>Thordrik Greymane (living ancestor - Kazrik's uncle)</p> <p>Morga of Karak Azul (Queen)</p> <p>Freygar (Priestess of Valaya)</p> <p>Vargansson (Ironmaster)</p> <p>Malrik Morbad (hammerer)</p> <p>Keldn Kromsson (hammerer)</p>	<p>(Note that many clans of Eight Peaks migrated to Karak Azul after its fall and so became subsumed into the clan history of the hold.)</p> <p>Angrund Clan (royalty)</p> <p>Luna Ironhammer (ancestor - King)</p> <p>Belegar Ironhammer of Karak Eight Peaks (King)</p> <p>Kenna Ironhammer (Queen of Belegar)</p> <p>Durgar Hammerfist (lord)</p>
<p>Redbeard Clan (runesmiths)</p> <p>Stromni</p> <p>Forgehand Clan (runesmiths)</p> <p>Razek (ancestor - Runelord)</p> <p>Virik (ancestor - Runelord)</p> <p>Karagin (Runesmith and weaponmaster)</p> <p>Stoutgirth Clan (brewers)</p> <p>Thengeln (Brewmaster)</p> <p>Daurakin Clan (brewers)</p>	<p>Stonebeard Clan (engineers)</p> <p>Dourback Clan (brewers)</p>
<p>Stoneheater Clan (masons)</p> <p>Oygrin (Stonemaster)</p> <p>Flinthand Clan (engineers)</p> <p>Ironforge Clan (runesmiths)</p> <p>Gangrim (ancestor - Runelord)</p> <p>Ironbrow Clan (runesmiths)</p> <p>Thorek (Runelord and Master of the Weapons Shops)</p>	<p>Stoneback Clan (masons)</p> <p>Ironfinger Clan (metal smiths)</p> <p>Flintheart Clan (metal smiths)</p>
<p>Stonehand Clan (masons)</p> <p>Cragbrow Clan (miners)</p> <p>Thunderheart Clan (jewel smiths)</p> <p>Badridd Clan (metal smiths)</p> <p>Burdrick Clan (metal smiths)</p> <p>Ironhammer Clan (metal smiths)</p> <p>Stoneheart Clan (masons)</p> <p>Silverback Clan (jewel smiths)</p> <p>Stonecutter Clan (masons)</p> <p>Firehand Clan (metal smiths)</p> <p>Ironfinger Clan (metal smiths)</p> <p>Kaznagar Clan (jewel smiths)</p>	<p>Grimstone Clan (prospector)</p> <p>Firehelm Clan (miners)</p> <p>Copperback Clan (miners)</p> <p>Flinthand Clan (miners - not to be confused with the Karak Azul Flintheands)</p> <p>Bronzefist Clan (lode wardens)</p> <p>Ironback Clan (miners)</p> <p>Ironspike Clan (carpenters)</p> <p>Craghand Clan (miners)</p>
<p>Halgakrin Clan (carpenters)</p> <p>Thurckson Clan (lode wardens)</p> <p>Sveageln Clan (prospectors)</p> <p>Kakki Clan (miners)</p> <p>Varnskan Clan (miners)</p> <p>Stoutpeak Clan (carpenters)</p>	<p>Guttrik Clan (rope-makers)</p>





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