

Barethkor (dark dwarves/duergar)

History

The story of the Barethkor, which is giantese for “Darkling,” began many centuries ago in the second age when a rift developed between a faction of rogue dwarves and the majority leaders. The rogues were unhappy with how dwarves were increasingly interacting with those on the surface. They believed that the only way to keep their traditions and their race pure was to remain segregated and below ground. But in the majority clans would not deny progress and ground forward until a war broke out. The war, which originated in Northern Houress, raged beneath the continent for 230 years before the majority clans were victorious. Many of the rogue clans acquiesced and came back into the fold, but a considerable amount vowed they could not change and withdrew even deeper into the earth in the name of preserving racial purity.

Bitter and resentful, the rogue dwarves turned to an evil, lesser god named Vorenclegg and pledged their loyalty in return for the promise of the powers of darkness. When the victorious clans began referring to them derisively as Barethkor, the rogue dwarves embraced the name and made it their own. Since then, they have worked in darkness and secrecy to forward their dark agenda of causing strife to the victorious clans and all from the surface.

Barethkor Society

Clans: Clans are an important part of Barethkor society, with ancient families that vie for power to establish longstanding pecking orders in every city.

Males: Shenuri society is dominated by males, although there are a few female clan leaders who have risen to prominence.

Females: Females figure prominently in Barethkor society, supporting their clans and even fighting alongside the males in whatever conflict arises. Some have even achieved high positions on local councils.

Allies: This term refers to those whom the Barethkor utilize to further their interest. Most are those living below ground, but there are a few select surface-dwellers the Barethkor ally themselves with. The Barethkor are always ready and willing to betray their allies if it suits them, and they are always ready to be betrayed. Their trust in others is very thin. Alliances with the Shenuri are common but tension-filled.

Slaves: The Barethkor happily enslaves others, with Torozen (dark gnomes) and normal dwarves being their favorite. Many slaves are bred in captivity to feed a lucrative slave market that exists below the surface.

Government

Each Barethkor community is ruled by a High Council of clan leaders. Most councils are overseen by a cleric of Vorenclegg, as religion figures prominently in Barethkor decisions. There is no ultimate leader among all Barethkor. Each city acts as its own separate society, but

strong interracial alliances across the continent help to ensure the safety of the Barethkor overall.

Rogue Factions

As with any society, there are factions that do not agree with the way things are going. This is true with the Barethkor. Only one faction of prominence exists that is a bother to the established clans:

True Bloods: This faction is located somewhere beneath the northern reaches of the Reliad Mountains. Their leaders trace their heritage back to the beginning when the dwarves were a whole race. Their belief is that today's regular dwarves and the Barethkor have become diluted in blood and purpose are considered tainted. The True Bloods still worship Kharsallis in and have pledged to convert the impure to their holy cause or eliminate the blasphemers. True Bloods rarely work with anyone on the surface who is not of their faction.

Currency

Barethkoo utilize minted gold, silver, and platinum coins that are used exclusively among their kind. The metal of the coins is still of value to other races who like precious metals. Barethkoo also prize precious gems, rare mushrooms, and chemical elements necessary to create powerful potions and brews. Lastly, slaves are used as currency regularly. Barethkor will acquire surface coins for use in bribery and such in those rare instances when they associate with surface-dwellers.

Gods

Vorenclegg is almost exclusively by the Barethkor, with few exceptions.