

## Shenuri (dark elves)

### History

The Shenuri people are ruthless dark elves who have lived in underground communities and constantly plot to acquire power from themselves and outsiders, whether in the underdark or on the surface. The myth is that, long ago, some surface elves began questioning Em'Sharfhei passive philosophy concerning non-elves. Elves, being an elder race, always looked upon other humanoids as petulant children resisting the wisdom that they had to offer.

The rogue elves felt that the only way to ensure the security of the elves across the land was to impart their wisdom and, if necessary, force the other races to bend to their superior philosophy. But most elves were against such uncivilized action and forbade any further talk. There erupted several conflicts between the established elves and the rogues, which blossomed into war. Em'Sharfhei looked down from the heavens and saw that her people were split. She angrily struck the rogue elves with a curse that turned their skin dark to match their temperament and banished them from the light of the surface for eternity.

The rogue elves were forced underground to make their way and a new life. As they struggled in the unfamiliar realm and died by the scores, they despaired and knew they would all soon die. One night, a beautiful she-demon emissary of Dur Anom appeared before the leader of the displaced elves, a male named Kirmon, who had been a powerful priest of Em'Sharfhei before losing everything. The emissary said that Dur Anom would save the displaced elves if they vowed to worship her. Knowing that Dur Anom was a demon lord, Kirmon stubbornly refused to stoop so low and angrily sent the emissary away.

Undaunted, the emissary sought the most powerful elven female in the outcasts, a fall High Priestess of Em'Sharfhei named Caliashere, and made the same offer. At first, Caliashere was horrified at the prospect of serving a demon lord, which went against her beliefs. But when she thought of all she had lost, the people who had died for their beliefs, and the callousness with which Em'Sharfhei had turned her back on them, she relented and became a servant of Dur Anom. The emissary said that Dur Anom was pleased. She explained that Caliashere had demonstrated the superiority of females over men and that, henceforth, men would become subservient to them.

Caliashere gathered her most trusted females and made them priestesses. After a brief battle for control with the males, she and her allies won. The men were put in their place forever. They would never rule, but they would have their place. In celebration, High Priestess Caliashere proclaimed that her people would then be known as "Shenuri," which is elven for "Outcasts." She wanted the elven translation to be used so that the Shenuri would never forget who they were or those who had turned their backs on them.

Despite their inter-racial conflicts and politicking, Shenuri will always unite against an outsider threat, particularly when that threat comes from their distant light-skinned relatives living in the hated sunlight. They will, of course, deal with elves when necessary and betray them when it is convenient.

## Shenuri Society

**Females:** Shenuri society is dominated by females, who are always the heads of the families and are almost always priestesses of Dur Anom. Aside from bearing children to keep their race populated, their function is to serve Dur Anom, their families, and themselves in that order.

**Males:** Males, are considered secondary to females. They are looked at as useful in many ways by females, such as mates, guards, warriors, wizards, and other positions benefit their matriarch. Some males achieve powerful positions, but will always know their place and will never command a non-slave Shenuri female to do anything she doesn't wish to do. That doesn't mean that there wouldn't be consequences for a female doesn't follow a male's "recommendation" if he has a position over her. But any discipline would come from another female, not the male directly. Males can become any class that doesn't use divine magic, so no paladins or druids. This is due to Dur Anom's disdain for them.

**Allies:** This term refers to anyone serving Shenuri interests that is not a slave. The alliance can be the result of mutual benefit, blackmail, extortion, or many other reasons. In any case, the Shenuri will never place themselves at the disadvantage of an ally unless they hope to gain something significant in the long run. Favorite allies of the Shenuri are Duergar, Svifneblin, Goblins, and various humanoids that live on the surface. the Shenuri view allies as disposable and will toss them aside or even betray them for any reason at any time. They also remain constantly vigilant that an ally would do the same to them. Shenuri look upon other races as inferior and only tolerate them so far as they are useful. They tend to be a bit more respectful to Duergar, who have proven to be formidable adversaries in the past.

Although Kryth are exclusively bred as slaves to serve the Illithid, some have been captured and enslaved by the Shenuri. The process of breeding Kryth is unknown to the Shenuri.

**Slaves:** Slaves of all kinds serve the Shenuri, from mindless creatures to beings with considerable intelligence. Some were born into slavery, others were conquered and turned into slaves. Shenuri don't like to employ slaves that have too much intelligence, for they are dangerous and can incite uprisings. Any slaves possessing notable intelligence are usually closely watched and magically bound in some way to ensure loyalty and to prevent escape.

## Government

Each Shenuri city is ruled by a High Priestess. They all answer to the Supreme High Priestess Elvandriira Vrammazza, who dwells in Chaulssinath, located below the Votack Mountains in Brighkly to the southwest of the city of Barrackus.

The High Priestess in each city meets with a council of advisors consisting of the head of each of the matriarchal families. Their input is valuable in helping to decide on what's best for the people and the community. But no matter what the council recommends, the High Priestess will always have ultimate power to do what she sees is fit. She must still be careful, though. By being the one with the power, she must bear ultimate responsibility of the success and failures of her people. High Priestesses have been assassinated for allowing things to decay too far.

Deals between families are constantly made, broken, and remade. Lies, deceit, and treachery are employed regularly as the families fight for dominance in Shenuri society.

### Rogue Factions

As with any society, there are factions that do not agree with the way things are going. This is true with the Shenuri. There are only two factions of note because they are organized:

**Faction 1:** This group is called the True Minds. They dwell near the Shenuri city of Larantuu, located in Kharamis in the Shadow Mountains south of the Tacoble swamp. Their contention is that the Shenuri are disregarding their own superiority over other races by hiding in the darkness like cowards. They believe that the time has come for the Shenuri to conquer the races of the underdark before turning their armies to the surface-dwellers. These secretive fanatics have worked hard to foster enmity between the Shenuri and the underdark races.

**Faction 2:** This group of male-dominated Shenuri calls themselves the Arm of Kithalis, referring to the demon lord of the same name. They dwell close to T'Rissnolu, located in the Hell Haunts to the south of the Southern Rocroosts in the Kingdom of Regdon. They hate that males have been subjugated and turned to Kithalis, who accepted their fealty. The males have been working tirelessly to undermine the credibility of the females within T'Rissnolu by secretly thwarting their plans and even assassinating some of them. The High Priestess of the city is at her wits end with these slippery traitors.

This faction is made up of loose "cells" that are highly mobile and never stay in one place too long for fear of being hunted down by their enemies and destroyed. There are usually never more than about twenty or thirty in a cell.

### Currency

There is no minted currency of any kind in Shenuri society. Goods and services are acquired through: barter, trade, gems, food (surface food is a delicacy and fetches a higher price), and slaves. Values are not set in stone as each community may have different needs than others. They do have mines that are mined by Duergar slaves. The primarily seek gems but also acquire gold and silver ore for their operatives to use on the surface. Any coins they have are those that have been stolen from surface dwellers and are used by operatives working there.

### Gods

The gods of Irith are timeless. Although the Shenuri worship different gods, their primary deity is Dur Anom. The number of Po worshippers is less half of the entire Shenuri population.