

THE HISTORY OF CLAN ROCKHALL

Part I: Memories of the Ancient Evil

In the ancient past, a sprawling city of Illithids dominated the landscape prior to the coming of man. The city, located deep underneath a great forest, was known to the elven wizards of the time as Shu'myndy'lort Mil'thana'dun – a name whose origins have no translation in the tongue of men, elves, or any of the younger races. In a fierce and epic struggle, elves and illithids contended in a war that devastated the forest. In the end, the elves could not completely destroy the illithids – though they could contain them. Casting a spell of great power, the likes of which had not been seen since the fall of the dark elves, three of the most powerful elven archmages of the time sacrificed themselves in an attempt to seal the city forever in a planar prison. The illithids managed to warp the energies of the spell, but were still bound away in the plane of Shadow – where they could see the world from which they had been banished, but never interact with it. To prevent discovery of this city, great mountains were raised, encasing the wards within tons of rock and stone. It was hoped that memories of the ancient evil would fade. However, fragments of the city's name managed to survive time's passage – evolving into a single word that became synonymous with the mountains themselves – Lortmil.

Sealed away from the world, the illithids found their ability to shift between the planes constrained by their prison. For thousands of years, the city lay sequestered in exile from Oerth – the drifting and cyclical nature of the planes prevented them from embarking on regular attempts to break from their prison. Thus, they plotted and calculated for the time when their home-in-exile might be close enough to the Material Plane to attempt an escape. As time passed, the illithid's found methods of adapting to their new environment as their bodies became infused with the essence of Shadow. This allowed them to partially use their plane shifting powers, appearing as dark wavering apparitions in the world but enabling them to see what had changed since their departure.

Part II: Mountains of Iron and Mithral

Centuries past and the elves withdrew into seclusion. From out of the west, seeking a new life for his clan, came Grodog Rockspitter of Clan Rockhall. Discovering mountains of iron and mithral, as well as other metals, the clan settled in the mountains. The centuries rolled as they

constructed their great city, Ulthak-Nor, and soon they began mining the ore from the mountains. Though they discovered evidence of the wards, the dwarven mages were unable to decipher their meaning. The mining of the dwarves attracted the attention of those who sought to take by force what the dwarves had gain by diligent toil. The duergar, never large in numbers, nevertheless proved to be a nuisance in Clan Rockhall's side, though never so much that they sought to permanent rid themselves of the duergar. Perhaps if they had been more attentive, Rockhall's fate could have been averted. Seeking markets for their wares, the dwarves sent members to establish trade outposts on the surface, eventually founding the town of Irondelve and constructing the surface city of Granite Keep.

Part III: The Wards of Millennia Past

As the dwarves continued their mining, weakening the wards of millennia past, the illithids observed them from afar. Slowly, their planar prison drifted closer once again to the material world. As the planar boundaries weakened, the shadowy illithid apparitions began to influence and entice the dwarven miners toward the wards. The wards were balanced in such a way that destroying one would weaken them enough to permit entry. Though the planes prevented the illithids from controlling the dwarves outright, it was enough to influence their choices. As the illithids tightened their control, the duergar increased their assaults on Ulthak-Nor. Thus it was on that day, when the first ward was sundered unknowingly by dwarven miner. In a flash of dark brilliance, Shu'myndy'lort Mil'thana'dun shimmered back to the world. Though not fully corporeal, due to the remaining wards, it was enough to let the illithid's escape their prison.

Part IV: Retreat from Ulthak-Nor

The battles that raged after that became the essence of legend, as Clan Rockhall fought against the duergar and the illithids of ages past. The steadfastness of the dwarven warriors held off the onslaught for many years, but they could not hold out forever. A rogue drow enclave felt the return of the illithid city, the planar reverberations echoing in the mind of their matron mother. Striking a bargain with the duergar and the shadow illithids, MyzBaronis Mal'Viconia, summoned a powerful creature, an aspect of Ghunadaur. In the face of such opposition, the dwarves could do

naught but retreat to the surface. So it was that Ulfgar Rockspitter, thane of Ulthak-Nor and wielder of Clan Rockhall's ancestral weapon, Worm Slayer, lead his people to the surface city of Granite Keep. It was here that the clan elders met in council, calling for the sealing of both the surface city and their home under the mountain. Obon Rockbreaker, cousin of the thane, personally crafted the seals. The magic of Moradin lent strength to his crafting, creating a stonework of such craftsmanship that, when finished, none could identify where the entrance was to their former home. Many of the priests and warriors were lost in the retreat from Ulthak-Nor to Granite Keep. Had Obon had more time to craft, perhaps the wards would have lasted longer.

The wards to the city were keyed to three items of dwarven spirit and antiquity – a holy symbol of Moradin, a shield crafted with the hands of a Rockhall smith, and Worm Slayer. Thus sealed, the dwarves sought a new refuge where they could gain strength and retake their lost home.

Part V: Pilgrimage

Ulfgar led his clan from the mountains to a high mountain valley near the eastern portion of the Lortmils just on the edge of the Kron Hills. Leaving on a pilgrimage to find other dwarven nations With the help of Grimbold Ironshanks, Ulfgar secured the head of Worm Slayer in a crystal cave formation beneath the town of Irondelve. Here it was to be held until the reuniting of the dwarven peoples that would drive the evil from their ancestral home. Crafting a new axe blade, he fitted it on the handle of Worm Slayer and left on his journey. He fell to an ambush of a savage humanoid tribe nearly loosing the axe. He was sold to a band of pale-faced humans migrating from the south. The humans took their newly gotten slaves and forged towards the great forest. A temple was built using the craftsmanship of the dwarves combined with their magic. This temple sat to the east of a boggy fen on the western edge of the great forest.

Not all of the shadow illithids were bound by Obon Rockbreaker's wards. Unbeknownst to the dwarves, their magic served to reinforce the remaining elven wards, and once again cast the illithid city into the planar prison – but not completely. Though the city was bound, still was it anchored to the Material Plane, not to drift away with the ebb and flow of the planes. The rebinding of the city sealed within a great many of the illithids, but some – those not within the city – did escape. Their sense of the magic sealing their brethren lead them to Irondelve, where they and their minions – magma elementals, duergar, and those drow who had adapted to the surface – lay siege to the town. Grimbold Ironshanks and Obon Rockbreaker led their few remaining kinsmen in battle against the evil that had pursued them. Without the strength of their kin, the illithids were defeated and driven off.

Part VI: Passing the Legacy

Leaving Irondelve, Obon Rockbreaker departed with his family for the western edges of the Lortmils - strong in spirit but diminished from years of battle. Nestled in a quite fertile valley, they spent several years reshaping the mountain face as was done at Granite Keep. Here Obon shaped a replica of the gates to Granite Keep and a final resting place for him and his few kinsmen that followed him from their beloved valley.

The leader of Clan Rockspitter lead his followers' north by west until they found a home near the edge of the Lortmils bounded by high walls of granite and close proximity to the hills of the Kron. The Clan Leader decreed that after three generations, the first-born son of the clan leader would seek the Valley of Granite Keep once more. Upon the start of the quest, the son of Rockhall would not have his name spoken until the Valley of Granite Keep was found or upon his return at the fall of the Clan Leader when he would assume leadership of the clan passing the legacy to his first born son. So it has been for the last four generations unto this day