

The Dwarves

The Dwarves were one of the earliest races bred from Man by the Demons. They were bred to act as underground workers. Unfortunately the hardiness given to them also resulted in a legendary stubbornness. The early Dwarves were not easily terrorized by the Demons and soon revolted. They took readily to the metalsmith arts and the discovery of iron is credited to the Dwarves. After the wars they returned to the mountains where they still dwell today.

Dwarf Template [25 pts]

Attribute Modifiers:

HT+2 [20].

Advantages:

Extended Lifespan 1 [2]; Lifting ST +2 [6]; Longevity [2];
Resistant to Poison (+3) [5];

Disadvantages:

Unattractive to other races (-1 reaction) [-5];
Stubbornness [-5].



Background

Created to delve stone as slaves, they had the essence of the mountain roots and could not be bent to the demons will.

- Veritas proclaiming the dwarves when they were presented to the Gods.

Short and stocky, the Dwarves were created as a hardy race designed to endure the worse conditions in the mines of the Demons. However along with their bodies their spirit proved to be hardy as well. The demons could never break them as slaves and many escaped into the wilderness to join the rebellion against the Demons.

Because of this Dwarves feel most at home underground in deep mines and caverns. Their homes are magnificent works of art hewn from the living rock. They revel in work and will pursue a task for days without rest. Dwarves are the finest craftsmen of the Wilderlands, while the Elves can match in quality Dwarves out produce in quantity. They are also innovators in metallurgy and engineering; many of the advances in these two fields originated in Dwarven Halls.

The Dwarves are extremely protective of their family. A legacy of their creation by the Demon Lords has left them with the ability to produce only a few children. Among those who are born 75% are male. With so many without a spouse or immediate family the clan has become the focus of the ambition of many Dwarves. A dwarf will fight as fiercely for a nephew or niece as they would their own children. Dwarves hold their feelings in reserve and are perceived as a dour and cheerless race. Privately their halls ring with song and laughter shared with family and good friends.

Their infertility has caused them to regard their home as sacred and its defense the most important priority. Many of the Dwarves who adventure do so in hopes of gaining for their home a decisive advantage.

Religion

They honor the High Lord Veritas as their liberator. They call Veritas the Soul Forger and believe that he gave them the sturdiness needed to resist the Demons.

Chief among the gods was Veritas. He was the first to enter the Wilderlands and forged the earth, the water, and the sky. While the Dwarves were being created, Veritas sneaked into the Demons place of creation. He walked up to the sleeping forms of the Dwarves and by each he whispered these words.

By the power of the One, I give to thee the strength of the roots of the world. You will endure as long as the world endures. Only a power greater than the mountains themselves will ever be able to break you.

When the Dwarves awoke the Demons set them to the task of mining. The Dwarves defied their masters and made secret tunnels and escaped. They came to the hiding places of the gods and pledged their service and loyalty in freeing the world from the Demons. They took Veritas as their liege and worked in his service. Their skill at mining and craftsmanship was instrumental in the Gods victory over the Demons. It was the Dwarves who built the nine towers where the Crystals were place to seal the Gateway to the Abyss.

History

Thunderhold

The Dwarven Kingdom of Thunderhold is the largest realm of Dwarves in the Padizan Peninsula. Four hundred years ago, Zephyrus Iron-Helm founded Thunderhold as a refuge for the survivors from the fall of the Majestic Fastness. Atrabilorin, the first Overlord of City-State, was instrumental in aiding the Iron-Helms.

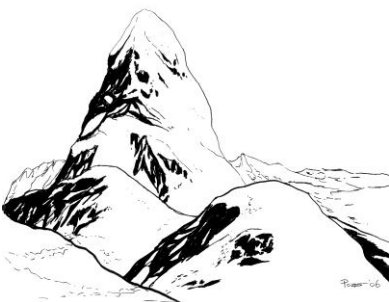
Thunderhold survived and when the Rorystone Road was built it became prosperous. The Kings of Thunderhold expanded the Dwarven holds at Anvil, Bridel, Carnage, and Karn into full fortresses. When City-State came under the control of Salm-Lorin the Kings of Thunderhold allied with Lucius of Bulwark in liberating the city from the Tyrant.

Today the Overlords of City-State continue the alliance with Thunderhold. The King of Thunderhold has been granted the right to appoint a senator to sit in the Senate of the Tharian Confederation. The Iron-Helms and the other Dwarves of Thunderhold still dream of reclaiming their ancestral home in the Majestic Fastness.

Orc raids from the Majestic Mountain and Troll raids from the Troll Mountains are a continual problem. Thunderhold has established the Border Warders a group of Dwarven rangers to patrols the borders of the Kingdom and the Rorystone Road. The Border Warders give warning to nearby holds and help organize the response to raids.

Majestic Fastness

Nearly six thousand years ago the Founder Empire was the leading civilization in the Wilderlands. One of its singular achievements was that it was confederation of a multitude of races coexisting in equality. However the untimely death of its Overlord resulted in a series of civil wars that destroyed the empire and the trust between the races. Only a few factions still held to the ideals of the fallen empire.



When the civil wars ended these factions fled the shattered remains of the empire and settled in the northeast corner of the Padizan Peninsula. Here they hoped to recreate the Founder's Empire and the peace that once existed between the races. They founded the Elven Kingdom of Silverwood, the Halfling Shire of Limerick, the Gnome Kingdom of Lightelf, the Human realm of Carolyn (presently Warwick), the Human realm of Merdan (presently Modron) and the Dwarven Kingdom of the Majestic Fastness. While not formally united, they were allies against the sea of monsters surrounding their realms.

The Majestic Fastness was built in a mountain as a series of levels, nearly 20 of them. Below the first level were a dozen deeps, additional levels where the Dwarves delved for gold, silver, iron, and mithril. For thousands of years the Dwarves only traded with local races but their isolation ended with the coming of the Elessarians. The quality of Dwarven weaponry and crafts was superior any other culture and soon the Dwarves had wealth beyond their wildest dreams. They used this wealth to turn the levels and deeps into magnificent works of art and architecture.

Humiliated by his defeats at the hand of the Dragon Empire, The Viridian Emperor, Galanitien plotted his enemies' downfall. The Dwarves supplying the Dragon Empire with armor that could turn aside the carbellium arrows of the Imperial Legions was a major cause of Viridistan's defeat.

Galanitien knew of an old Black Dragon named Ancelgorn who hunted the wastes west of the Pinnacle Mountains. He ensured that the dragon heard rumors of the wealth of the Majestic Fastness. With its greed awakened Ancelgorn flew into the Majestic Mountains and began to unite the disparate orc tribes into a single army. The chaos of the civil wars ripping apart the Dragon Empire provided Ancelgorn with his opportunity. With most of the Dwarven forces guarding the borders of their realm, Ancelgorn struck directly at the Majestic Fastness. Vast hordes of Orcs swarmed in the Dragon's wake overpowering the guards that remained. The Fastness was sacked and the entire countryside laid waste in the flame of the dragon's fire. After rampaging through Silverwood, Ancelgorn returned to the Majestic Fastness and made it his lair guarded by the survivors of his army.

Today Ancelgorn still dwells in the Majestic Fastness. For the last hundred years he has been concerned with the rise of the Tharian Overlords and City-State. Since the fall of the Viridistan Empire, City-State's power is unrivaled and they may finally be able to give Thunderhold the aid they need to reclaim the Majestic Fastness. He has been secretly aiding the Lords of Warwick and hopes to use them as allies against City-State. He has also been helping the followers of the dragon god Set in City-State. Hoping that if they gain control their reverence for dragons will work in his favor.