

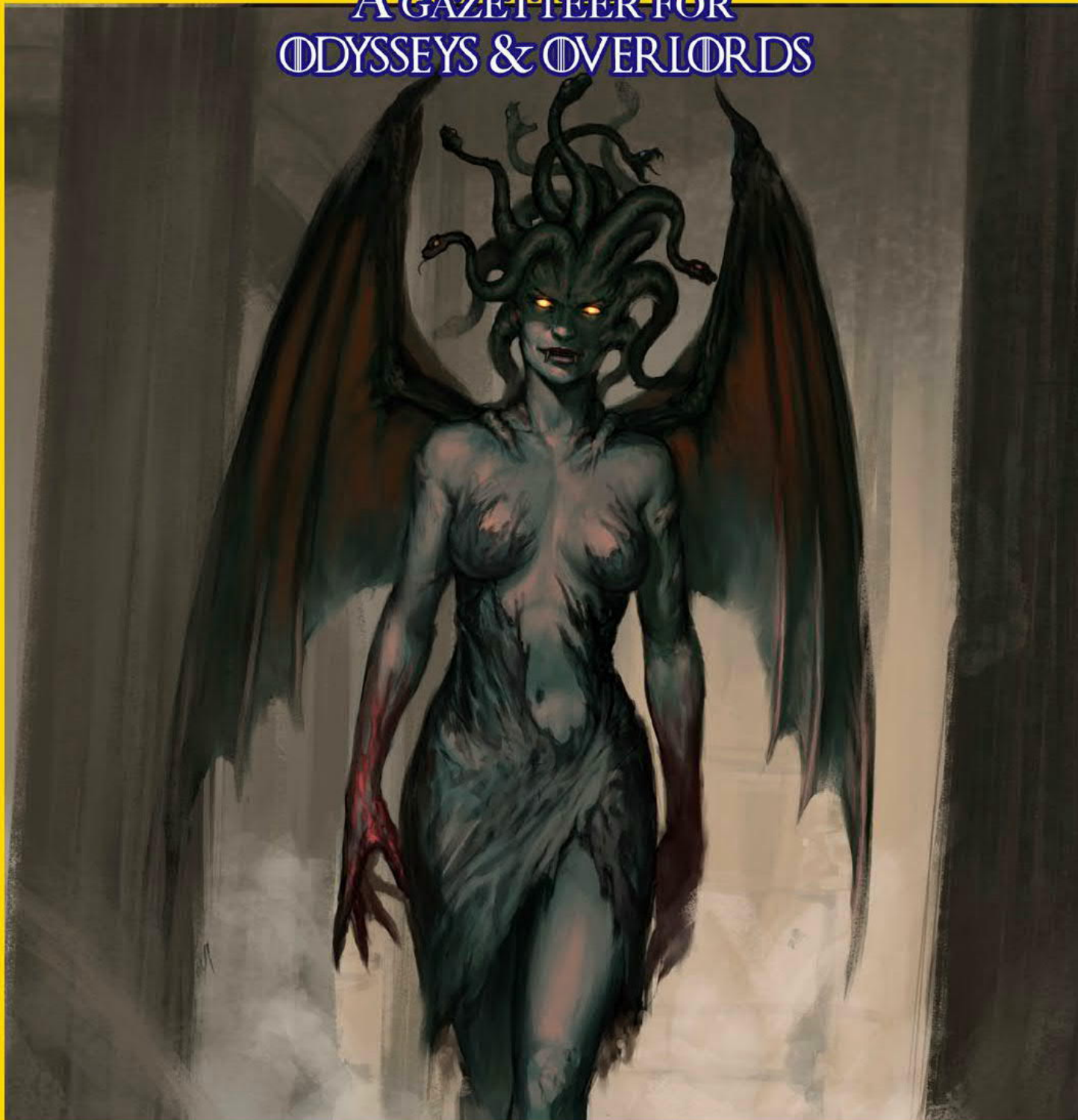
Designed
for use
with the

Basic Fantasy
Role-Playing Game

THE SHARD: DEADHOME



A GAZETTEER FOR ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS



REFUGE OF THE ABYSS-KISSED

THE SHARD: DEADHOME

A GAZETTEER FOR ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

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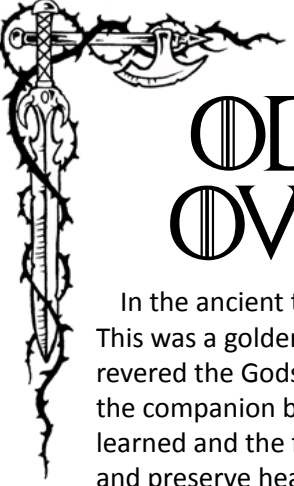
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ODYSSEYS & OVERLORDS

In the ancient times, the Gods watched over humankind. This was a golden age of learning and peace. Humans revered the Gods, living in harmony with the divine and the companion beasts. Magic flowed freely allowing the learned and the faithful to alter their forms, prevent aging, and preserve health. The wild folk were born of this time as humans and companion beasts united in love. While most of the Gods rejoiced at this development, Ragnar, the God of Conquest was jealous and appalled by the humans choosing the animal companions as mates instead of the Gods. This caused a divine war during which the Gods who agreed with Ragnar tried to kill the other Gods. The first casualty of this war was Ember, the Goddess of knowledge. When Ember died, her scholar-priests, the Keepers of the Arcane were caught in a magical backlash creating the spellscorched. This war of Gods, called the Schism, raged for 1000 years, during which time the followers of Ragnar courted the worship and love of as many humans as they could. From these unions, the Abyss-kissed were born. After a long and bloody conflict, Ragnar and his followers were defeated. The Gods who fought them dragged Ragnar's followers into the Abyss where they are believed to still be fighting to this day. Only Ragnar and Chandra, the Goddess of the moon and nature remained among mortals. Declaring a cease fire, Ragnar retreated with a small retinue of cultists to the Tower of Wretched Wroth. Chandra and her highest clerics went to the Crystal Library on the surface of the northern Moon. Mortals were left to determine their own fates. The magic that had bound the souls of humans and the companion beasts shattered, though wild folk were already numerous enough to persevere. The spellscorched taught the ways of arcane magic sparingly, protecting the art nearly to extinction. Clerics of Chandra and Ragnar spoke of worship, but most mortal kingdoms rejected all gods and magic, relying on steel and blood to determine righteousness and rulership. Now, the mortal lands are divided. A dozen kingdoms lie scattered across the world, separated by dangerous wilds filled with bandits and monsters. The bravest mortals act as adventurers, guiding travelers between the kingdoms, killing monsters to thin their numbers, and plundering ruins in search of the lost treasures of the golden age. This is the world of **Odysseys & Overlords**!



DEADHOME

Laying on a plateau near the summit of Mount Alaxin, the northernmost mountain in The Shard, the fortified city-state of Deadhome houses one of the largest single settlements of Abyss-kissed in perhaps all the world, or at least of any that exist in the open. Ruled by the Queen in Mourning, Deadhome's gates are open to any and all who would brave the mountain road to get there.

While nominally under fealty to Lady Moldoveanu, the vampire and her court rarely make the trip to Deadhome to collect their blood tax if any more convenient meals exist. Generally, The Shard ignores the existence of Deadhome. It's out of the way, and even among the undead, the Abyss-kissed are loathed enough that they none too secretly hope that a harsh winter will come and when the mountain passes thaw, the city-state will be empty save for frozen corpses.

This book contains all that you will need to set your **Odysseys & Overlords** campaign in Deadhome, including important NPCs, how the city-state is run, and the threats from within and without that threaten its fragile existence.

THE PEOPLE

Just over a thousand people live in Deadhome, though that number fluctuates often. The Queen in Mourning's first edict was that the Gates would never be closed to those who come to Deadhome under the mien of friendship. All would be sheltered, for a time, but to become a resident of Deadhome one must swear an oath to defend it, and its residents, to their dying breath.

Seventy percent of Deadhome's populace are Abyss-kissed. Distrusted for their lineage and shunned from most other nations, they find themselves pulled to the city-state that most in Estria or Chandra's Haven don't even believe really exists. Many don't survive the trip, more still give up before they get there, but those who do make it find a community that is both welcoming and hyper vigilant.

Twenty percent of the population are mountainous wild folk, many of whom lived in the surrounding area before the coming of the Queen in Mourning and her people. They didn't live on the windswept plateau and didn't make their presence known until well into the building of Deadhome. Much shorter lived than their Abyss-kissed neighbors and knowing that they both share a stigma among the other genera, wild folk welcome them, sending their children down who wish to learn from the Abyss-kissed, while helping them hunt in the terrain they know best.

The final ten percent is mixed between humans and spellscorched. Outcasts from their original homes, they find a new settlement in the cold wastes of Deadhome. Criminals, heretics, whatever, no one else cares whatever you were before arriving, only what you can offer once there.



GOVERNANCE

While under the nominal rule of Lady Moldoveanu, Castle Moldov has little actually to do with the remote settlement, allowing them to govern themselves under the leadership of the mysterious Queen in Mourning (She/Her, LN Abyss-kissed 13th level Magic-User). Rumors abound as to why she is never referred to by any other name, some say her partner was killed in the Schism, others by hateful humans in any one of the kingdoms to the south. Others say it was her child, others still say her parents, either the mortal or divine side. Regardless of why she led her retinue of thirty five original Abyss-kissed to the land where Deadhome would be built, she rules it firmly but kindly.

All are welcome in Deadhome, but all must contribute both to its survival and its defense. Anyone who does not will have their personal property, save for a change of clothing and a weeks' food, seized for those who would contribute, and then ousted into the wilderness. Some make it to other settlements in the Schism, or elsewhere, but most don't.

The Queen in Mourning stands at six feet tall, her skin a midnight blue with stark white ram's horns crowning her head. She has white-gold hair that extends between a pair of wings to touch the base of her tail, that is as long as she is tall. It is said that she, herself, set up the wards that protect Deadhome from magical assault. Once, when an avalanche threatened to bury the settlement, she led a ritual that brought dark fire that melted the snow before it had the chance.

Chieftain Halain (He/Him NG wild folk 12th level Fighter) is the leader of the wild folk who live in the mountains

around Deadhome but has a residence in the village as well. His beard is long enough to rest comfortably on his broad chest. Standing at nearly seven feet tall, his black claws on both his hands and feet click on the grey stone of the settlement. His father was the Chief who made the alliance with the Queen in Mourning, and thus far he has respected it. However, there are malcontents among his people who think Deadhome got the better part of the deal, and more over their very existence brings attention that they didn't get beforehand.

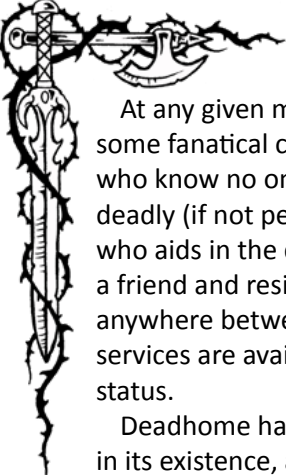
Elandi D'an (They/Them NG spellscorched 10th level Cleric) speaks for the small population of spellscorched in Deadhome, relating their needs to the Queen in Mourning. Since arriving half a century ago, they have pushed to have a temple to Chandra be built in town, henceforth to no avail. There are not nearly enough of them to cause any real problems, but the spellscorched bristle at having to leave the city to the small prayer house built in the wilds to worship.

Having fled Chandra's Haven, Gareth Blackstag (He/Him NE human 8th level Thief), otherwise known as the Murder King, is the leader of a cadre of assassins and thugs for hire who took the wrong job and was exposed. He made it to Deadhome and set up the city as his new headquarters. There is a large bounty on his head, should anyone hear that he's there. Since he has leant his sanguine arts to the defense of the city more than once in his two years of living there, none of the Abyss-kissed guards would allow him to be taken if it came down to it, but they also wouldn't risk the other citizens if that factors into the situation. What few humans are in Deadhome rally behind him, and, at least for the moment, the Murder King backs the Queen in Mourning. Many, however, wonder what would happen if he changed his mind.

A MYRIAD OF THREATS ABOUND

No one wants the Abyss-kissed around, a memory of the Schism that broke the world. Deadhome exists as both a ghetto in exile from the rest of the continent as well as a convenient grouping of all the people no one would seem to miss should anything happen to them. Many residents there believe that whatever storms or natural disasters that come their way are in fact magical attempts to wipe them off the face of the mountain, and in some cases they aren't wrong.

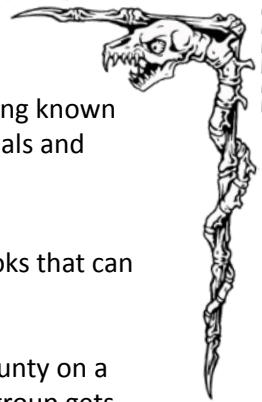
While it sits in The Shard, Lady Moldoveanu holds that they are, if ever pressed about it, squatters who she doesn't have the heart to expel from their plateau homes. They get no support from The Shard, and The Shard rarely if ever have any troops in the way of any religious group who march on the Abyss-kissed home. It's all the Lady of Castle Moldov can do to hold to her image of being a haven for the monstrous, while still harboring the opinions that seem to fester all over about the Abyss-kissed.



At any given moment, the city can be under siege from some fanatical crusade, an enterprising leader of bandits who know no one would come to Deadhome's aid, or a deadly (if not perhaps conjured) mountain storm. Anyone who aids in the defense of Deadhome will be considered a friend and resident of the city, allowing for better prices, anywhere between 25%-40% off, at what few shops and services are available, and the aid of others with the same status.

Deadhome has nearly been sacked half a dozen times in its existence, and the city still has the scars of that. None of the residents are particularly trusting to outsiders and strangers, even traders who make their way to the city regularly but don't remain are given the sour eye. There is an understanding between the actual residents of Deadhome, even those who just became so, and those merchants and others who visit it from time to time. Anyone could be a spy for someone who wants to wipe them off the face of the mountain, and if you aren't a member of Deadhome's citizenry, you might be the reason the next sacking is successful. The hard winters and tough terrain of the region made these people cold and harsh, and they have seen too many of their neighbors cast down, both in the city and before they arrived, to be too charitable.

Many use Deadhome as a hideout from the long reach of the law. If they can get to it, and act like any other resident, the Queen in Mourning is famous for not caring what you did before you got to Deadhome, or what your actions there might shake loose elsewhere. The rest of the world is just that, the rest of the world's problem, and she only cares about her small corner of it. This, however, does bring some amount of grief to her people, as the city is constantly targeted by enterprising bounty hunters or revenge seekers looking for these people. It isn't as if



Deadhome has enough problems without being known on the world stage as a safe harbor for criminals and malcontents.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following are a list of potential plot hooks that can be played in a campaign set in Deadhome:

- Your group is sent to hunt down a bounty on a human in Deadhome, but when the group gets there, they find the target is an upstanding citizen of the community and nothing at all like the criminal you were sent after.
- Bandits have set up an extortion racket outside of Deadhome, their leader someone banished from the city for cowardice. The Queen in Mourning has asked for a group of the brave to go free the road of their wickedness, will you answer the call?
- Convinced by his people, the Murder King Gareth Blackstag has decided to take his shot, moving to assassinate the Queen in Mourning and take over Deadhome. Will the group defend her and in so doing perhaps claim the bounty on the King's head, or will they try for the power of regime change and aid him?
- Yet more crusaders, these dubbing themselves the Holy Knights of Chandra, have braved the road to Deadhome and are laying siege, can the group help the citizens of the village defend themselves and wait it out, or otherwise rally and attack back?
- When the day started, the skies were clear, but since midday a storm has blanketed the horizon and is moving in. There may be a day before the passes are snowed in and Deadhome is buried under a preternatural blizzard, unless the group can do something about it.





DEADHOME





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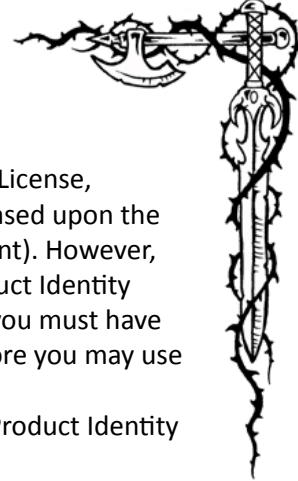
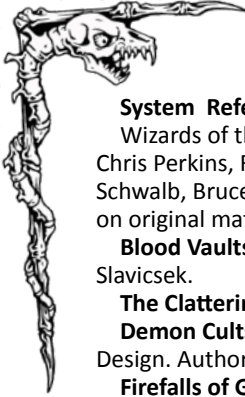
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