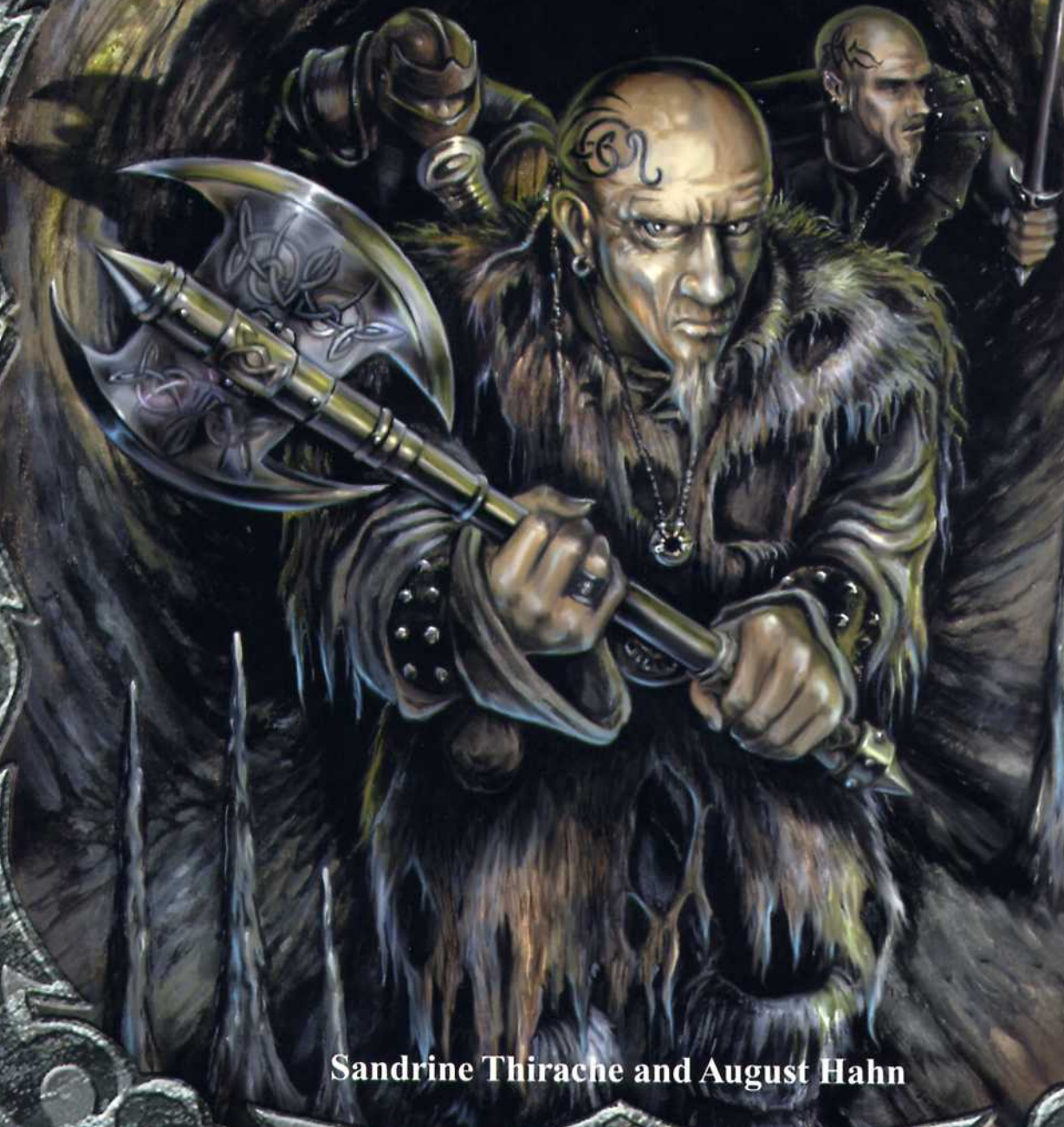


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THE  
SLAYER'S  
GUIDE  
TO  
DUERGAR



Sandrine Thirache and August Hahn

**D**uergar

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Williams 2002

# The Slayer's Guide To DUERGAR

Sandrine Thirache and August Hahn

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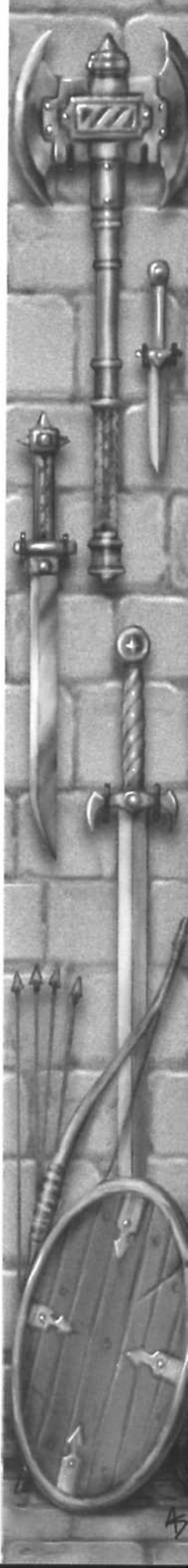
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# INTRODUCTION

There was a time in history when dwarves and duergar were one race, but it is said that a cataclysmic battle separated them forever. Little is known about this legend, but it is true that duergar, often called grey dwarves, live well-hidden in the darkness of the cold ground, revelling in mischief and evil deeds of all sorts and despising their cousins still living on a surface world now forbidden to them. Once a mysterious people, more has been discovered about their way of life, and sages hope that with the information provided by their texts one will be able to understand the intrinsic nature of these creatures and be aware of the danger they represent.

Duergar are masters of treachery and deceit and are engaged in an everlasting struggle with the other races of the underdark in their search for dominance over those realms. Drow are their fierce competitors in this domain, but duergar have surrounded themselves with such ingenuity that even dark elves have learned to respect them as capable adversaries. Duergar retain much of the dwarven race's traits even if their metabolism has changed somewhat to adapt to their environment, and their communities have evolved into a well-oiled fighting power to be reckoned with. Duergar are not to be taken lightly.



They are cunning and intelligent and, most of all, can be very unpredictable.

A desire for secrecy pushes these creatures to establish their colonies far from humanoid settlements whenever they can. Players venturing in the dark depths of mountains or rocky grounds may encounter one of their parties at the least expected moment. As duergar tend to avoid outsiders, adventurers are likely to be left alone when travelling if they avoid duergar areas of influence. This race does not send wandering parties outside of its territories unless it is needed, but once their territory is invaded, they are a most tenacious people.

## THE SLAYER'S GUIDES

This series of supplements, designed for use in all fantasy-based d20 games systems, takes an exhaustive look at specific monster races, detailing their beliefs, societies and methods of warfare. Typically, these will be the races all but ignored by Games Masters and players alike, who view them as little better than cannon fodder.

This outlook just has to be wrong. An entire race does not just suddenly materialise in the campaign world, and very few exist solely to wage war. What are they doing when the player characters are not around?

## DUERGAR: TREACHEROUS, DECEITFUL DWARVES

Each *Slayer's Guide* features a single race, in this case the duergar. You will find a colossal amount of information on duergar physiology, habitat and society, giving you a fundamental level of understanding on how this race exists and interacts with the rest of the world. Players can learn the sort of combat tactics the duergar are likely to employ against them, and Games Masters are presented with guidelines on how to introduce this race into their existing campaigns. Finally, a complete lair is featured to be used as either an extended encounter, the basis for a complete set of scenarios, or just an example of what duergar are capable of.

After reading *The Slayer's Guide to Duergar*, you may never view this race in quite the same way again.

'What do you mean we are lost?' grunted Marhuk with impatience. The head scout sensed the controlled fury in the voice of his leader and cautiously backed away. They had been walking along the dark corridors for what seemed an eternity without even getting close to their prey or finding their way out.

Marhuk had grown wary of the chase. At first it had all seemed very easy, a quick catch, and the hobgoblins had tracked their game through the night, certain of their kill. They had followed underground in the hope of tightening the pursuit but had lost valuable time. At the corner of one corridor, they had suddenly come to a dead end.

No trace existed of the small humanoids they had been following, so they must have found another way out. They tried several passages, all dark and silent, and had come to the conclusion they had lost the tracks. Marhuk had called off the chase and they had been backing their way up until the scouts at the front of the formation had stopped.

'We can't be lost!' barked Marhuk.

He violently pushed aside the scout and walked in front of the small column. He faced the darkness of the tunnel, trying to get a glimpse of any light source that would indicate to him they were close to the surface. He wiped the sweat covering his forehead and swore in silence. Turning back to the scouts waiting for his orders, he signalled them to follow.

They walked through more tunnels, crawled in passageways barely wide enough to let them pass, but there was still no escape. Even with all their senses alert, a meagre compensation against the shadows of that underdark world, they could not tell if they were going up or down. Marhuk remembered the stories he had heard some time ago, stories of creatures deep down that could swallow a whole man. He shivered at the thought. *They were just stories*, he reminded himself with a deliberate shrug.

'We will rest there,' he suddenly commanded.

They were emerging into a large cavern. Marhuk sensed the tension among his men recede somewhat. A weak light was emanating from the walls of the cave where some kind of moss was growing, enabling them to have a better idea of their surroundings. A small run of water was dripping in one corner. He was not sure how long they had been travelling or if it was day or night outside. All he knew is that they would need all their strength if they ever wanted to get out of here. He gave a last order to the sentinels and made his own camp.

A sudden shriek pierced the darkness and Marhuk awoke on the defensive. He called the sentinels but no one answered. His eyes were trying to focus on what was happening around him but he couldn't see beyond the forms of his subordinates. Like him, they were waiting for an attack that didn't seem to come. Judging by the lack of response from the sentinels, he gathered they would not be of any help anymore.

Strange whispers were now coming from all around them. Sometimes, for a split second, he could make out a vague shape that would disappear as soon as it appeared. He was still waiting, ready to strike any invisible opponent, but his nerves were pushed to their limit. He felt panic rushing through his men and one of them lost it.

Marhuk saw him rush forward and vanish. He heard a scream and a muffled sound and knew the man had not made it past the attacker's position. He drew a deep breath and gripped more tightly the hilt of his sword. Another shriek rose up to the top of the cave. He suddenly yelled at his men to stand their ground as he saw shapes pouring from every corner and from invisible holes in the rock.

'*Duergar!*' he thought as a blade pierced his heart. They had been hunting duergar like fools. And, like fools, they had been the prey without suspecting it.



# DUERGAR PHYSIOLOGY

All other differences aside, the physiology of a duergar is essentially dwarven. With an average height of 4 feet and the same general build of a dwarf, the duergar appear at first glance like their better known cousins. Initial appearances are quite deceiving in this case, as the duergar differ greatly from dwarves in a number of physical and mental ways. While their basic body style might be similar, a careful examination will note the duergar's emaciated body, grey skin, grey or colourless hair, and their most marked divergence from other dwarves; most duergar, male and female alike, are completely bald.

A duergar's emaciated appearance is not an indication of weakness, despite the wasted look of a grey dwarf's muscles and flesh. Instead of muscular bulk, the duergar have developed strong, thick bones and extremely resilient tendons. This gives them the same strength as other dwarven races while seeming frail and thin. For a race dedicated to deception and misdirection, this misleading appearance is entirely appropriate.

The lack of colour in a duergar's flesh and hair comes from a number of elements, including habitat and diet. Thousands of years spent in the darkest of caverns have robbed the duergar of their skin and hair pigmentation, leaving it chalky and grey. While this might seem an unhealthy colour, duergar have the same amazing constitution that marks the dwarven race as a whole. Another factor behind their loss of hue is their diet, a topic discussed at length below.

While their lack of colour is a distinguishing characteristic, it is their lack of hair that notes their true difference from other dwarven sub-races. Duergar generally lack any body hair whatsoever, with the few exceptions to this seen as freakish deviants by other grey dwarves. The reason behind this lack of hair is likely environmental, the result of long exposure to the strange radiations of their subterranean home. When a duergar does begin to grow hair, he or she usually shaves it as quickly as possible. Growing hair openly is usually a mark of defiance, seen only in those grey dwarves who are outcast from their own kind.

The special nature of duergar physiology is more than just skin deep. Duergar are not subject to any form of paralysis, phantasms, and any form of poison except natural ones. These immunities, combined with their acute senses and their innate ability to both vanish from sight and enlarge themselves, suggest that a duergar's body has been subjected to extreme metamorphic forces during their time in the depths. Regardless of the source of these differences, they are important to examine as they give insight into the duergar as a race.

## A SOUL IN THE SHADOWS: THE POWERS OF THE GREY DWARVES

The primary power of a duergar is stealth. The compact, quiet body style of a grey dwarf, combined with generations of training in the roguish arts, grants any member of the race a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. This complements their natural ability of *invisibility*, allowing them to overcome the possibility of being heard when they move about without being seen. Subterfuge is part of a duergar's life; whatever they endeavour to do,

If the exact height and weight of a given duergar becomes important, use the following formulas to generate these values. Keep in mind that the weight of a duergar comes more from its bones than from its musculature. Also, these results are merely suggestions; a deviant grey dwarf abnormally short or tall would certainly not be impossible.

	Base Weight	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Duergar, male	3' 8"	+2d4	150 lb.	+(3d6) lb.
Duergar, female	3' 6"	+2d4	120 lb.	+(3d4) lb.

This chart is used in the manner described for random character height and weight in the *Core Rulebook I*, resulting in a duergar individual that is generally an inch shorter and slightly heavier than a dwarven character of equivalent variance.

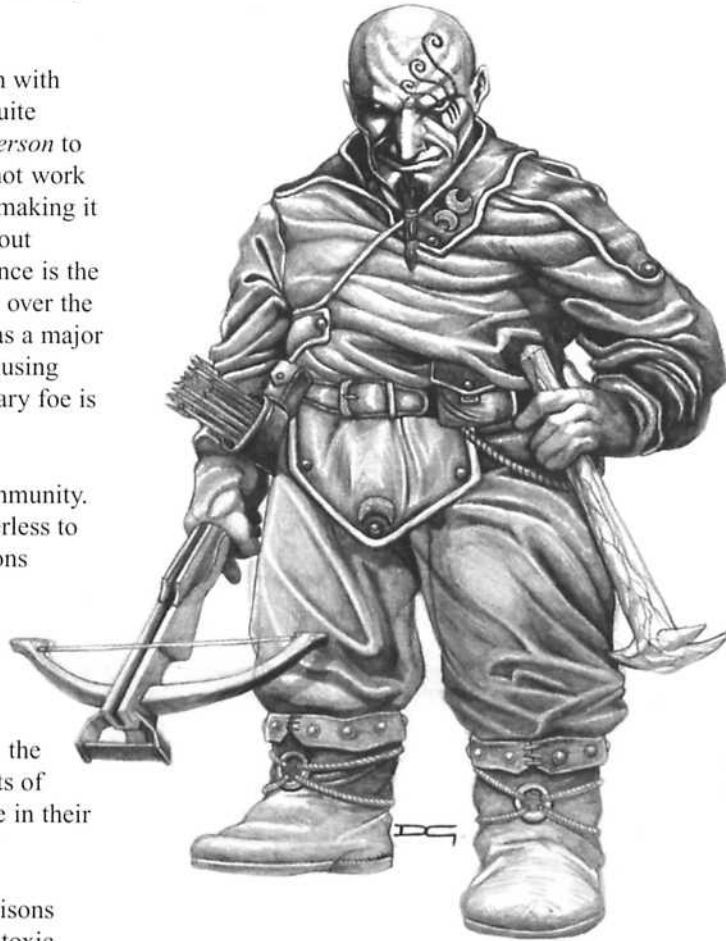
they generally go about it like the grey ghosts they resemble.

Even when a duergar is seen, affecting them with anything other than direct attacks can be quite difficult. Paralysis of any sort, from *hold person* to the touch of a bone-chilling undead, does not work on the strange physiology of a grey dwarf, making it impossible to impede their movement without physical restraints. Most likely, this resistance is the direct result of the duergar's many conflicts over the centuries with creatures utilizing paralysis as a major attack form. This includes dwarven priests using paralyzing magics, since the duergar's primary foe is the dwarven race they are descended from.

Duergar possess a curious form of poison immunity. If a toxin has an unnatural origin, it is powerless to affect them. Alchemical mixtures and poisons created by magic fall into this category, making the duergar impervious to spells like *poison* and the envenoming effects of weapons that create their own lethal fluids. Grey dwarves are not immune to natural poisons, leaving them vulnerable to the bite of spiders, snakes, and the deadly effects of certain plants and fungi. This apparent hole in their defences is a curious one.

Likely, duergar are vulnerable to natural poisons because their environment is bereft of most toxic sources. While the grey dwarves might ally with other subterranean races, they do not often live near them. Instead, the duergar prefer their extremely deep caverns where they can dwell in total seclusion. In these dark rifts, few plants of any kind grow without careful tending and creature life is also very selective. In such a controlled environment, duergar are rarely exposed to any substance they do not choose to encounter. While the strange energies of these deep homes may have made grey dwarves resistant to artificial and magical toxins, it has not rendered them proof against natural poisons.

Duergar have also developed innate magical powers; the power to *enlarge* themselves and become *invisible* as spell-like abilities. Both are useful in dealing with the foes grey dwarves encounter in their lightless homes. Those creatures too powerful to combat while *enlarged* can be avoided through silent movement and vanishing from sight. These powers have the odd trait of being usable only on the grey dwarf in question, resembling more the special traits of outsiders than actual spellcasting.



Again, these powers are likely the result of prolonged exposure to the energy of the abyss-like caverns the duergar call home.

The other traits that differentiate duergar from other dwarven races are all sensory, including their immunity to phantasms. Grey dwarves have been without light for so long, their other senses have become phenomenally acute as compensation. With a racial bonus of +1 to Listen and Spot checks in addition to Alertness as a free feat, few creatures have more acute hearing. Duergar darkvision is exceptional, as its 120 foot range is rivalled by few other creatures beneath the earth. Indeed, duergar may have developed the ability to turn *invisible* as a way to hide from the sharp-eyed members of their own race.

This sensory acuity explains the grey dwarven immunity to phantasms of any sort. A duergar is constantly experiencing its surroundings in extreme detail. When a duergar encounters a phantasm, he or she receives hundreds of subtle clues to its true

nature. Combined with a grey dwarf's resistance to mental paralysis and their racially augmented Will saves, this knowledge lets him or her completely ignore such falsehoods. Duergar can sense a phantasm without difficulty, but nothing detrimental can come from such awareness.

### BLOOD OF STONE, BONES OF THE EARTH

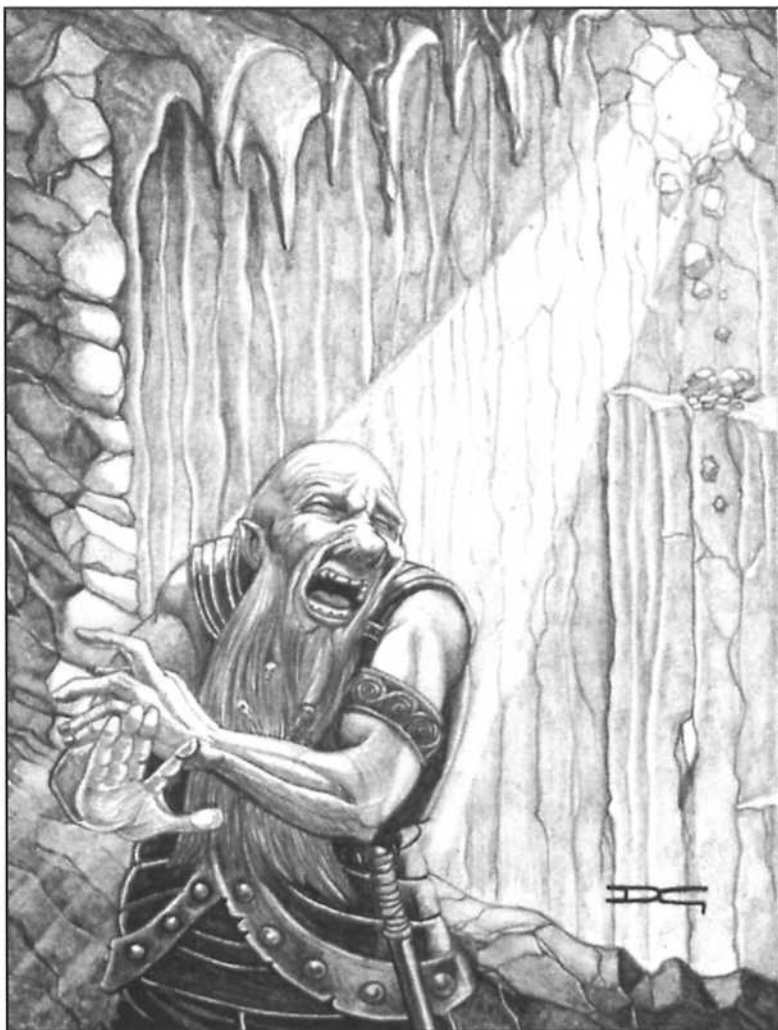
Despite what most dwarves would say, duergar are also children of the earth. Their grey coloration and heavy bone structure might be as much an aspect of this terran heritage as a side-effect of their shadowy environment. While this kinship with stone may or may not be a vital part of the duergar's physiology, their physical strength, constitution, and resiliency cannot be denied. Duergar may be dark, vile reflections of their better known hill dwarven brethren, but they are still dwarves.

Certain duergar bear the signs of their earthen bonds more visibly than others. Few grey dwarves have body hair of any sort, but they do occasionally develop stony protrusions as replacements. While a duergar with rocky scales for eyebrows or a scalp covered in glittering quartz points would be considered a rare oddity, they would by no means be unheard of. In fact, such 'earth touched' duergar are usually treated with great reverence, as they usually possess a special kinship with the rock and stone that most grey dwarves lost long ago. It is not uncommon for these special duergar to hold positions of spiritual leadership.

Earth touched or not, duergar have all the normal dwarven stonemasonry abilities of their less twisted relatives. This makes them intimately familiar with their surroundings, allowing even the youngest grey dwarves to sense unsafe terrestrial passages, determine how far below the hated surface world they are, and feel natural shifts and changes within the earth. Degenerate or not, a duergar knows more about the caverns they lair in than anyone; those who hunt them would do well to remember this.

### THE DYING OF THE LIGHT

No guide to the duergar would be complete without mentioning the grey dwarves' greatest weakness; light. While weaker sources of illumination are merely distasteful to them, sunlight or the radiance of a *daylight* spell nearly blinds duergar. They can still function, of course, and only a fool would consider a duergar exposed to sunlight any less deadly. Still, those who wish to fight the grey dwarves would be well advised to carry sources of bright light. The distraction value of a *daylight* spell might well be the difference between victory and a silent, ignoble death in the dark caverns below.





# HABITAT

To understand the duergar in any detail, it becomes necessary to examine their environment. Unlit caverns deep below the surface, existing in the midst of a labyrinth of tertiary passages winding through the hard stone of the underearth, are where these shadowy grey dwarves make their homes. This confusing abyss of tangled caves is the domain of the secretive and isolationist duergar; a physical expression of the duplicity and darkness that exists in the hearts of those who lurk there.

Paradoxically both deceitful and ordered, the duergar do not find their maze-like territory confusing at all. Each cavern system's twists and turns are carefully mapped out by the specific clan of grey dwarves that claim them. By the time a duergar is twenty, the passages that make up his or her clan home is utterly committed to memory and can be traversed expertly even if utterly blind. This intimate knowledge of the cavernous geography around their clan homes is a part of every grey dwarf's teachings, with new passages added constantly as mining and exploration expand their claimed territories.

Duergar clan homes consist of one primary living cavern, called a dur-holt, for every two to three hundred dwarves in the clan. Dur-holts are further subdivided into excavated dwellings for each family, all radially added to the main cavern and extended out as far as family size necessitates. The centre of a dur-holt contains all of the important structures for clan life, including feast halls, water wells, and guard towers. Whenever possible, these buildings are tunnelled directly from stalagmites in the area.

All of the dur-holts of a given clan of duergar are collectively called the agur-holt; the words agur-holt and clan are synonymous in the minds of most grey dwarves. It is a point of pride among the duergar to compare the number of dur-holts in their clan with those of others. An agur-holt is also the name given to a central cave located in the centre of all the dur-holts, connected to each by wide, well-braced corridors and massive, carved doors of iron-banded stone.

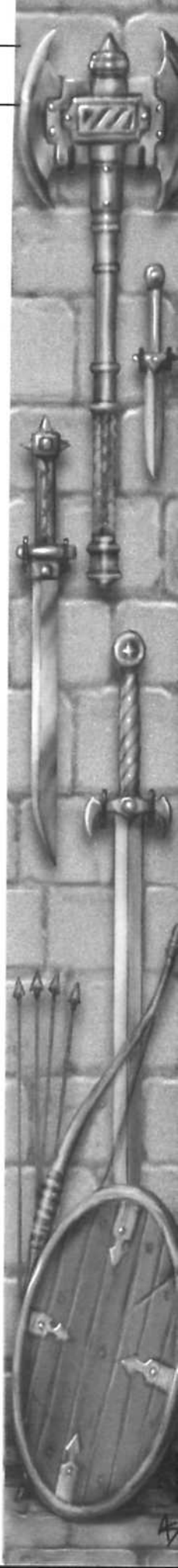
Also connected to the agur-holt are the deshtuur, the caves of the fethet, and the heavily guarded gates of

the uldir-buurn. The deshtuur usually consist of secondary caverns sprawling beneath or above the agur-holt and reachable by means of a defended series of metal doors and staircases. The deshtuur include all of the burial cairns and passages leading to the clan's mines. While the duergar do not place a great deal of value on their ancestors, their mines are their lifeblood and as such, guards and traps constantly ward the entrances to the deshtuur.

Fethet is the duergar word for 'slave'; thus, the caves of the fethet are the usually dismal holding cells where the grey dwarves keep their unfortunate captives. Creatures of every race the duergar can conceivably encounter and contain can be found in these caves, watched over by some of the toughest, most vicious examples of the duergar race. The caves of the fethet are generally the most unstable caverns in the area, unsuitable for any other purpose. Some duergar clans purposefully make their fethet caves even more unstable, building a series of destroyable buttresses that allows them to collapse the caves if they so desire. The threat of being crushed under a thousand tons of stone can quell a potential rebellion far better than the cruellest whip.

Lastly, the uldir-buurn is the single passage that leads out of the clan's caverns and connects to the rest of the underearth. Most uldir-buurns consist of a wandering single passage worked to contain dozens of double backs, unsafe rockslides, and sudden pitfalls; all of this construction is subtle and never appears to be anything more than the hazards of a natural cave. To penetrate a duergar clan's uldir-buurn is an act of sheer fortitude, skill, and daring few natural predators will attempt and most underearth races would avoid if possible. Hidden in the uldir-buurn are at least a score of guard posts, places where a single duergar can conceal himself and watch for intruders. Each carries a shrill whistle capable of echoing through the entire length of the uldir-buurn and warn the watchmen at the agur-holt's main gate.

While any given part of a duergar clan complex might seem chaotic and twisted, one should always keep in mind that the grey dwarves do not create anything without a reason. Keeping in mind that every turn in a duergar cavern might conceal a new and deadly danger may very well help you survive your time below.



# DUERGAR SOCIETY

The life of a duergar rotates around his clan, from his first step into the world to his last breath in the tunnels. The clan defines his fate, his status and sometimes his position as a respected or feared member of the community. This bond is instilled at a very early age and is rarely broken.

Men and women have separate and specific roles in society. Although women have the responsibility of taking care of the babies, males and females of the clan are separated from each other, thus establishing sexual boundaries early in their infancy. They will not have further contact with one another until they have reached the age at which they are considered old enough to be married, with the bride being chosen for her husband by the clan.

Female duergar continue to be nursed and brought up by their mothers, but it is the father's duty to teach a male child about life and his role within the family. When the young boy reaches the age of responsibility, his father takes him to the mines, where he will work and learn about his environment and what he is expected to do as a mature member of

the household. If a young duergar demonstrates special talents such as magical or trade skills, he will be sent into an apprenticeship, paid for by the clan or bartered in return for future favours. These privileged youths will have the advantage of a better education and will be a source of great pride, as their new skills will allow the tribe to grow wealthier.

Before he can be fully considered as an adult, the boy has to earn his clan's name. Not entirely a ceremonial act, this passage into adulthood is taken with the utmost seriousness. The rite, called the Silent Year, consists of the young male leaving his clan caverns on the eve of his thirtieth birthday. Alone, he must survive the passage of a full year outside of the colony. Isolated, he will either fully develop his survival instincts or fail and die in the unforgiving darkness.

Upon his return, the new adult will choose his name and take his rightful place. The clan will present him with a chosen bride, according to the dowry she is bringing and her merits as a good housewife. Duergar enter marriage as soon as they are recognised as worthy of bringing new sons into the clan. Marriage is a matter of convenience, bringing two houses together for mutual interests.

If an encounter includes males, females, and young duergar, the females will almost always move to defend the children with their lives. Children provide a female duergar with status and prestige, something they are loath to risk. Female grey dwarves will generally protect their children with an almost feral disregard for their own lives. Games Masters can apply a +1 morale bonus to weapon attack and damage rolls when female duergar are defending their offspring.

The duergar is now free to choose his own path, to continue to work in the mines or to choose another profession if he had an apprenticeship. Most will stay close to the mines, as they have inherited the greed of their fathers. The few showing magical dispositions and trained accordingly may follow that path and enter into one of the grey dwarves' magical colleges. Those duergar blessed enough to be 'earth touched' may even aspire to the secret arts of the Dark Stone Magi (see the prestige class of the same name for more information).

In general, duergar distrust magic, though clerics and other spellcasters are not unheard of amongst their ranks. Most will not traffic in the magic arts



willingly if they can avoid it, but there are exceptions in nearly every clan; magics of earth and darkness come naturally to the grey dwarves whether they deny it or not. Those who embrace this truth and devote their lives to magical studies usually keep their arts secret. These reluctant spellcasters spend their time in seclusion hidden behind stone walls, going outside only when their services are required by their often-resentful fellow duergar.

## THE DUERGAR MINDSET – MINING, MURDER, AND MISOGYNY

Spending all their lives hiding in the shadows of their brethren has given the duergar an isolationist complex toward the other dwarven races. Now, confused about and afraid of the surface, they have become a twisted race, cruel and bitter, resentful of others and trusting no one outside their own kind. Due to this xenophobic attitude, they wage a constant war with anybody trespassing on their domain. Innately hostile towards other races, the grey dwarves turn this violence against any who encounter them.

A driving force pushes duergar deeper into the underground and makes them thrive in the dark: lust, for gold and gems, for precious metals. Duergar, through desperate need and the resourcefulness that lies within all breeds of dwarvenkind, have met their material needs even in the most barren of deep caverns. Subsistence is not enough for the avaricious hearts of the grey dwarves; greed dictates their every action. Duergar feel greed towards everything they see, from the caverns that surround them to the creatures they encounter and enslave. Anything a duergar comes into contact with is a potential possession waiting to be claimed and taken.

Nothing exemplifies this attitude like the duergar's mines. Mines are sometimes the source of pride of entire communities, and whole clans are devoted to working them. The majority of each grey dwarven generation follows in the steps of their fathers and forefathers, becoming miners or engaging in a related profession by the time that they are adults. Blacksmithing and jewellery making are considered secondary professions, even if they do contribute to the growth of the clan's wealth.

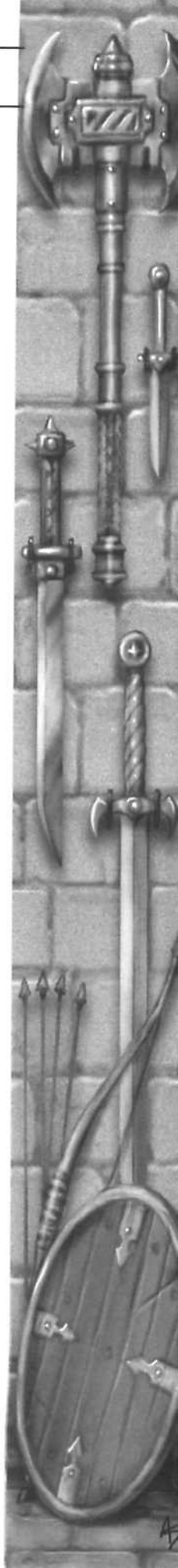
Another valid way for duergar to contribute to the wealth of their clan is through the shadowy arts of thievery and assassination. Naturally quiet and invisible, grey dwarves are well-suited for such pursuits. It is a mark of pride among these twisted people to collect possessions from their slain victims; the more valuable the spoils, the greater the value of the duergar in the eyes of his foul folk. Duergar inclined to murder and thievery also usually practise their storytelling skills, though this art is put to just as dark a purpose.

How the duergar acquires this stolen wealth is just as important as its worth, because the grey dwarves greatly enjoy stories of death and suffering. Duergar rogues with the ability to relate the details of their exploits to their fellows can gain status and prestige. The bloodier and more heinous the acts performed by the storyteller, the more appreciated the story of their commission will be received by the duergar's audience. In this way, duergar come together to share in vile tales and establish a sort of order amongst themselves – a ranking of dark deeds and darker words.

In the manner of other dwarven races, many of the tales of the duergar are put into verse and set to a low, repetitive beat. The chants performed by duergar rogues (and what few bards the race produces) are called *courvach*, a word that roughly translates to 'blood song'. The greatest of *courvach* are performed during clan feasts and as lessons for educating grey dwarven children.

About the only thing considered inappropriate at these gatherings is a woman's voice. Women rarely gain status outside their clan and are not allowed a profession. Young girls are taught to obey their future husbands and to care for their children. Though they do not go into apprenticeships, they are trained in the home arts and excel at transforming the bare surfaces of their stone houses into pleasant living areas. These skills will determine a female's chance at being chosen as a bride by a wealthy family and at bearing the sons of a renowned house with pride. Her adult name is chosen when she becomes a spouse and is generally given by the clan of her new husband. She does not retain her previous possessions, except what she brings as a gift into her new house.

Although women's conditions might seem harsh, most are glad to serve in this way and to leave responsibilities to men. They do not imagine



themselves as fighters and do not often possess any magical or religious aptitudes. They do earn the respect of their clan as the mothers of its sons and are revered and protected as such. For a rare few, this is not enough. Some female duergar aspire to something more. When outcast grey dwarves are encountered, they are often led by powerful, independent women.

## DUERGAR RELIGION — A LIFE OF SERVITUDE

Duergar almost exclusively worship one god, the deity that according to their legends led them into the dark places of the earth. Known to his followers as the Lord of Toil, the duergar deity demands only

one thing of them; grey dwarves pledge their entire lives to unceasing service. Priests of the Lord of Toil are even more bound to this promise, spending the rest of their days guiding the efforts of their clan to supplicating their god's unending appetites.

The Lord of Toil dominates everything in the lightless caverns of the duergar. Priests serve him directly, but all grey dwarves are expected to live as he bids. From infancy, the word of their god dictates how grey dwarves work, eat, speak, and dress. The Lord of Toil, through the guidance and enforcement of his clergy, shapes every aspect of his chosen race's existence. From their first cries at birth to their final rest in the burial cairns of their clan, a duergar takes each step as their greedy, insatiable Lord demands.

The servitude begins at the birthing bed. Duergar mothers will sit just beside their new-born infants, forcing them to seek them out to feed. This tradition is meant to teach the grey dwarf from his first moments that everything in life is a struggle. In truth, most duergar mothers are too protective of their children to let them starve, but any 'help' they offer must be done without the watchful eye of the priesthood seeing them. Aiding an infant in their first feeding is usually a death sentence for both mother and child. Duergar fathers, who base much of their status on the perceived strength and worth of their children, have been known to help carry out this execution.

As a young duergar grows up, there are hundreds of work rituals that they must undergo. Each one is progressively harder, forcing the maturing grey dwarf to struggle more and more to achieve some token reward for his efforts. Females have similar trials, though theirs are centred around maintaining a good home life for their future husband and children. There are no religious taboos about instructing children in the particulars of their expected roles. Duergar children are surprisingly mature at an early age, usually understanding the details of mating and childbirth by their thirteenth year.

After undergoing their Silent Year, duergar return to their clans and to an entirely new system of rituals and trials. Now expected to take on the responsibilities of family and work, a newly adult duergar also faces the Hand of Toil each decade from now until the end of his life. Considered the most important ceremony in a grey dwarf's life, the Hand of Toil is administered with great reverence and



approached with some dread by those who must undergo it.

When duergar go rogue and leave their clans, it usually happens just before the grey dwarf would have to undergo his ten year trial. The echoes of the unworthy sometimes drive other duergar to fear for their own worth and as the day of reckoning approaches, they are tempted to take their chances in the uncharted caverns outside their clan homes. This is an especially common thing to occur to young duergar who have just come back from their Lonely Year, as the ways of the outside world are still fresh in their minds and do not hold as much terror as dying on the Hand of Toil...

The Hand of Toil involves the high altar to the Lord of Toil in each clan cavern and requires that the duergar undergoing the trial offer up an example of his work over the last ten years. The altar, which is invariably in the shape of a grasping hand, closes around the sacrifice. If the effort is pleasing to the duergar god, the hand opens, empty, and the priests present will feel the satisfaction of their Lord. If not, the hand opens to reveal the crushed remnants of the unworthy offering.

The priests then drag the failed duergar onto the altar himself, where the Lord of Toil judges his worth. If the gift was unworthy but the dwarf has potential for better work, he is spared and released to contemplate his failure. If the duergar is deemed unfit to continue as a member of the clan, the hand closes again. Temples to the Lord of Toil are usually built so that the screams of those who fail this final test can echo throughout the entire clan cavern.

The final religious trial of a duergar's life is taken once that life ends. Priests of the Lord of Toil pile the corpse of the grey dwarf along with all of his valuables onto a flat stone in the clan's burial cairns. Anointing the stone with a special oil and intoning a passage of praise to the virtues of work, the priests call down their god's judgement on the final worth of the departed. If the Lord of

Toil is pleased with what the deceased has accomplished in his life, most of the valuables disappear as sacrifices and the corpse is interred with what is left. If everything on the body vanishes, the Lord has found the dead duergar lacking and the stripped body is left to rot in a dark, forgotten corner of the cave.

The burial rite of judgement is the origin of the duergar version of the phrase, 'taking this to my grave'. To a duergar, something they want to take to the grave is something extremely valuable to them. It is not a commonly uttered oath, but when a grey dwarf says, 'I will take this to my grave,' those around him would do well to listen. If a duergar is willing to risk the wrath of his greedy deity, he will not think twice of killing a companion who comes between him and the object of his desire.



# WARFARE IN THE DARK

**D**uergar as a race are lawful, and this ordered mindset shows in their approach to battle. Even grey dwarven ambushes and backstabs are well-planned affairs that often incorporate days of planning when such advance time is available. In areas where the terrain can be carefully studied and preparations can be made ahead of time, duergar tactics can be quite devastating. These long-lived masters of the deepest darkness are rarely caught unawares and their plans incorporate decades of experience and familiarity with their dangerous subterranean environment.

Another thing to consider about the warfare strategies of the duergar is their desperate will to

survive. Driven into their current homes by other dwarves and forced to live in conditions that would have extinguished lesser creatures, the duergar can fight with the unbending morale that comes from having nothing left to lose. With nowhere to retreat, duergar do not give ground and will usually die before surrender becomes an option. Those who do not give mercy rarely consider asking for it.

Duergar benefit from three major advantages. Each one ensures that while they may have fallen as far as they can, the grey dwarves have the strength of arms to rule their sunless world with absolute authority. While few underground races fear the possibility of a duergar invasion, they in turn do not attempt to take what the grey dwarves hold. Superior equipment, lethal subterfuge, and the power of their dark clergy keep the duergar safe from the ravages of the earthen deep.

## WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

Despite their pale complexion and differences, the duergar are still dwarves. The arts of weapon and armourcraft are in the grey dwarves' blood; their skills at crafting implements of war are just as well developed as other races of dwarvenkind. Centuries of having to fight for their survival in the darkest pits of the earth have greatly honed their metallurgy and martial crafts. While they do not surpass the dwarves of the mountains and the hills in their knowledge of steel, they are at least their equals.

This is not to say the art has not been changed in the grey hands of the duergar. The tight caverns and twisting passages of their home have shaped the craft, resulting in a unique style of armour and weapons. Unlike the battleaxes and heavy plate mail of their distant brethren above, duergar have developed lighter arms better suited for the close-in conditions of their battlegrounds. This is not to say that duergar cannot heft waraxes and belt on thick iron armour when the situation demands it, but their typical battle garb is considerably lighter.

For weaponry, most duergar prefer short swords, short spears, and picks. Virtually any piercing weapon is effective in a grey dwarf's hands, as the many low ceilings in the caverns of the underworld limit the usefulness of anything that has to be swung overhead. The narrow passages also keep anything long or wide from being very practical, which means few duergar will be encountered wielding a large size weapon of any kind. Duergar warriors



defending the larger caverns of their clan homes are exceptions to this rule and will most likely be carrying the most damaging weapons they can get. In these cases, duergar often carry their unique form of the dwarven waraxe – a spike backed sweeping axe blade mounted to a heavy steel or stone haft.

The armour of the duergar is almost always heavy leather or hide studded with circular metal discs. Those few exceptions among the grey dwarves that prefer heavier armour wear scale mail. Duergar armour is never polished or bright, every exposed metal surface is purposefully dulled. Whenever possible, dark iron is used for its lack of lustre. Large shields are rarely used due to space concerns, but many duergar carry small metal shields to provide a little additional protection.

Ranged attacks are of limited use in the confines of the duergar's caverns; this consequently has limited their development of missile weapons. Thrown items require an overhead arc, making them less than effective for the grey dwarves. Bows are also large, needing clearance to use. This leaves the crossbow, which duergar wield with deadly accuracy. In any battle that allows the duergar the distance to use ranged attacks at all, they usually unleash as many volleys of crossbow bolts as they can before closing into melee.

A common modification made to duergar crossbows is the addition of a vicious iron blade mounted to the stock in front. While this change does not make the crossbow a melee weapon for purposes of attacks of opportunity, it does allow the wielder to make melee attacks as if the bladed crossbow was a dagger. These attacks incur a -2 circumstance penalty because of the clumsiness of the improvised weapon.

An important final note about the weapons and armour of the duergar is that whenever possible, they are silenced and dulled to keep from reflecting any light at all. Duergar scabbards have strips of hide built into them to steady and quiet their weapons. Duergar armour is backed with sections of leather to soften any noise it could make. Nothing on a duergar is allowed to hang free; every weapon and piece of armour is secured with cord and kept tight against the body.

## THE TWIN FACES OF WAR

As the Lord of Toil teaches, there are two paths the grey dwarves take into battle. From the time they are old enough to understand spoken words, duergar learn these paths and, to some extent, are expected to walk them both. Each duergar develops his own specialities, however, and few travel both paths equally. By the time any given duergar emerges from the dark caverns outside his clan home after the Lonely Year, the path that will dominate his life has already been chosen. His contribution to the safety and prosperity of his clan depends largely on which face of war he chooses to wear.

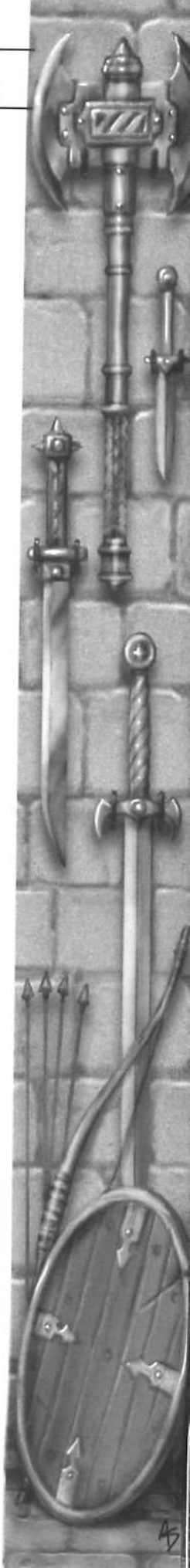
As taught by the priesthood of the Lord of Toil, the twin faces of war are Ambush and Assassination. These arts comprise the bulk of the grey dwarves' combat strategies. No one path is greater than the other, and each is revered on its own worth. A master of Assassination is accorded the same level of respect as a devoted warrior who strikes from Ambush. In fact, one art is rarely practised solely to the exclusion of the other. The most powerful grey dwarves are those who understand the place of both in battle.

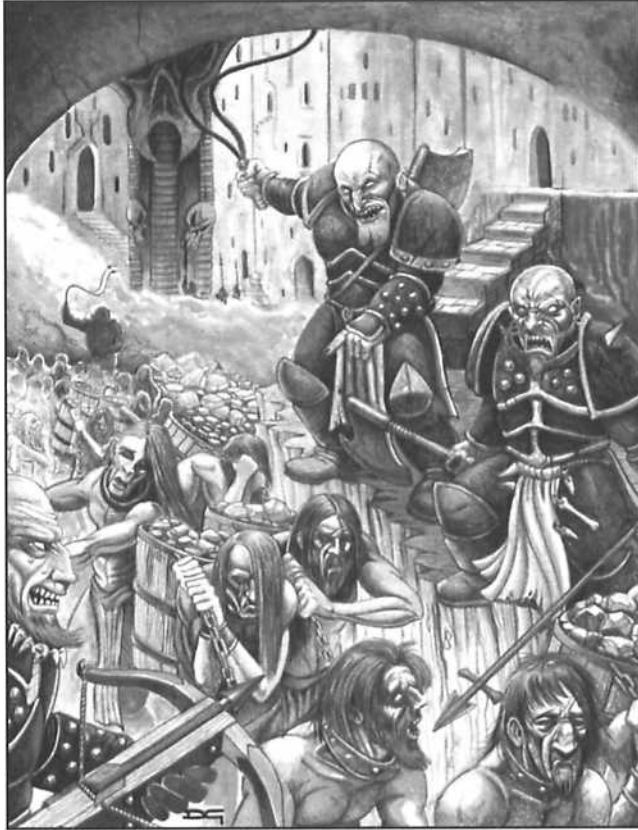
## AMBUSH

Ambush is the epitome of the duergar fighting style. Using their natural stealth and magical abilities in harmony with their innate knowledge of their dark domain, grey dwarves seem much like the ghosts they resemble. Striking from the shadows to devastating effect, a unit of hidden duergar soldiers can often decimate an enemy force before their foes have enough time to react. If an ambush is executed correctly, the victims never even get the chance to draw their weapons.

Ambush tactics go further than 'hit them before they can see you'. Avenues of escape are always plotted out in advance, with orders to both block the enemy's retreat and to pull back if the quarry begins to fight back effectively. A general rule during ambushes is for the entire attacking force to withdraw if they take even a single casualty. In some cases, the signal to retreat is when any single member of the ambushing side takes significant damage.

This is not cowardice. Usually, a fallback point has been set up for the retreating duergar to set up





another ambush. More often than not, this catches the enemy completely off-guard because the duergar appeared to be routed and fleeing for their lives. When the pursuers are suddenly set upon again by an unshaken grey dwarven force striking from the shadows once more, the effects can be extremely lethal.

An ambush does not always involve an attacking force of duergar. The art of ambush incorporates the idea of pits, rockfalls, and other hazards that can be unleashed on the unsuspecting. Traps and the skilful use of what dangers lurk naturally in the underearth are considered important parts of the ambushing art. A dozen duergar armed with crossbows can be deadly, but when they can fire down onto the heads of their prey *after* the unfortunates have fallen thirty feet into a hidden ravine, so much the deadlier. Other subterranean creatures are also effective tools for ambush, with a favourite tactic being to drive enemies into the lair of something vicious and inhospitable.

The duergar preference for ambush should not be mistaken as an inability to face a direct fight. Those who think the duergar will break and run when faced with opposition are sorely mistaken. Duergar specialise in striking from the shadows, but they can

also stand fast in the open spaces of their caves and ensure that any victory their enemies win comes at a dire cost.

## ASSASSINATION

While a volley of quarrels might drive off an attacking army, a single, well-placed dagger thrust in the back of the right commander can ensure the survivors never return. If ambush is the crushing fist of the duergar, assassination is their subtle touch of death. A few careful murders of important leaders can send even the most disciplined force into disarray, making the enemy's defeat that much easier. Some attackers might simply prove too dangerous to face through force of arms, even in the safety of the shadows.

That is when a grey dwarf assassin can accomplish what twenty duergar warriors cannot. Even more skilled in the ways of stealth than his fellow duergar, these dark figures travel through the twists and turns of the underearth seeking out their victims with cold, tireless efficiency. Called 'shadowknives' by other grey dwarves, true duergar assassins are treated with respect and fear. The respect is accorded to them because of the valuable part they play in the defence of their clan homes.

The fear comes from the fact that when the duergar are not at war or defending themselves from the predators that lurk in the underearth, shadowknives keep their skills honed by hunting down outcast duergar and those few clansmen who dare to break the law. Knowing that the shadowknives are willing to stalk and kill their own kinsmen keeps the duergar around them at a distance. This reaction is often a useful tool for the shadowknives, so much so that they rarely try to discourage it.

The tactics of assassination are practised by those without specific training as well. Any duergar worth his short sword understands the value in targeting enemy leaders. Even the lowest ranking soldier in a grey dwarven unit knows that a blade in the back is more efficient than crossing swords with an opponent face to face. Duergar understand the usefulness of surgical strikes intuitively. Trained duergar rogues simply take this attitude to a higher level of effect.

One advantage duergar rogues have over those of other races is their immunity to certain types of poison. Grey dwarves do not require the special



training other assassins must receive to handle deadly substances safely. As such, it is common for well-equipped duergar to use envenomed weapons. Of the many common toxins, duergar are especially fond of shadow essence and an alchemical form of blue whinnis (see *Core Rulebook II*). While the latter is more difficult for them to procure, the unconsciousness it inflicts makes capturing slaves vastly easier.

It should be noted that while duergar are isolationist and evil, they are not irrationally violent. Assassination can just as easily be used to capture as it can to kill. When times are difficult and the slave pens are running low of useful talent, assassins and foot soldiers alike will usually attempt to capture opponents when they can. A slain enemy is always a joy, but when the needs of the clan demand otherwise, a captured slave is better.

## THE POWER OF DARK FAITH

Although their brooding, often emotionless expressions would not suggest it, duergar are creatures capable of deep faith. From birth, the grey dwarves are raised according to the dictates of their god, the Lord of Toil. This creates a close, if not loving, bond between the duergar and their tyrant deity. For some, this bond goes a step beyond and sparks a level of fervour that draws the duergar into a special relationship with the Lord of Toil – the life of the priesthood.

Those who serve the Lord of Toil directly become the religious leadership of their entire clan. Taskmasters empowered by their god with priestly magic, the devoted of the Lord of Toil can exert great power over the duergar and their enemies. Usually, each dur-holt in a clan has a priest as its spiritual leader. This high ranking priest serves beside the duergar lord ruling the families of the dur-holt, but he only answers to the priests ruling in the central agur-holt. In this way, military leaders and the priesthood alike share power equally.

On the battlefield, duergar priests earn their special status. It is the duty of those who revere the Lord of Toil to ensure that every duergar present performs to the best of his abilities. Directly effective personal spells like *bull's strength* are normally reserved for the priest himself, but the Lord of Toil also expects his priests to *bless* and heal whenever possible. The more powerful the priest, the more he is expected to



do to maintain his special status. Since priests must also undergo the Hand of Toil ritual, it is in their best interests to stay in their deity's good graces, such as they are.

Truly mighty priests among the grey dwarves can be a terrifying force in battle. The caverns of their underground home are particularly suited to many of the great magics the Lord of Toil can grant. From *stone shape* ensuring that any chosen battleground is exactly as the duergar wish it to be, to the last word in subterranean warfare, *earthquake*, a wrathful priest of the Lord of Toil underground can be a truly potent force to contend with. With all of the creatures that duergar have to compete with for their territories, the priesthood play a vital role in their continued survival.

Grey dwarves who are 'earth-touched' always have Earth as one of their two divine domains if they become clerics, regardless of the domains normally offered by their deity. The special connection earth-touched duergar feel with the stones around them allows them to channel these spells directly from the underground. Even if they lose their normal clerical divine spells for some reason, only a complete inability to cast can prevent them from using their earth domain spells.



# ROLEPLAYING WITH DUERGAR

**G**rey skin, dark shadows, and darker souls, the duergar are twisted reflections of the dwarves that live far above them in the hills and mountains of the world. Though they might wish to deny it, those more 'noble' races know a terrible truth; the evil that taints the grey dwarves exists in their hearts as well. Everything foul in the duergar is simply a magnification of the flaws that exist in all dwarves. Duergar are greedy, hostile towards outsiders, and live a dismal life of unending toil.

Greed is nothing alien to the hearts of any dwarves. In the duergar, this avarice is heightened to an almost insane degree. Anything of value a duergar sees, a duergar wants. Practicality, usefulness, and prior ownership have no bearing on this desire. Much of a grey dwarf's life is spent satisfying his greed or seeking out new things to want. This overwhelming desire is not limited to physical objects. New slaves, new territory, or new positions among their own kind are all things that can drive the greed of a duergar. This greed and the lengths to

which a grey dwarf will go to satisfy it are important steps towards understanding the duergar people.

The hostility duergar show towards those not of their kind is not unlike the massive doors and hidden halls of other dwarven folk. Few dwarves appreciate visitors, especially unannounced ones. The duergar take this distrust and lack of hospitality to a severe extreme, slaying instead of keeping out and enslaving rather than parleying with strangers. The efforts the duergar take in hiding and protecting their clan homes ensure that they have to deal with few uninvited creatures in their own tunnels. When they explore farther out, they treat wherever they are as their own territory and treat those they encounter accordingly.

The trait that truly defines a duergar is neither greed nor violence. It is toil. While the grey dwarves do take slaves and force them into dangerous and exhausting labour, they generally perform the same kinds of work themselves. The duergar are no strangers to their mines, working long hours with no rest or pause for food or drink. This is done as the grey dwarves' god demands of them; unceasing toil is a sacrament among the duergar.

In fact, the brutal treatment the duergar subject their slaves to might come as much from their attitude towards working themselves to the brink of exhaustion as from their innate cruelty. The enhanced constitution duergar enjoy allows them to exert themselves far longer than other races, which gives them an inflated opinion of what can be accomplished in a given amount of work time. This in turn contributes to the grey dwarves' opinion of their slaves as lazy and weak. Comparing their abilities and dedication to work with the shortcomings of other creatures, especially surface beings, explains much about why the duergar revile all other forms of life.

While they are creatures of great hatred and evil, the duergar are also driven by the same passions and emotions as any other sentient race. They care for home and family, they honour their ancestors, and they can be moved to do great things in the name of their dark deity. They work to better themselves and their kind, they constantly strive to improve their living and working conditions, and they will give their lives to defend the things they value. The duergar may be vicious enemies of all that travel the dark passages below, but they are also living



creatures with lives that do not revolve around senseless combat.

## DUERGAR IN YOUR GAME

When including the duergar in an encounter, make certain to take their personality traits and motivations into account. The duergar will rarely simply be out in the open, especially since they are very difficult to surprise. Their natural stealth and power of *invisibility* give them the ability to insinuate themselves into the background of nearly any setting, allowing an encounter to feature other creatures or situations without arousing the character's suspicions that danger lurks unseen nearby.

If the duergar do appear in an encounter, it does not necessarily have to be for combat at all. While they are xenophobic, duergar do not automatically attack other creatures on sight. If the player characters appear too powerful to kill easily, the grey dwarves they encounter might choose to try and avoid them if possible. A duergar rogue may be just as content to use his Pick Pockets skill as he would his Sneak Attack ability if the odds of his survival do not look promising. Trying to track down a grey dwarf that has just stolen the wizard's spell component pouch could be an adventure all on its own.

Duergar can also figure peripherally in an encounter. Other underground races have been known to ally with them when the need arises. A duergar band and a mind flayer might combine forces to dominate an area's slave trading, or the derro and the duergar might set aside their differences to harass a passing detachment of a dwarven army. Conversely, a duergar might be among the rescued prisoners of an aboleth the player characters have just slain. Faced with an evil creature that poses no threat to them unarmed (or so they might believe), they may have to make some difficult moral decisions.

Keep in mind that while duergar may be evil, they are by no means stupid. They are the same average intelligence as any human, which gives them the ability to make long term plans, consider the possible consequences of any given course of action, and act competently to maintain their own well being. Duergar are also greedy, a trait they assume other creatures possess as well. If faced with certain death, a grey dwarf is not above trying to bribe their aggressors with whatever valuables they possess. Riches are greatly treasured by the duergar, but they are intelligent to know that a gem is



meaningless when you are dead. Few things are more important to the duergar than their continued survival.

Lastly, duergar always have a plan. They are meticulous creatures by nature, constantly considering what will come of their next action and how best to survive it. Duergar are never lazy, do not seek to avoid effort or heavy labour, and are quite willing to suffer hardship if it accomplishes something meaningful to them. If a plotline requires minions (or masters) with single-minded devotion, the duergar are perfectly suited as a Games Master's foils.

## DUERGAR AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

The dreary clan life of the duergar is likely not well suited to a campaign, but Games Masters may be able to work a renegade grey dwarf into a story line if he or she so chooses. The information in this chapter will help with integrating Player Characters of this race into games in a balanced and fair way, preventing the natural advantages of the duergar from becoming overpowering. This section can also



be used to expand duergar Non-Player Characters through the use of the prestige classes and new feats provided herein.

Even renegade duergar retain many of their less-than-social tendencies, which makes bringing them into a fellowship difficult. Having the grey dwarf rescued from captivity is an effective way of ingratiating the new Player Character to the others, as the duergar do retain a twisted form of honour. As the duergar dislike owing debts, a Player Character of this race could conceivably travel with his rescuers until such time as his honour feels satisfied through his service to them. Similarly, if the duergar were currently engaged in a similar goal himself, he might assent to travel with an adventuring group while their objectives coincided.

Of course, along the way, events might draw the duergar closer to one or more of his adventuring companions, forging bonds that go beyond honour or convenience. This sort of character development is an exciting part of roleplaying and is often best accomplished through a Player Character that is a little bit outside the normal. Duergar certainly qualify as such, and if a player is willing to take on the burden of roleplaying the faults and skewed

viewpoint of a grey dwarf, the result can be a valuable experience for all involved.

The problems that an adventuring party may encounter with a grey dwarf among them can also make for interesting, if difficult, roleplaying. Most folk in a 'standard' fantasy setting might not know the difference between a duergar and any other kind of dwarf aside from the colour changes. Duergar rarely travel to the surface, so their unique appearance would not mean much to a typical human farmer. Any dwarves that see the duergar would be another matter entirely; the Player Characters may well have to defend their grey dwarven friend from an unwarranted attack... or prevent him from doing the same!

Suggested classes for the duergar include fighter, rogue, and cleric. There are few arcane spellcasters among the duergar as previously noted, but they are marginally more common among the outcasts of their race. As such, virtually anything goes. Druids, rangers, and barbarians would be quite rare, while monks and paladins would be all but unheard of. With a creative background and Games Master approval, anything is possible, but the duergar mindset does not lend itself well to a life of privation and humility.

As with other humanoids with a marked advantage over standard Player Character races, it may be advisable to begin a new campaign with Player Characters at a slightly higher starting level to account for the benefits of the duergar among them. If other Player Characters of standard races are second level to the duergar's first level, the slight difference in power should make up for the grey dwarf's natural abilities. Maintaining a difference of one level between the party's average and the duergar character's development will likely maintain the balance of power in the group.

### Duergar Racial Traits

† +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma: Duergar are extremely hardy and can endure great hardship, but their social skills have suffered from their long years of isolation.

† Medium-size: As medium-size creatures, the duergar do not suffer any particular penalties or benefit from any advantages based on size.

† Duergar have a base speed of 20 feet.

† Darkvision: Duergar can see 120 feet in the dark, which makes them one of the most keen-eyed creatures underground. Darkvision is black and white only, but is otherwise treated as normal sight. Duergar can function fully with no light at all.

† +4 Racial Bonus to Move Silently checks.

† Immune to paralysis, phantasms, and magical or alchemical poisons. Normal poisons do not benefit from this immunity, such as creature venoms or plant-based toxins.

† *Spell-Like Abilities*: 1/day *enlarge* and *invisibility*. These spell powers are cast as a wizard of twice the duergar's character level, with a minimum caster level of 3<sup>rd</sup>. Both of these abilities only affect the duergar and his or her possessions.

† Listen and Spot checks both gain a +1 racial bonus.

† Duergar gain Alertness as a free feat.

† *Light Sensitivity (Ex)*: Duergar suffer a -2 circumstance bonus to attacks, saves, skill rolls, and attribute checks when they are exposed to bright sunlight. A *daylight* spell also imposes these penalties, but lesser forms of radiance do not.

† Automatic Languages: Duergar (which uses the same alphabet as Dwarven), Undercommon. Bonus Languages: Dark Elven, Dwarven, Goblin, and Orc.

† Favoured Class: Rogue. The innate stealth of the duergar allows a multiclass grey dwarf to not count his or her rogue level when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty when multiclassing.

Duergar names are generally short and consist of harsh consonant blends. This form of naming, an extension of dwarven traditions, is used in virtually every duergar clan with little regard for the number of other grey dwarves with the same name. In the minds of the duergar, the one worthy of the name will eventually assert his dominance and claim it as his own. Some duergar purposefully name their children something common in the hopes of making him or her more competitive. A sample of duergar names are listed here for convenience;

Durrost, Khaldar, Grosht, Uldarr, Martesht, Hroath, Kulnor, Rulldor, Broshdan, Nuleern, Methlar, Kroann



## DUERGAR FEATS

Centuries of isolation in the deepest parts of the earth have provided the duergar with some very unique abilities. In addition to the advantages and traits that come to them by birth, some special talents lie deep in their blood or can be gained through devoted study. These skills and birthrights are unique to the duergar and their way of life. While a special circumstance might allow someone from outside the grey dwarven race to possess one of these special traits, such an occurrence would be rare indeed.

### Exotic Weapon Focus (bladed crossbow) (General)

Through special training, you have learned how to use a bladed crossbow as efficiently as a melee weapon as it can be used in ranged combat.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon Focus (any crossbow), Must be duergar or trained by duergar.

**Benefit:** You may treat a bladed crossbow as a melee weapon, qualifying as armed while you are wielding it in any sort of combat. You still draw an attack of opportunity if you try to load or fire the bladed

crossbow, but you can also take attacks of opportunity if someone in your threatened area provokes one. You no longer suffer the -2 improvised penalty for using a bladed crossbow in melee combat.

### Unrelenting (General)

The spirit of Toil that drives your efforts will not allow you to quit or admit defeat, even when success seems impossible.

**Prerequisite:** Must be Duergar, Endurance, Great Fortitude

**Benefit:** You may choose to draw upon your inner strength to overcome any physical adversity or threat to your constitution. When making Fortitude saves, you may sacrifice hit points to modify the check before you roll it. For every 5 hit points you lose this way, you add a +1 circumstance bonus. There is no limit to how many hit points to sacrifice in this way, but hit points lost in this way can only be healed through normal, physical rest.

### Stone-Touched (General)

The blood of the earth flows through your veins, urging you to explore the mysteries of deep stone and leaving its mark on you in some undeniable way.

**Prerequisite:** Must be Duergar (or another dwarven race if the Games Master allows), Constitution 16+, Strength 12+

**Benefit:** This feat must be taken for the first time at first level. You bear some sign of the earth's favour; this manifests as stone protrusions where some or all of your hair would normally be. Your body is partially stone, resulting in a +60 lb. weight increase and a +1 Natural Armour bonus. You gain Terran as a bonus language; you can speak and understand it instinctively. Once per day, you can cast *soften earth and stone* as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level cleric.

**Special:** You can take this feat multiple times, up to a maximum of five. Each time you choose this feat, the weight increase and Natural Armour bonuses stack. The second time you choose this feat, you gain 1 use per day of *stone shape* as a 5<sup>th</sup> level caster. The third time, you gain *magic stone*, usable 3 times per day as a 5<sup>th</sup> level caster. The fourth time you select this feat, you gain one use per day of *stoneskin*, cast as at 7<sup>th</sup> level. The fifth and final time this feat is taken, you can generate an *earthquake* as a 10<sup>th</sup> level caster once per day.

## DUERGAR PRESTIGE CLASSES

### THE STONECALLER

Duergar who bear the touch of stone in their blood are considered blessed children of the earth. Most become powerful members of grey dwarven society, using their innate gifts to aid in mining, the defence of the clan, and increasing their own personal standing. Many join the priesthood and merge their kinship with stone to the gift of divine magic. Stone-touched priests of the Lord of Toil are greatly respected by other duergar because of their great power.

Others seeking a purer, more direct bond with the earth sometimes find a different path. Through long contemplation, these duergar slowly learn to unlock the secrets of the earth magic within them. Few ever advance past the first few steps along this path, but those who do become as mighty as the stone they revere. These seekers, called stonecallers, are extremely rare. Masters of the path are nearly unheard of, with only one in a generation ever truly reaching the summit of their potential.

Stonecallers, also called Stone Summoners because of their abilities, are found in equal measure among the clans of the duergar and its outcast members. There is no teaching needed to develop the earthen power in a stone-touched's blood; they only require the inclination to do so and the time to assimilate each change as it comes. Becoming a Stonecaller is not a quick journey, as the earth moves very slowly and does not share its bounty without toil and sacrifice. For a duergar, they would not respect the art if it was any other way.

**Hit Dice:** d12

#### Requirements

To qualify to become a stonecaller, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

**Race:** Must be Duergar (or another dwarven race, with the Games Master's permission).

**Feats:** Stone-Touched (twice), Great Fortitude

**Base Attack Bonus:** +4

**Special Limitation:** A character cannot gain more than one level of the Stonecaller prestige class per

## The Stonecaller

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Touch of the Earth	Level One Earth Domain
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Call the Rock Friend	Level Two Earth Domain
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Eyes of the Earth, <i>Summon III</i>	Level Three Earth Domain
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	—	Level Four Earth Domain
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Stonemastery, <i>Summon V</i>	Level Five Earth Domain
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Skin of the Earth, <i>Summon VI</i>	Level Six Earth Domain
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Bones of the Earth, <i>Summon VII</i>	Level Seven Earth Domain
8	+6	+6	+2	+6	<i>Summon VIII</i>	Level Eight Earth Domain
9	+6	+6	+3	+6	Stonemastery, <i>Summon IX</i>	Level Nine Earth Domain
10	+7	+7	+3	+7	Soul of the Earth	—

year. Any experience levels gained during the same year must be attributed to another class.

### Class Skills

The stonecaller's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Intimidate (Chr), and Spellcraft (Int).

**Skill points at each level:** 2 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All of the following are class features of the stonecaller prestige class.

**Weapon and Armour Proficiency:** Stonecallers gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pockets, and Tumble.

**Spells Per Day:** A stonecaller learns the magic of the earth, allowing him to draw on the powers of stone and soil as he advances in power. Thus, when every stonecaller level is gained, the character also gains the ability to cast the spell attributed to that level of the Earth divine domain as a spell-like ability once per day. Certain stonecaller class abilities modify the number of times some of these abilities can be used.

In addition, at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> level, the Stonecaller gains the ability to cast *summon monster* of the appropriate level once per day. This *summon monster* spell can only be used to call forth creatures of the earth subtype.

**Touch of the Earth:** A stonecaller gains a power ability when he first begins exploring the bond between him and the earth. By placing both hands on the ground and taking no other action during a given round, a first level stonecaller can use *tremorsense* at a 60' range. While the stonecaller cannot take any physical actions without disrupting this sense, he may communicate his discoveries to



others and take action that would qualify as a free action and does not require the use of his hands.

**Call the Rock Friend:** A stonecaller can summon a special form of familiar; an earth mephit (as detailed in the *Core Rulebook III*). The stonecaller does not gain any innate abilities from the mephit other than those gained from the possession of any familiar. Level-dependent familiar bonuses accrue based on the stonecaller's prestige class level only. At the fifth level of this class, the Stonecaller can *polymorph* the earth mephit into a medium earth elemental if he chooses. This transformation is permanent and can be done at any time after the Stonecaller reaches the required level.

**Eyes of the Earth:** The Stonecaller with eyes of the earth is difficult to hide from in his natural surroundings. At will, the Stonecaller may see through up to two feet of solid stone as if it were clear glass. No actual change occurs to the stone, but it does not impede the stonecaller's sight in any way. Even magical stone can be seen through without difficulty. Also, magical stone constructions such as stone golems or animated statues are instantly recognised for what they are if seen by a Stonecaller of 3<sup>rd</sup> or higher level.

**Stonemastery:** When stonemastery is gained, the Stonecaller receives a bonus feat of Stone-Touched. If the Stonecaller already has five Stone-Touched feats, nothing further is received.

**Skin of the Earth:** The stonecaller's rocky appearance becomes more prevalent, spreading to cover a considerable amount of his body. This immediately increases the stonecaller's Natural Armour bonus by +3 and reduces his base land movement speed by -5 feet.

**Bones of the Earth:** The earth and stone within a stonecaller of this level has finally become so much a part of him that his bones have completely calcified. This adds 30 lbs. to the stonecaller's weight and grants a +2 racial bonus to his Strength score. The Stonecaller also gains 5 point of damage reduction against bludgeoning attacks of any kind, regardless of their magical bonus.

**Soul of the Earth:** So few ever achieve this level of union with the earth that the power itself is considered a legend even by most other stonecallers. In order to even take the 10<sup>th</sup> level in this prestige class, the Stonecaller must have gained five Stone-

Touched feats beforehand. Upon reaching this level, the spirit of the duergar becomes one with the rocks and soil of the deep underground, transfusing remarkable power and stamina into his body. The Stonecaller becomes an earth elemental, retaining his former statistics and class abilities but immediately gaining all the powers and traits of a medium-sized earth elemental as well.

## BLACK ROCK MAGI

In the depths of the duergar caverns, many strange and wondrous minerals can be found in the ancient earth. Some are valuable gemstones and are mined for the wealth they bring to the clan. Others are more mysterious, collected for curiosity's sake or subjected to endless experiments in the hopes of finding a use for them. Black rock, a glittering stone that forms in spherical, faceted nodules, is one such mineral.

In a time long past, black rock was thought of as a bizarre but essentially useless oddity. When it was found during grey dwarven mining, it was discarded and ignored. Alchemically inert, black rock has no useful mundane properties aside from tiny samples occasionally being set in jewelry. It was not until the stone was examined in detail by duergar wizards that its special nature was discovered.

Black rock is a solidified form of magical power, trapped deep within the earth and formed over unimaginably vast lengths of time into crystalline spheres. Sensitive to external energies, black rock has drawn in the darkness and evil of the creatures that dwell in the unreachable depths below. This dark force can be felt by those of magical power who know how to properly attune themselves to its unique vibrations. Those trained to do so, the black rock magi, are a secretive order who spend most of their time studying the powers contained within these enigmatic treasures.

Other duergar are of mixed opinion of the black rock magi. They are powerful, something all duergar value, but they are also arcane spellcasters which makes them a feared, unknown quantity. For now, most clans tolerate the presence of the black rock magi for as long as they make themselves useful. The magi themselves do not much worry about their welcome; many of their order become renegades when their clans grow intolerant of them. To them, the only thing that matters is the power of their shadowy stones.



**Hit Dice:** d4

## Requirements

To qualify to become a black rock magi, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

**Race:** Must be Duergar or trained by another black rock magi.

**Spellcasting:** Must be able to cast arcane spells of 4<sup>th</sup> level or higher, with a school specialisation in either Necromancy, Illusion, or Enchantment.

**Feats:** Spell Focus in the chosen speciality school, Skill Focus (Craft (gemcutting)), Any Metamagic Feat

**Skills:** Concentration 8+, Craft (gemcutting) 9+



## Class Skills

The black rock magi's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the black rock magi prestige class.

**Weapon and Armour Proficiency:** Black rock magi gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pockets, and Tumble.

**Spells per Day:** A black rock magi continues training in magic, learning how to combine his

powers with those of his black rock foci. Thus, when every black rock magi level is gained, the character also gains spells as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any additional benefits a character of that class would have gained, only the new spells.

This essentially means that he adds the level of black rock magi to the level of another spellcasting class the character already has and then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the

## The Black Rock Magi

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Black Rock Attunement	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Black Channel +1	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Detonate Stone	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	—	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Black Channel +2	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Dark Matrix	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	—	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Black Channel +3	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Dark Ward	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Cache of Power	+1 level of existing class

caster has more than one spellcasting class before he became a black rock magi, he must decide to which class he adds each level of black rock magi for the purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

**Black Rock Attunement:** When a black rock magi begins his training, he discovers how to use black rock to augment his spellcasting. The magical potential stored in black rock can channel the energies of a spell cast through it and enhance it in several ways. The dark stone magi also learns of the synergies that can occur when several stones are in close proximity and used during the casting of a single spell.

At first however, a black rock magi's mastery over these powerful stones is very limited. To delve deeper into their mysteries, he must attune himself to their magical vibrations. This is done through a complex arcane ritual and etching process that binds the magi's energies to the substance of black rock. From that moment on, any spell cast by a black rock magi requires a palm sized sphere of black rock as an arcane foci in addition to any other components it might possess. Black rocks suitable for use as foci cost 200 gold pieces and can usually be found in any duergar community in large quantities.

**Black Channel:** Until the power of the black channel, as black rock magi dub the ability to focus spells through their chosen foci, is gained, there is no benefit to being attuned to black rock stones. Afterward, a major advantage is realised. Any spell cast using black rock as an arcane foci gains the level of the magi's Black Channel as a bonus to its DC and any rolls the magi must make to penetrate Spell Resistance.

**Detonate Stone:** There is a great deal of potential energy within black rocks, but when a magi first begins trying to surpass his previous abilities to utilise them, the stones resist his efforts. All that can be achieved at this stage of a magi's training is the explosive release of all the power within a dark stone. While this is considered a waste of a black rock, duergar are nothing if not practical.

This is done by casting any prepared spell into the stone for the purpose of detonating it. This consumes the spell's normal effect and transforms the black stone into a pulsing sphere of black energy that will explode in one round. Using such a stone against a specific target requires a ranged touch

attack and inflicts 1d6 points of force damage per spell level of the cast spell upon everything within a 10 foot radius of the rock. Struck targets do not receive a saving throw, but others within the blast radius may make a Reflex save for half damage.

**Dark Matrix:** To use this class ability, the black rock magi must be wearing at least 2000 gold pieces worth of black rocks scattered over his person in the form of jewellery, ornamentation, and bead work. By casting a spell through these stones, the black rock magi can sustain its duration far longer than normal. The spell in question must be one that targets the caster personally and has a duration other than instantaneous. The spell's duration is then multiplied by the caster's prestige class level, to a maximum of one full day. This power can be used as often as the magi desires, but each spell requires a different 2000 gold piece set of stones.

**Dark Ward:** An extension of Dark Matrix, the Dark Ward is cast using a specific layout of black rocks valued at 1000 gold pieces per level of the spell in question. The spell must have an area of effect and a duration longer than greater. Setting up the pattern of black rocks adds one minute to the spell's casting time but the Dark Ward multiplies its duration by the black rock magi's prestige class level. Unlike Dark Matrix, there is no limitation to the duration of a Dark Ward spell.

**Cache of Power:** The final achievement attained by a black rock magi, a cache of power is the term ascribed to a master magi's collection of imbued black rocks. A magi can imbue as many stones at any given time as he has points of Intelligence bonus, each one treated like a *ring of spell storing* with regards to how many spell levels can be stored and how they can be used. A black rock magi can set any or all of his imbued stones to only be usable by himself if he so chooses. An imbued black rock is fist sized and is worth 500 gold pieces.

There is no enchantment time required to imbue a black rock outside of the time it normally takes to cast the spells a black rock magi wishes to set into one. Imbued black rocks must be held to activate any spells within them, but a black rock that is shattered instantly releases any spells it currently contains. If the released spells do not have an area of effect, they simply dissipate with no further effect.

# THE MINES OF VERHAVEN

## HISTORY OF THE AREA

Located at the foot of the southern mountains, the caves of Verhaven carry the vestiges of a human settlement whose inhabitants left it to rot under the whims of an inclement sky. The proximity of abandoned mineshafts left no doubt about the nature of the old camp. But the caves were far from being abandoned. Separated from their mother colony, a newly formed duergar community had traced its steps to the spacious caves in the hope of reopening the mines and exploiting the new veins their experts had uncovered. Though the caves were situated close to the surface, the duergar found them wide enough to protect the clans and their future generations. Reshaping the canyon to protect their areas, they managed to block its main entrances with rockslides, cutting them off from any outside intrusion.

Making sure to stay hidden deep in the bowels of the earth, they reopened the mines by digging parallel tunnels underneath the existing mine galleries and began retrieving the precious metals. They enlarged the main living quarters for their children and placed deadly traps and pits near the surface entrance of the caves since they were unable to dig a maze capable of protecting their homes. Unfortunately, due to recent seismic activity, the entrance of the canyon reopened. Once it was spotted by travellers, a gold rush spread throughout the region once more. Adventurers and settlers hoping to become rich came from all around the country and created the small town of Verhaven.

The inhabitants of Verhaven, unaware of the presence of the duergar, have reopened the old mines and with difficulty have increased the productivity of the galleries. Digging deeper and deeper, they are coming close to the duergar's own galleries. They are starting to hear strange noises and phantom footsteps emanating from inside the earth, and superstitions have now spread in the town. Some of the miners have organised themselves into armed parties before venturing into the tunnels. Disappearances are taken more seriously, and

villagers barricade themselves inside their home when night falls.

The proximity of the humanoid settlement is more than the duergar can bear. Without revealing their presence, they try to keep outsiders at bay, but occasional accidents and mysterious disappearances do not seem to drive them away. The duergar are coming closer and closer to the village at night in the hope of destroying material and equipment, sometimes even mutilating cattle. New galleries have been opened on the side of the canyon, but still the presence of the duergar has not been discovered. This race is not known to be patient, and soon they will opt for more direct tactics against the human invaders.

## THE DUERGAR COLONY

The duergar colony comprises two large clans, each having more than fifty able adults. The clans have seen their number grow during the last season with the birth of at least ten children on each side. Soon they will have to dig the cave's chambers deeper in order to make room for the new generations. With more than a hundred individuals, they could easily manage a direct assault on the small town of Verhaven. Although they appear strong, the colony possesses weaknesses, such as the location of the caves too close to the lethal surface and the fact that during the day most of the adults work in the mines, leaving the defence of the caves to their younger brethren, who are not as strong as their fathers and unable to defend their home as fiercely as their elders.

The clans' circles of elders lead the community, as the separation from the mother colony left them with no direct ruler. They have two clerics of Laduguer. Their forces are divided mostly between scouts and footmen, but some breeders are now emerging from each clan. Soon they will be a tactical force to reckon with. Spellcasters are almost non-existent, and the colony only counts one summoner among them. Messengers have been sent and other clans have been invited to join their number, but none has answered yet. In the long run, the colony wants to assert its supremacy over the area and get rid of the human menace by destroying or driving away the settlers.



**The Colony**

The breakdown of the population is given below. Every individual is a potential threat, with the exception of the women, babies and very young children.

- 2 Circles of Elders (8 adult commoners + one elemental, a 7th-level summoner)
- 2 Priests (1st- to 4th-level clerics of Laduguer)
- 5 Breeders (1st- to 2nd-level)
- 19 Scouts (1st- to 5th-level rogues)
- 21 Footmen (1st- to 3rd-level fighters)
- 35 Workers (1st- to 4th-level warriors)
- 15 Adolescents (1st- to 2nd-level warriors)
- 28 Women
- 10 Children
- 5 Giant Rats

**Varras, Elementalist (7th-level summoner)**

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**

**Hit Dice:** 7d4+10 (29 hp)

**Initiative:** +6

**Speed:** Base 20 ft.

**AC:** 14

**Attacks:** Quarterstaff +3 melee, Light Crossbow +6 ranged

**Damage:** Quarterstaff 1d6, Light Crossbow 1d8

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision up to 120 ft.; +2 Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities, +2 Fort saves against poisons; immune to paralysis, phantasms and magical or alchemical poisons (but not normal poisons); *enlarge* and *invisibility* 1/day as a wizard twice the duergar's level (minimum 3rd level), affecting only the duergar and whatever he carries

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 4

**Spells:** *resistance* (x2), *arcane mark* (x2), *endure elements (fire)* (x2), *magic missile* (x3), *flaming sphere* (2), *darkness* (x2), *fireball* (x3), *scrying*

**Skills:** Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Spot +1

**Feats:** Alertness, Scribe Scroll

**Class Features:** Summon Familiar

**Challenge Rating:** 8

**Treasure:** Standard, Quarterstaff +1

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

**VERHAVEN**

The town of Verhaven sits on a small mound facing the valleys and the canyon to the south. A precarious wooden wall surrounds the town and offers a semblance of protection but threatens to crumble down during bad weather. Houses have been built quickly with the material available around the area — stone, wood and mud — but the results are poor. The houses at best resemble shacks and stables, witnesses to the carelessness of their builders. The presence of women is scarce, and the few who have come with their husbands stay barricaded behind the walls of their miserable homes. A few farms are scattered here and there at the limit of the town, more to supply food to the miners than really to grow and prosper.

There is no evident sign of any industry except the inevitable itinerant blacksmiths and jewellers waiting for an opportunity to deprive the workers of their money. Only one of the establishments seems to flourish in the middle of the decadence: the only tavern of the small town, where most spend their monthly salary on women, drinks and games in just one night. One main road divides the town in two, coming from the canyon and heading further up north, to the promises of the hot plains. Verhaven was built in only a week and promised to be a new



haven, but its inhabitants quickly transformed it into a dump, a reflection of their shattered dreams of riches and fame, with no hope of returning to the lives they have left behind.

## The Canyon

The canyon possesses only one main entrance and continues south until it stops at the foot of the mountains. Any traveller thinking of cutting his journey across the canyon will merely lose time as there are no paths through the mountains, only dead ends. The main accesses to the gorge have been blocked by a rockslide created by the duergar in order to keep the curious out, but recent geological activity has reopened the access to the old mineshafts. The entrance to the caves themselves is located at the opposite end of the mines, and a rock tower separates them. The path to the caves is still blocked by tonnes of rock, but human settlers do not care about what is on the other side of the rock tower, as they are too busy trying to make profits from the mine.

## The Natural Tower

Unsuspected by the human colonists, the rock formation dividing the gorge in two allows the duergar to keep an eye on their neighbours' everyday activities and progress. From the caves, they have dug a tunnel linking them to the tower and have transformed it, bit by bit, into a watchtower equipped with all the proper tools. The tower now houses two parties of two men whose primary objective is to report any suspicious activities from the human camps. They are able to spy thanks to the minuscule windows they have shaped into the rock. The first window on the first floor is directed east toward the entrance of the mines and the second is turned north to keep an eye on the town. The tower includes two storey in addition to the ground floor.

## DUERGAR DEFENCES

In addition to the protection provided by the blockade placed on the left side of the tower and the canyon facade, duergar have built a couple of traps at strategic points to guard the tunnel leading to their living areas and have organised patrols of scouts and breeders in a tight routine. Even without the presence of a maze to protect them further, they have enough confidence in their present lines of defence and in their ability to defeat the invaders and pull them away from the canyon. The main tunnel to the cave divides into two main branches.

The left access leads to the excavated caves and is filled with guards and pits, while the second tunnel only sends travellers deeper into the ground. Duergar also sometimes use it for deep scouting or hunting.

### Patrols

A patrol scouts the tunnels every two hours. A typical patrol may be either of the following formations:

**1 footman, 1 breeder, 1 giant rat**

Or

**1 footman, 1 scout**

## The Duergar Stronghold

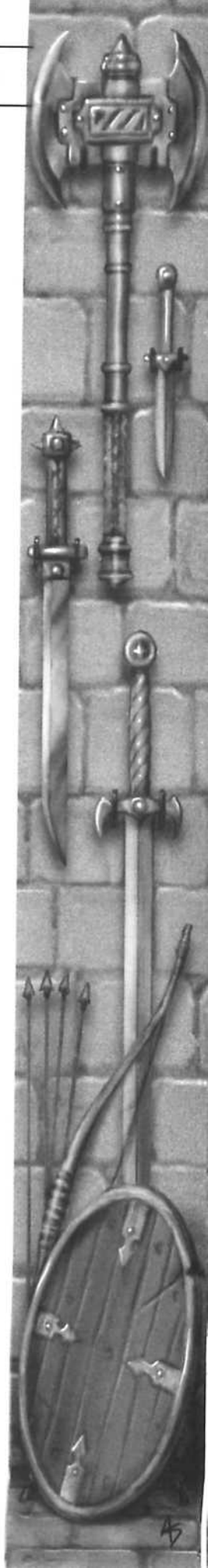
One main passage leads to the caves, but it is well protected against unwanted entry. Ten feet in, the tunnel opens onto two large grottoes, one on each side. These humid and damp grottoes have been left untouched for centuries and are the home of a bat colony. Stalactites hang on the ceiling and are particularly massed near the exit. Any loud sound or yell could trigger the fall of some of them, as they are unstable. The tunnel continues down into the darkness and leads to a sculpted arch. No apparent sign of life is by the arch itself, but the atmosphere is oppressive. Just after the arch, the passage widens, large enough to let two medium-sized humanoid walk side by side. This is the location of the first set of traps.

### Entrance Traps

Two main traps are encountered before reaching the caves now inhabited by the duergar:

1. The first one, placed before the junction of the grottoes, is a pit. The depth is 12 feet and the hole is 6 feet wide. A thick wooden pole is in the middle (DC 18 Reflex save to move across the pole without slipping and generally the pit is occupied by a couple of creatures in case the pole is successfully avoided.
2. The second trap, placed just after the first one, is triggered when someone trips on a thin cord set across the corridor. Any tension on the cord make a solid stone block fall on the unfortunate victim, transforming him into pulp. If avoided, the stone will nonetheless block the way.

Upon reaching the tunnel junction, more dangers await. The left tunnel leads to a second decorated





arch. Tiny windows have been pierced along the walls, and sentinels with crossbows hide in the darkness and invite the unfortunate to fall prey to their bolts. From their position, they easily target and shoot everything that moves. Few have escaped this line of defence. The right side looks like a dead end, but further exploration shows that the stone blocking the way rotates and opens onto a corridor. Further along is another archway, but only two men-at-arms guard it. This is also where the crossbowmen exit from their hiding place, allowing quick reinforcements.

### Living Quarters

Further down the left tunnel, the tunnel divides again in two; the left passage leads to living quarters and the right continues down toward storage chambers and a subterranean river. The left passage opens finally onto a wide area. Huge stones piled on top of each other have been cemented with the strongest materials and minerals.

Here another set of well-protected windows in the walls allows the use of projectile weapons. As the duergar have not yet smoothed the recent construction, it would be easy to climb the walls to the top if given enough time.

The living quarters are located beyond the gate. On the left, one of the main chambers has been kept as it was and serves as temporary stables for livestock and

breeder enclosures. A barricade keeps the animals inside but is easily removable for when the time comes to move them elsewhere and transform the chamber to welcome more members into the caves. By the side of the chamber is a hidden passage closed by another rotating stone. This tunnel leads to the mines on the other side of the canyon and travels under it. The way has been equipped with rudimentary protection, as duergar are confident the stone suffices in making it look like a dead end on the other side. They surely did not think they would soon get company.

Directly facing the gate lie the chambers housing the two clans. Each is subdivided into three rooms. Rooms are efficiently shaped and no space is wasted. Common halls and kitchens are in the front in the biggest of the chambers; bedrooms and other family areas are located behind, generally with a hidden escape route in the back. Furniture is scarce, and tables and seats are carved into the rock itself or have been brought in. Light is weak and dim. Following on the right side of the living quarters, the way slowly goes down and leads to another junction, with a path to the temple on the left and the way to the storage areas straight over.

The temple emerges at the end of a tunnel with two round arches. Those arches are different from the ones encountered previously; they are decorated with religious symbols and runes. The entrance to the temple is simple but large enough to allow the safe passage of a procession. In the temple, seats have been carved on each side of a circular room and go up to form six rows. In the middle is a column on which is carved the simple figure of the Lord of Toil. On each side of the figure, symbols of the god without pity are sculpted like decorations. The chamber is free of other ornaments and quite dark and silent. A door on the opposite side of the temple gives access to the small quarters of the priests.

The pathway goes gently down to the storage areas and the mushroom farm and turns to the right in a semicircle. At this intersection, the first door on the left opens on the drying room, a huge cavern where moss and fungi are grown and processed. Mushrooms placed on several shelves and benches are waiting to dry. Opposite them, the already dried mushrooms are piled into baskets and are ready to be picked up by the farmers. The second door from the tunnel opens on the storage area where other goods are stacked, such as caskets, dried meat, moss wine and some other tools used in the farms. These two

rooms are linked together through a thin passage and the air is always damp. Humidity seems to stay in the farm area and not spread to the other two rooms.

The way continuing on the right slowly rises up, passes a small bridge and links back to the first section of tunnels. The small bridge goes over a subterranean river, the main natural water supply for the duergar. Before and just after the bridge lay two removable blocks of stone with a system of ropes. This system allows the duergar to seal their area without cutting off the water supply. The stones are heavy and cannot be removed or broken by one man alone. Trying to dislodge them would take time, and the duergar would certainly have time to counterattack such an attempt. The only practical way to enter the stronghold remains the main walls and the door of the fortress.

## The Mines

There are two sets of galleries. The inhabitants of Verhaven reopened the first, older set of galleries, for mining. Continuing down into the depth of the canyon, miners are simply reworking old veins in the hope of discovering new riches. But the increase in the population now pushes them further down. The mines open on the right side of the canyon and only one main tunnel goes in and out. Mined ore, beams for shoring and tools are carried on rudimentary wagons.

The second set of galleries is located under the human mines and operates in parallel to them. This is where the duergar experts have located precious gems and metal. They have developed larger tunnels to facilitate large-scale extraction, but the noises coming from them are sometimes detected in the other mines.

Soon now. Very soon.

Kulnor looked to either side of him, watching the tension in the lines of his fellow warriors' faces. They were as poised as he was, just as ready to string their deadly trap. He tightened his grip on his sword, keeping the blade an inch away from the stone of his hiding place at all times. No stray noises would give his position away. With some prey, a few sounds could be useful to draw them closer, but not this prey. Not the dark elves...

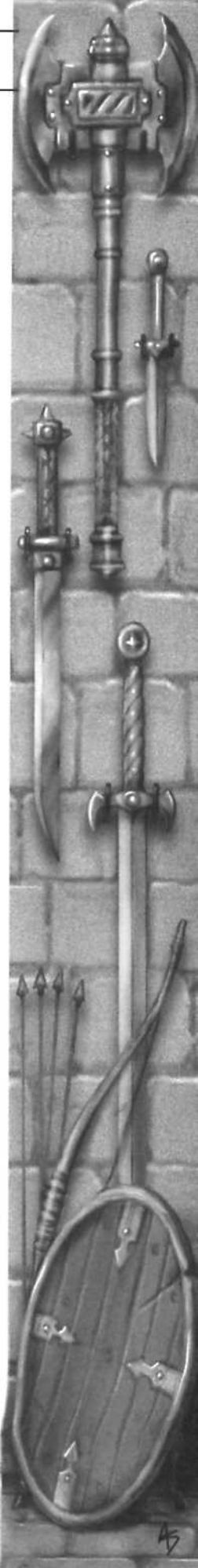
They had brought this on themselves. The raids on their slave patrols had been vicious and unwarranted. No duergar had violated the neutral stretch of caves between their clan caverns and the dark elven city. If the white-haired fools wanted war, they had certainly gotten one. The black elves would get a war they could never win, a brutal war of shadow assaults and murder. The stones echoed around him with the coming storm of battle, the whispers of war.

What was about to happen was not war, however. This dark elf caravan had been followed for hours, its numbers carefully counted. There were five of them; three were on lizards, the other two riding in a carriage. Five dark elves, just as there had been five duergar in the slaughtered patrol. No, this wasn't war. It was revenge.

They appeared finally, their obsidian skin a stark contrast to his own pale grey flesh. He watched them as they approached slowly. The dark elves were a paranoid sort, which he could respect, but it would not save them. Even now, Kulnor's commander was gesturing for them to move into position. His shieldmates moved like ghosts around him, raising their short spears for the kill. They were standing ready, waiting only for their deadly trap to be sprung.

Kulnor had been given the honour of springing that trap. His father had been the warrior in charge of the slave patrol these ebon bastards had cut down. Now, he could avenge his name and prove that his blood was not weak. With a sudden slash, he cut the thick rope and loosed a shower of jagged rocks and iron shards over the surprised night elves. The welcome scent of blood hit the air.

*That was the second signal. As one, they all descended onto their stunned prey. Kulnor began to compose his bloodsong, starting with the first throat he cut.*



# DUERGAR REFERENCE LIST

**D**uergar are quieter than most races, gaining numerous advantages to their stealth and subterfuge abilities. They have a strong, lanky build and are at a disadvantage in bright sunlight. The sample characters below all possess the following special qualities:

- † Darkvision up to 120 ft.
- † +2 Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities
- † +2 Fort saves against poisons
- † Immune to paralysis, phantasms and magical or alchemical poisons (but not normal poisons)
- † *Enlarge* and *invisibility* 1/day as a wizard twice the duergar's level (minimum 3rd level); only affect the duergar and whatever he carries

## Stonecaller

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**

**6<sup>th</sup> level Fighter/3<sup>rd</sup> level Stonecaller**

**Hit Dice:** 6d10+18+3d12+9 (79 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (Dex +1)

**Speed:** 15 ft. (base 20 ft.)

**AC:** 19 (Half Plate +7, Large Steel Shield +2)

**Attacks:** Dwarven war axe +11 melee; Light Crossbow +9 ranged

**Damage:** Dwarven war axe 1d10+2; Light Crossbow 1d8

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120', Light Sensitivity, Duergar Traits

**Saves:** Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +6

**Spells:** *Magic stone, soften earth and stone, stone shape, Summon III*

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 4

**Skills:** Climb +2, Concentration +4, Listen +6, Move

Silently -2 Ride +6, Spot +6

**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Exotic Weapon (dwarven war axe), Improved Initiative, Stonetouched (x2), Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dwarven war axe), +3 fighter,

**Challenge Rating:** 9

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

## Summoner

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**

**6<sup>th</sup> level Wizard**

**Hit Dice:** 6d4+15 (30 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (Dex +2, Improved Initiative +4)

**Speed:** Base 20 ft.

**AC:** 12 (Dex +2)

**Attacks:** Quarterstaff +3 melee, Light Crossbow +5 ranged

**Damage:** Quarterstaff 1d6, Light Crossbow 1d8  
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120', Light Sensitivity, Duergar Traits

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 4

**Skills:** Concentration +11, Craft (Poisons) +12, Knowledge (Arcana) +12, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spellcraft +12, Spot +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Toughness

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

**Spells (DC 13 + spell level): (known +12):** *arcane mark (x2), darkness (x3), dispel magic (x2), endure elements (earth) (x2), explosive runes (x2), magic missile (x2), read magic (x2), resist elements (earth)*

## Duergar Cleric

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**

**4<sup>th</sup> level Cleric**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+12 (33 hp)

**Initiative:** -1 (Dex -1)

**Speed:** 15 ft. (base 20 ft.)

**AC:** 19 (Splint Mail +6, Large Steel Shield +2, Dex -1)

**Attacks:** Morningstar +4 melee, Light Crossbow +2 ranged

**Damage:** Morningstar 1d8+1; Light Crossbow 1d8  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.



**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120', Light Sensitivity, Duergar Traits  
**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +0, Will +7  
**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8  
**Skills:** Concentration +9, Heal +5, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently -6, Spellcraft +2, Spot +6  
**Challenge Rating:** 5  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil  
**Spells (DC 13 + spell level; domains earth and evil):** *cause fear, cure minor wounds, darkness (x2), death kneel (x2), doom (x3), inflict minor wounds (x3), resistance, protection from good*

## Grey Guard

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**  
**2nd level Fighter**  
**Hit Dice:** 2d10+6 (19 hp)  
**Initiative:** +5 (Dex +1, Improved Initiative +4)  
**Speed:** 15 ft. (base 20 ft.)  
**AC:** 19 (Half Plate +7, Large Steel Shield +2)  
**Attacks:** Dwarven war axe +5 melee; Light Crossbow +3 ranged  
**Damage:** Dwarven war axe 1d10+2; Light Crossbow 1d8  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120', Light Sensitivity, Duergar Traits  
**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1  
**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 4  
**Skills:** Climb -2, Listen +4, Move Silently -4, Ride +6, Spot +4  
**Feats:** Alertness, Exotic Weapon (dwarven war axe), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (dwarven war axe)  
**Challenge Rating:** 3  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

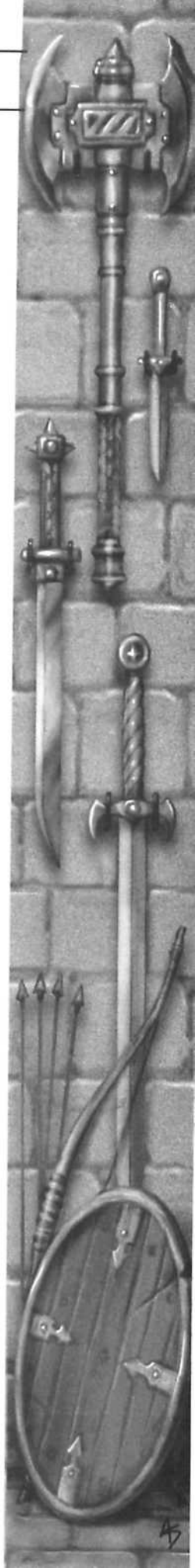
## Duergar Footman

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**  
**1st level Fighter**  
**Hit Dice:** 1d10+3 (9 hp)  
**Initiative:** +1 (Dex +1)  
**Speed:** 15 ft. (Base 20 ft.)  
**AC:** 16 (Chain Mail +5, Dex +1)  
**Attacks:** Battleaxe +4 melee, Light Crossbow +2

ranged  
**Damage:** Battleaxe 1d8+2, Light Crossbow 1d8  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120', Light Sensitivity, Duergar Traits  
**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1  
**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 4  
**Skills:** Climb +1, Listen +4, Move Silently +0, Ride +5, Spot +4  
**Feats:** Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe)  
**Challenge Rating:** 2  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

## Duergar Scout

**Small Humanoid (Duergar)**  
**1st level Rogue**  
**Hit Dice:** 1d6+2 (6 hp)  
**Initiative:** +6 (Dex +2, Improved Initiative +4)  
**Speed:** Base 20 ft.  
**AC:** 14 (Leather +2, Dex +2)  
**Attacks:** Dagger +1 melee, Club +1 melee, Light Crossbow +2 ranged  
**Damage:** Dagger 1d4+1, Club 1d6+1, Light Crossbow 1d8  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 120', Light Sensitivity, Duergar Traits  
**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0  
**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 4  
**Skills:** Balance +4, Climb +5, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +5, Pick Pocket +5, Search +6, Spot +7, Tumble +6  
**Feat:** Alertness, Improved Initiative  
**Class Features:** Sneak Attack +1d6  
**Challenge Rating:** 2  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil



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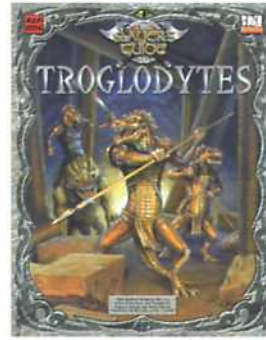
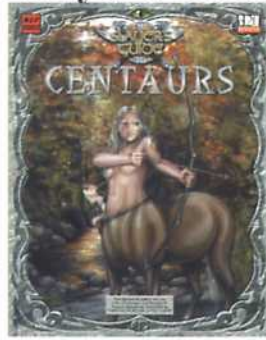
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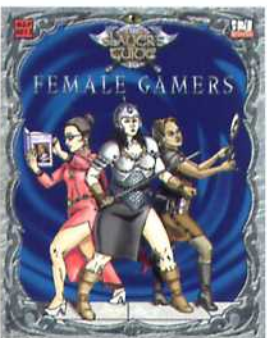
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TO

# DUERGAR

## Deceit and Treachery

The duergar, often called grey dwarves, live well-hidden in the darkness of the cold ground, revelling in mischief and evil deeds of all sorts and despising their cousins still living on a surface world now forbidden to them. Once a mysterious people, more has been discovered about their way of life, and sages hope that with the information provided by their texts one will be able to understand the intrinsic nature of these creatures and be aware of the danger they represent.

Duergar are masters of treachery and deceit and are engaged in an everlasting struggle with the other races of the underdark in their search for dominance over those realms. Drow are their fierce competitors in this domain, but duergar have surrounded themselves with such ingenuity that even dark elves have learned to respect them as capable adversaries. Duergar retain much of the dwarven race's traits even if their metabolism has changed somewhat to adapt to their environment, and their communities have evolved into a well-oiled fighting power to be reckoned with. Duergar are not to be taken lightly. They are cunning and intelligent and, most of all, can be very unpredictable.

### Inside You Will Find:

**Duergar Physiology:** The physical make up of a duergar is similar, but different, to dwarves. This chapter details the important divergence in the race.

**Duergar Roleplaying:** How best to portray duergar in your games, including details on using them as player characters.

**Duergar Society:** How the duergar's society is interlinked, including their adherence to dark religions.

**Duergar Habitat:** Where and why duergar settle in the underground places.

**Warfare in the dark:** How the grey dwarves battle in their world without light.

**Verhaven:** An intricate and militaristic community of duergar.

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