

MYSTARA 2300 BC

GAZBC 1

SHIMMERING LANDS LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR PLAYER'S GUIDE

BY

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PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

By John Calvin

Player's Handbook.....	1
Welcome	2
History	3
Calendar.....	6
Races.....	8
Classes	11
Arms and Equipment.....	13
Backgrounds	15
Organizations.....	17
Faiths.....	19

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WELCOME

“The Moadreg are a proud people, you must never forget that. My grandfather’s father told the tale of the Reckoning, when the elves betrayed Blackmoor and tried to destroy the earth. My grandfather’s father survived that day... we survived. Gathering up what knowledge we could, we rebuilt our world. The Wasting came, and yet we endured. It forced us from our primal lands and still we thrive. Now, here, on this new continent we will regain our former glory.

“Never forget what we lost during the Reckoning, when fire rained down upon our heads. Though we saved many of the old secrets, we lost still more. Our fathers knew this well and many of them despaired... but here in this land we can see how great our victory actually was! The creatures around us, who claim to be civilized, see how far they have sunk in comparison. They are like animals to us.

“And yet... their numbers are great, while ours continue to diminish. Yes, it is true. The Wasting still claims us... see my hand, it is crumpled and twisted. My left eye is cloudy and gray. And still with all of my frailties am I not greater than any of these animals surrounding us? That is what it means to be Moadreg.

“Now, be attentive! Your countenance is important, both when dealing with your own kind as well as with others. Mark my words well, young one. You are always being watched. Act accordingly. Not only must you maintain an air of superiority and power over the lesser races, but you must also be mindful of the other holdfasts. Each holdfast seeks to increase their prestige in the eyes of the First house... and sometimes they will do this at the expense of one of the other holdfasts.



HISTORY

Logbook of the Silver Blossom as kept by Captain Lanweyll

[AF - after the fall of Grunland. 467 AF is equivalent to 2533 BC.]

467 AF White-Ewe, 13: *Our search for a new homeland continues. I have heard through my Taymoran contacts of a great nation of gnomes and dwarves that has arisen on the bridge between Brunn and the Dawn Lands. Though my contacts warn me to stay clear of those lands I am determined to investigate. We are setting course straight away.*

467 AF Rich-Sun, 4: *Our stay at Isshum was brief, for looks our hosts gave us were most unwholesome. I did not resupply here. I shudder to think what I might bring aboard should I choose to. About this supposed dwarven nation the Mogreth were very tight lipped. I did manage to procure several items made in the lands north of here. They are beautifully crafted and of the finest quality, but I am beginning to have misgivings. I only hope that we can reach these dwarven lands before our supplies give out.*

467 AF Rich-Sun, 11: *The welcome we received in Gromedyn is very encouraging. We were introduced to Errol Gwelk, the Minister of Finance and Trade, an affable gnome of middling years who supped with us and offered a personal tour of the city. I have approved shore leave for the crew in shifts. It will be good for them to stretch their legs on open ground again.*

467 AF Rich-Sun, 12: *The tour was given to myself and my senior staff, as promised. Gromedyn is centered around the holdfast, an enormous fortress constructed of massive stone blocks. Eldorwyn suspects powerful magic was required for its construction. Nearly everyone we met within was a minister of some sort. I do not know how the gnomes get anything done with so much bureaucracy. The city proper is of a poorer construction. From what I saw, its walls are ramshackle, and I doubt that they would repel even a minor skirmishing force. Down side alleys I caught glimpses of mud huts and makeshift tent dwellings, but our tour directed us through more affluent areas. Minister Gwelk is a most gracious host, but still... I feel he is hiding something.*

467 AF Rich-Sun, 21: *I am growing restless, but Minister Gwelk insists that we stay a few more days. One of the Moadreg Elders is journeying to Gromedyn explicitly to meet us, apparently he is very interested to see an elf. For my inconvenience he has promised to update our navigational charts. To leave now would be an insult to the minister and could possibly leave him in disfavor with his superiors. He has been very helpful to us all, and those charts could prove very useful to this voyage, so I am inclined to grant his request.*

467 AF Rich-Sun, 24: *Ghytar Kelgrym arrived today in a ceremony much more solemn than I expected. Apparently these elders put great stead in their own privacy. Few in Gromedyn even suspected he was here, save Minister Gwelk and a few others. Ghytar is not what I expected. He is crippled apparently, though I know not how, and moves about through the use of a spidery construct that obeys his whims. His eyes were milky white, though based on his movements I suspect he could see, and one arm he always kept under heavy robes. It did not move. The gnomes show him a great deference, casting their eyes to the ground when he is near, but with me he cultivated a close familiarity, even insisting that I call him by his first name.*

As promised Minister Gwelk has provided me with updated maps of the highest quality. They will be invaluable to us indeed. Ghytar also left with me a marvelous chest, inlaid with silver and gold and encrusted with gems of all kinds. I do not know how it opens, but Ghytar assures me that when the time is right, it will serve me well. I should feel quite honored by the gift, but instead am quite uneasy about it. I have asked the crew to lock it in the hold. We leave at first light tomorrow.

467 AF Rich-Sun, 25: *Several of the crew have grown ill since our dep...*

HISTORY

Missive from First Mate Eldorwyn to Ilsundel

I am sending the log kept by Captain Lanweyll along with this personal missive, may Thendara grant that you receive it. We are in dire straights. Several crewmen were missing this morning and during a search of the ship we found Captain Lanweyll's head attached to the figurehead. Her cabin was slick with blood and gore, and on the walls words were scribbled over and over again. Deceivers. World destroyers. We will never forget. As soon as I saw the cabin I had men search the hold, but Ghytar's gift is gone.

...

The ship is lost... sinking fast. We destroyed the mechanical abomination that those treacherous dwarves snuck aboard, but the damage is already done. These dwarves have the taint of Blackmoor on them, I can smell it. They must be stopped before the world is destroyed again.

May Thendara keep you and preserve you Ilsundel, and may you lead our people down the right paths. I do not think I will see you again.

“Now listen well to Master Hyrrigk, as he recounts the history of our people! My eyes may be clouded, and my limbs withered away, but I remember those times... I was a part of them...”

- Dalwyr Hyrrigh, Master Historian of the Coruscating Tower

The Great Rain of Fire

“Our ancestors thrived in the land of Blackmoor, where dwarven artisans crafted wonders beyond belief. Secrets wrested from the City of the Gods vaulted Blackmoor and its allies into the dawn of a new age, and yes, we dwarves were at the forefront! Magic fed the populace, Earthshakers guarded the borderlands from aggression, and our people explored the multiverse – from the Inner Planes, to the crystal spheres hanging in the void. A Golden Age was upon us!

“Then the elves came to the North, feigning friendship and pretending to embrace the wonders of Blackmoorian technomancy. The Grunland colonies grew - thriving in the exchange of knowledge, art, and magic between our peoples. For centuries the elves played such, building cities in the pall of Blackmoor’s greatness. Mimicking their culture. Paying lip service to science... to progress.

“Despite their best efforts, the elves could never grasp the knowledge of our grandeur. Growing jealous of our success, they plotted in the dark, seeking out the means to lay Blackmoor low and

claim its victories for their own. Low... their works bore fruit even they could not harvest, and their treachery wrought destruction upon the entire world. Yes! It was the elves who brought about the Great Rain of Fire! Elves who caused the sun to spin in the sky, and burning ash to fall upon the ground! Never forget this... lest you fall victim of their deceit again, and are fated to the doom of our ancestors.”

Rise of the Yadraks

“When the elves of Grunland first came to the North, our ancestors also set out across the lands of this earth, eager to find adventure and riches in a new world. Of these, some traveled west, finding a mountainous region along the coast of Brun yielding great treasures. The Great Rain of Fire flung these lands into the frigid north, and afterwards the dwarves living there struggled even to survive.

“It was Lugett Yadrak who saved his people from destruction. Following visions sent to him by benevolent immortals, Lugett led his kinfolk south and east along the spine of the mountains. Food was scarce, snow and ice covered much of the lands, and savage bands of giants and elves beset them at every opportunity, but Lugett’s will was stronger.

“When at last they had traveled to lands below the Wurmsteeth Mountains, Lugett and his kin happened upon their first friendly allies – the

HISTORY

Zarka gnomes. Standing together the two peoples carved a new home from the barbaric lands of the north... but still their enemies gathered all around them, and the dwarves of the north could not stand alone much longer.”

Coming of the Moadreg

“Not all perished in the great catastrophe that shattered Blackmoor. Urthyne Drelgh found shelter in an abandoned Blackmoorian stronghold on the edge of their borders and began to search out the rest of her kin. Farseer Refuge became a sanctuary for the dwarves of Blackmoor – not only was it a fortress against the ravages of the Wasting, but it was also a stronghold of Blackmoorian knowledge and science.

“In the decades and centuries to come Farseer Refuge protected and nurtured dwarves from across the blasted face of Skothar. These became the clans of Felwig and Karlheig, and for a time they were content. Those times did not last, for even Farseer Refuge was not immune to the ravages of the Wasting. As the disease seeped further and further into their sanctuary, the dwarves were eventually left with only one choice – they must leave their newfound home or perish.

“Urthyne Drelgh was not complacent during her time at Farseer Refuge however. Using the great artifact in the center of the stronghold she was able to find long lost kin who had made the journey to faraway Brun before the Great Rain of

Fire. Though too old to make the journey herself, Urthyne entrusted the care of her people to her greatest apprentice Dranwyrf Korrskill, and it was he who led the dwarven emigration from Skothar to Brun.”

Merging of the Clans

“For decades Dranwyrf struggled to bring his people to their promised homeland on Brun, but when the journey was finally over the dwarves faced a new problem. Savage tribes of elves and giants were dedicated to wiping them out, intent on eradicating all traces of ancient Blackmoor from the planet.

“Vicious enemies, the giants and elves were on the verge of annihilating our folk. Our people would have been slaughtered if Dranwyn hadn’t brought all of the clans together. Yardrak, Felwig, Karlheig... even some of those who deserted to Hurgon heeded his call. On that day of Triumph, when the dwarven host defeated the giants at the Battle of Drangyr, the Shimmering Lands were born!

“Since then, Dranwyrf has lead his people, guiding us so that we may rebuild our former glory, and once again bring the light of Blackmoor back into this world. That dream is upon us. With the completion of the Gate of Light, the power of the radiance flows through our lands... and the grandeur of what once was, will soon be again”

CALENDAR

Precepts of a Gnomish Trader

“Mark my words well... at least if you want to get ahead in this life... well, or even if you just want to keep your head. Most folk tend to shun these dwarves we live with. True they have tempers, follow a complex code of social conduct, and most of them are just plain off their rockers... but mainly they’re just misunderstood. If you can understand them... well, then you can profit from them.

“For example, don’t plan to deliver any merchandise to one of them dwarves on the Day of Refuge... They just won’t even open their door... if you’re lucky. See on Refuge they sit deep in their holds and meditate on days gone past, when their ancestors had to seek shelter to escape the Wasting. What? Aren’t they always like that? Well... yes... mostly. But especially on the Day of Refuge.

“But there are times when a dwarf is more than happy to see a trader pull up. The months of Khonlyn and Sraylyn are known for celebrations. Food, drink, anything that would lend itself to merry making sells well in those months. If you want to make a real killing, bring supplies into Himnem in the month of Jaylyn... but not after the 15th. After that those radiomancers seal themselves up tight and won’t talk to anyone.

“What’s that? What about them that dwell along the Maghkrys Mountains? Sure they’re more social than most, but mark my words... Don’t never go near them during the month of Byrlyn... lessen you never want to come back...”

12 Khonlyn: Brethren

Celebrates the day when the Skotharian dwarves repaired the Farseer and used it to find their brethren on Brun. Many Yadraks and their kin despise this day and actively dissuade others from practicing it, which invariably leads to brawls in areas where the clans mix.

8 Sraylyn: Triumph

Celebrations occur across the Shimmering Lands commemorating the triumph of the dwarven people against their giant oppressors at the Battle of Drangyr. When destined to meet, the Elder Conclave does so on this day.

15 Byrlyn: Pact Day

Temples to dark immortals are especially active on this day. Sacrifices are made and pacts are renewed to insure the continued hardiness of the dwarven people against the dreaded Wasting disease. This observance is more prevalent amongst the Yadrak dwarves than with their Skotharian cousins, although a good portion of Karlheig dwarves follow the practice as well.

11 Karrlyn: Mourning

A time set aside to remember the devastation caused by the Great Rain of Fire. Shops are closed and no business transactions are permitted. Even armies on the march will dig in and make camp for the day. Most dwarves take this time to inspect their long term supplies, making sure they have enough to last at least a year. Gnomish families huddle together in dark basements and tell stories of how their ancestors survived the catastrophe.

15 Jaylyn: Preparation

These two weeks preceding the Tide of the Shimmering Gate are solemn serious times, when all those who utilize the power of the radiance prepare for its coming.

1 Kayldlyn: Tide of the Shimmering Gate

This is the annual celebration of the opening of the Gate of Light, and culminates weeks of preparation time for the dwarves. On this day radiance surges forth from the Gate and fills any prepared receptacles with its power.

CALENDAR

27 Byflyn: Refuge

Commemorates the day when the Skotharian dwarves, led by Urthyne Drelgh, first discovered

the Farseer, deep in their underground shelter. Dwarves refuse to leave their homes on this day for any reason, instead spending solitary time reflecting on their escape from the Wasting.

OLD DWARVISH MODERN DWARVISH Thyatian	KHONLYN WHARLIN NUMONT	MYRLYN MORLIN VATERMONT	HARRLYN HRALIN THAUMONT
	HRAYLYN HWYRLIN FLAURMONT	SRAYLYN STYRLIN YARTHMONT	KURLYN BAHRLIN KLARMONT
	BYRLYN BUHRLIN FEIMONT	KLYNLYN KLINTIN FYRMONT	KARRLYN BARRLIN AMBYRMONT
	BYFLYN BIFLIN SVIFTMONT	JRAYLYN JHYRLIN EIRMONT	KAYLDLYN KULDILIN KALDMONT

RACES

Darra the Shade to a Corsair Princeling

“Come closer handsome... yes you, come closer. I won't bite you.

“Did I appear out of thin air? No, not in the least. It's that medallion you wear around your neck. Where did you get it from?”

“Hold on, no need to be defensive. Where you got it isn't important, but what's inside of it is. It's the radiance you see... That medallion must be touched by it in some way. The radiance gives a shade substance... at least for a time. Allows us to smell the world once again... taste... touch...”

“Why do you pull back from my embrace? I have no wish to harm you, I only... well, it's not so often that I get the chance to converse with one as handsome as yourself. To see... and to be seen...”

“That's better. You see the tales they tell about these lands can't all be true, can they? I am no monster, and truth be told neither are the dwarves. They're quite enlightened actually, and share their realm with many peoples. The Zarka gnomes were here before the dwarves, but neither races would have survived long without one another's help. Oh... granted, the giantkin can be brutish at times, but they're no monsters. Just try to stay out from underfoot, shall we?”

“Perhaps we could go somewhere... more private? No? You'd prefer a stroll through the streets of Gromhyeld? I'm sure there are better things we could be... very well. You're a guest in my lands after all. That? It's one of the soulbound. Sometimes, when a dwarven master becomes too old or too frail, they choose to put themselves in a body made of stone. I don't fully understand the techniques myself, but I suspect the craft was preserved by the dwarves from ancient times, possibly Blackmoorian in nature... just as I suspect, is your medallion.

“These others? Where did they come from? We've been walking all about the town... and shades are drawn to the radiance. They were bound to see you sooner or later. Perhaps it would have been best if you had listened to me earlier. You could have dealt with me alone. No matter. Now, we really must insist you tell us. Where did you find that medallion...?”

Many races inhabit the depths of the Shimmering Lands. Natives, immigrants, and even former slaves all live together under a common umbrella. With the Wasting disease spreading and their neighbors growing more and more hostile, the inhabitants of the Shimmering Lands must overcome their differences if they are to survive.

Dwarf

The dwarves first journeyed to Norwold over the Ostland land bridge from the Dawn Lands. Forced to leave their native lands by the dreaded Wasting, a disease that slowly eats away mind, body, and soul, the dwarves have only recently found a new home to call their own. Initially claiming the colder northern realms of Brun, the dwarves have been fighting a losing battle with

the native inhabitants of that realm, mostly tribes of elves and giant-kin. Finally driven to desperation the disparate clans have begun to combine their efforts in defense of their new lands and are beginning to hold their own.

Most dwarves prefer to live quiet and isolated lives in secluded estates hidden in the wilderness. Those that cannot be masters of their own domains swear fealty to those that can. Even so, the population that makes up dwarven estates is only a fraction of the total. Dwarves who are underprivileged and unlucky enough not to have the money or means for solitude end up living in the few scattered cities of the Shimmering Lands.

Dwarven culture is not monolithic, but instead made up of several varied beliefs that have

RACES

meshed together throughout the years as different dwarven clans merged throughout the long pilgrimage that brought them to Brun. One thing that they all have in common though is the dreaded Wasting disease. It is a plague brought with them from their ancestral lands in Skothar and affects all dwarves in some shape or form. The most common manifestation of the Wasting is physical deformities, though mental deterioration often takes hold in older generations as well.

Giantkin (Half-Giants)

Magical experiments and breeding programs of the dwarves have created a race of hardy and obedient servants. Although still large, the giantkin do not tower over the smaller races as their ancestors did and kin to the north still do to this day. Giantkin stand 8 to 10 feet tall with corded muscles throughout their bodies.

Though many of their kin remain slaves to the dwarves, a few of their number have been granted their freedom and have chosen to remain in the Shimmering Lands, to eek out their own existence. This commonly occurs with the demise of their current master, as few dwarves are concerned enough with the fate of one of their fellow's slaves (being concerned more with the fate of their own slaves) to reestablish mastery. Many giantkin end up in the few organized settlements scattered throughout the Shimmering Lands. Although they hold little love for dwarves, they find that gnomes are tolerable enough and often get along well with the smaller creatures.

Gnome

Gnomes migrated to these lands from the frozen northwest. Those that have settled in Moadreg lands are treated as near equals by the dwarves. The gnomes are hardy and can endure the harsh conditions of the world, and as such they take on all societal roles that the dwarves either shun or are unable to perform.

Many swear fealty to one of the dwarven Houses and serve them directly, though most gnomes are content to live on the surface of the land, beholden to the dwarves but for the most part left

largely to their own devices. In fact gnomes hold many positions of prominence in the Shimmering Lands and are largely responsible for keeping the country cohesive. They are the merchants, tradesmen, and administrators of the country.

Like the dwarves, gnomish culture is a union created from several different tribes. Unlike the dwarvish culture however there are many commonalities between the tribes that bring the gnomes closer together. Gnomes tend to enjoy the company of their peers, and often work together – even when a single gnome is enough to accomplish the task at hand. The gnomes of the Shimmering Lands also hold a singular distinction, of all of the (flesh and blood) races in Brun, the gnomes are the only one that has proven resistant to the Wasting. Whether this is a cause of their fey heritage or some other factor is unknown.

Shade (Ghostwalk)

These creatures hail from the Gate of Light, and from the Blighted Lands beyond. While at times they can appear substantial, they are in fact mere shades of living dwarves. Many are ancestors of the dwarves who first began the migration to Brun, but did not make it to their promised land.

Drawn to the radiance in all of its forms, shades require that magical substance in order to survive. With the radiance nearby, shades take on a more solid existence and can interact with their surroundings just as well as the truly living can. As the power of the radiance fades, so too do shades, becoming little more than insubstantial shadows. Despite this, they are valued members of society. Shades are revered and consulted as oracles in some communities. Their ties to the past make them excellent guides for the future.

Soulbound (Warforged)

The soulbound appear to be constructs made of stone, metal, and even sometimes pieces of wood and other materials. Often they are shaped in the likeness of a great dwarf warrior or mage and are encrusted with jewels and precious metals of all kinds. These are living constructs, that have been imbued with the soul of a Moadreg dwarf whose

RACES

body was too weak or frail to continue its existence on its own.



All soulbound bodies have one thing in common, a large centralized crystal, most often embedded in their torso, which is the receptacle for housing the dwarven soul. The transference process is difficult, and many dwarves lose their memories once placed into their new bodies, at least for the short term. In some cases, over time, a soulbound may come to remember its former life, but most

often they continue in their new existence without much thought for the past.

Every hundred years a soulbound must be infused with the power of the Radiance, or it will cease to function. Unknown to the dwarves, each time this is done, a portion of the soulbound's soul is consumed. Over time this loss of soul leads to increasingly chaotic behavior and eventually insanity.

Tiefling/Planetouched

The results of unions between dwarves and other worldly creatures, tieflings have become more prominent in the Shimmering Lands, especially in locales where Yadrak dwarves hold sway. In many instances these tieflings are nearly indistinguishable from other dwarves, especially considering the heavy and concealing clothing that most dwarves wear.

Although tieflings of the Shimmering Lands may have the appearances of their dwarven brethren, their outlook on life is very different. Of all the dwarf-kin, tieflings are by far the most social, even rivaling the cooperative behavior of the gnomes. Unfortunately for those around them, most tieflings are less altruistic than their gnome neighbors. Though some are able to overcome the urges of their heritage, most are thoroughly and unrepentantly evil.

CLASSES

Tale from a Stone Giant Hetman

"Now listen to me! This happened when my father's father, Raggnet Jaggedarm, was young. He was a warrior in the Granite Guard, and was sent by the then hetman, Korrl the Grimm, to treat with the Frost Jarl and his people. The Frost Jarl was wicked. The north wind was his servant and he sent it down the mountainside, freezing everything in its path. Many of our tribe he slew, and others he took captive and made them into slaves. Korrl called a moot of five tribes and gathered a host to lay waste to the Frost Jarl and his evil. But Korrl was also wise and knew that many of the Stone Folk would be slain if they swung clubs with the frostlings, so he sent Raggnet and his finest warriors to speak with the Jarl and treat for the release of our people before our host descended upon him.

"This my father's father did. Down from the mountain and through the green valleys thick with pines he led his men. For days they journeyed through the wilds until finally they came upon the base of Old Snow Man, the foot of the Frost Jarl's domain. That night they camped, with Old Snow Man looming above them as far as they could see. Even though the moon was full they cut trees and made a fire, to show the Frost Jarl where they were, and they set sentries to watch for his approach. For three nights they did this... but the Frost Jarl did not appear.

"Raggnet awoke on that third night, a witness to something horrifying. One of his men had killed two others, slitting their throats as they slept. Raggnet struggled with him, preventing him from killing a third. The warrior's face was blank. His eyes were dead though he still drew breath, and Raggnet and his men could do nor say nothing to stop him. In the struggle the warrior was killed, but as soon as his knife fell to the ground another warrior grasped it and killed the one standing next to him. A madness had taken them all. My father's father was hit, and he stumbled into a copse of nearby trees.

"It was there that Raggnet saw him. A short creature... smaller than a man, but thicker. Scars covered its face, as if runes had been branded directly onto its skin, and its yellow beard was sparse and unkempt. The creature looked right into Raggnet's eyes and laughed, and as it did Raggnet could feel things... as if worms were crawling on the inside of his skull. It was a struggle for Raggnet to move, but somehow he did. Rising to his full height he wrenched a tree out of the ground and raised it above the creature's head. The creature did not move, it simply stood there looking at Raggnet, laughing even as my father's father smashed its skull.

"This tale Raggnet told to my father, and to me as well. What he did not say... until he was near to returning with the stone, was this; That laugh he heard the creature make... that laugh he could hear in his dreams every time the moon was full, until the day the stones took him. Dwarf, these creatures are called. Mark them from my words. They are rotten outside and within, and are worse by far than any Frost Jarl. They can steal your soul with a look, and make you into a puppet for their whims. Kill them when you see them... if you can. For if you can't your fate will be filled with horrors far worse than death."

Most character classes have at least some representation in the Shimmering Lands.

Arcane

Gnomes, dwarves, and even some soulbound, may become powerful wizards. Gnomes tend to be more traditional in their crafts while dwarves and soulbound tend to gravitate toward radiomancy. The Moadreg believe that the

arcane arts they practice are the last remnants of knowledge and power handed down to them from ancient Blackmoor.

Wizardry is one of the few rare professions that will bring the Moadreg together, at least for a short time. Many of the largest cities in the land have schools devoted to the craft, and competition for admittance is high. Although not

CLASSES

all of the arts taught in such institutes originate with Blackmoor, those that do can offer their practitioners power beyond belief... perhaps with a price to match.

Divine

Most dwarves of the Shimmering Lands revere their own abilities more than they do any immortals. Not all are godless however, especially among the Yadrak. Those priests venerate the darkest and foulest of the immortals. A small minority of clerics in the land worship Kagyar, the Artisan. Gnomes and giantkin may also worship their own deities, most often those associated with nature and the wild things in it.

Although rare in the Shimmering Lands, druids do exist. Their ranks are composed mostly of gnomes and giantkin, who tend to have just as much affinity with earth and stone as they do with wild growing things.

Martial

With a long history of violence and war, it is unsurprising that the Moadreg have a proud martial tradition. Both groups of dwarves, those from Brun as well as those from Skothar, faced many enemies during their migration to the Shimmering Lands, and faced even more during the formative years of the nation.

Most settlements, from the largest city to the smallest wilderness estate, maintain some standing military force. While dwarves comprise the majority of such units, they are by no means the only members. In addition to soldiers, many regions boast martial orders and mercenary groups. Though a dangerous life, the martial arts

afford a certain amount of prestige to those who practice them.

Psionic

Karlheig and Hurgon dwarves have an affinity toward the mental arts, an ability that was developed by their ancestors living on the fringes of Blackmoorian society. Non-dwarves possessing such powers are rare, although rumors persist of secret orders attempting to instill such abilities in other races.

Psionicists find roles in many organizations throughout the Shimmering Lands, but are especially prized by military orders. Some become hermits and oracles, willing to peer into the future, or the past, for a price. Still others travel abroad as merchants (and spies), using their powers to manipulate others into giving them what they want.

Mystical

Although rare in the Shimmering Lands, mystical orders do exist. Gnomes and giantkin are most likely to gravitate towards monastic life, seeking fellowship among those who set themselves apart from the toils of mundane life. Former slaves are also drawn to such orders, if for no other reason than to escape masters who may be pursuing them.

Many mystical orders find solitude on the outskirts of society, near the borders with Grondheim, the north, and even Mogreth. Some of the larger cities also harbor such brotherhoods, whose orders are strongly affiliated with some of the major religions of the area.

ARMS AND EQUIPMENT

Giantkin Soldier to New Recruit

“No, they aren’t marching us into a trap. Yes, I know we’ve been marching through these mountain passes for days, but that’s what you do when you’re a soldier. Heh... anyway, we’re trained and provisioned. We’re too valuable to serve as bait.

“You’re right, the dwarves don’t care for us. Sometimes I think they wouldn’t notice us, cept we stand three times their height. Hard to miss that, even for a long beard with their nose in a book. No, you’re right. They’d be just as happy to send us to slaughter as anything else. But they won’t, see...

“They aren’t really in charge of things... that’s why. It’s the skinny ones... the ones that even smile every now and then. Gnomes they’re called, you’re right. Anyway, them dwarves... they like to think they are the masters, but who runs their estates? Who stocks provisions? Who counts coins? Not them. They’re too busy for that.

“What do you mean, what’s that got to do with anything? It’s the gnomes, I tell you! They provision us with food and arms. See that we’re trained. They have invested in us! They aren’t going to waste all the coin they’ve spent on us.

“No... it doesn’t look like there is any way out of this valley... cept the way we come in... But we aren’t the bait...

“...That’s what mercenaries are for...”

Mundane Equipment

Bracer Axe

A bracer axe is an axe head that can be attached to specialized bracers worn on the arms. Doing so prevents the weapon from being disarmed. Bracer axes may also be attached to the muzzles of appropriately crafted dragon belchers.

Mounts

Horses and Ponies

Used mainly as draft animals in the Shimmering Lands, these animals are fairly rare, and represent all of the Blackmoorian stock that could be saved by dwarves migrating from Skothar. The dwarves take great pride in the bloodlines of these creatures and are loath to part with any of them.

Dire Goats

The use of these large goats was brought into the area by dwarves migrating from northern Brun. They are hardy animals that can survive in some of the most inhospitable conditions. Dire goats mainly serve as mounts in mountainous or rocky

terrain, where their sure footing makes them indispensable.

War Mastiffs

Selectively bred from captured dire wolves, many varieties of hounds serve as mounts across the nations of Brun. These are the mount of choice for warriors and knights, since hounds can be trained to complement their master’s battle techniques in combat.

V’hrugg Lizards

These reptilian creatures see service as mounts mainly in Mogreth, but their use may extend from those borders into parts of the Shimmering Lands, Grondheim, and Frontierlands. The lizards are hardy and strong, and able to carry a great deal of weight for long distances, however they fair ill in colder climates.

Special Materials

Radiantum

A radiance infused metal that causes a constitution poisoning on a critical hit. On a critical miss, the user of the weapon suffers the

poisoning instead. Radiantum is relatively new with the only known sources of the metal being found through the Gate of Light in the Blighted Lands.

Magic Items

Dragon Belcher

A technomantic device that can expel the magical charges stored within potions in a directed blast. Dragon belchers can be crafted to hold from one to five potions concurrently. The one and two potion variants are smaller and can be held in a

single hand, while those that hold three or more potions require the use of both hands to aim and fire.

Belcher Potions

Belcher potions replicate the magical powers of spells that are not normally stored in potion form. Fire ball, lightning, web, hold person, and other offensive spells may all be crafted as belcher potions. In addition to the typical attack spells, the dwarves also store pure radiance in potion form. This radiance potion causes radiance damage as well as constitution drain to effected targets.



BACKGROUNDS

Kurdul Mollak to his Gnomish Companion

“Aye, I was born on Mollak Estate, but it’s no more mine than the city of Taymoraz is.

“My mother is old... true... and perhaps one day my sister Nurdah, or even my brother Syrrak might inherit it... but not me.

“That’s why we’re out here in the wilds! No... not to get away from it all... to be noticed. That’s the only way to be assured of ever owning an estate! Some may be lucky enough to be born into one... but that’s all it is, just pure luck. If you’re first in line. If you’re elders pass on before you do. If your younger siblings don’t stab you from behind. That’s too many ifs for me.

“But the accords put forth by Dranwyrf still hold true. A dwarf can still make a name for himself... can still extend the power and dominion of the Shimmering Lands and be rewarded!

“What’s in it for you? Whatever do you mean? I won’t forget all you’ve done for me! No... you’ll serve me well once I’m installed as master of my own estate. Groundskeeper. Quartermaster. Maybe even majordomo... if you could ever shut your mouth and stop asking all of these stupid questions...

Names

Prefixes: *Dran, Dras, Jur, Kher, Kur, Lem, Lum, Mol, Nur, Syr, Tyr, Wan*

Suffixes (male): *dehk, dul, dyn, egk, gyr, lak, mehr, neg, nohk, rak, uld*

Suffixes (female): *ahr, dah, deh, ehr, gid, uhr, vid, wid, wuhr*

Flaws

Replacement Parts

Arms, legs, even internal organs, can all be affected by the Wasting. When a limb or organ becomes so corrupted by the disease that it can no longer function, many Moadreg seek to replace it with some form of substitute. The most common of these are construct grafts – pieces of clockwork or golemcraft that are attached to the body and powered by magic.

Disfigurement

Sometimes the Wasting destroys muscle or tissue on or around the face, leaving one of the Moadreg with some amount of disfigurement. Such conditions can be anything from purely cosmetic (stretched and desiccated skin) to truly sensory impeding (the loss of an eye, ear, nose, etc...), though those that suffer from extreme

disfigurement may choose to replace sensitive organs with a construct graft.

Compulsion

The Wasting not only affects the body, but it can also affect the mind. Those subjected to prolonged exposure to the radiance often develop certain quirks of behavior that if left unchecked, can lead to detrimental social behavior.

Insanity

Psyches of the truly unlucky can become so warped by the Wasting, that they cease being able to discern fantasy from reality. Those that suffer from insanity may see or hear things that are not really there.

Languages

Derived Thonian

Many folk in the area, and indeed across the globe, speak some form of language derived from the Thonian tongue. Although these languages have had more than 700 years to drift apart, basic concepts can still be understood across cultures. Descendants of Skotharian dwarves, speak this language in the Shimmering Lands, as do the Makers in Teknuria and most folk that they have contact with (including those on the Corsair Isles and in the Frontierlands). Creatures of Mogreth

remember some Thonian from ancient times, and use that to communicate with their neighbors.

Antalian

The root of the Antalian tongue is shared by many cultures in northern Brun. For centuries, even before the Great Rain of Fire, dwarves living on Brun absorbed and adapted portions of the language as their own. Likewise, giantish folk of Grondheim, as well as several other giant kingdoms, had very close interactions with the ancestors of the Antalians. Even the beastmen of Urzud have picked up a smattering of Antalian which they use whenever communicating with potential employers in Antalian lands or the Shimmering Lands.



ORGANIZATIONS

Urzd Mercenary Hregget, to his Whelp

"These long beards pay well, see. But don't be fooled by em! I only takes the gold, but they be wanting to give you jewels or trinkets. Don't go for it. Grignar Longtooth, he takes the red ruby, see. Was as big as your noggin. He whooped and howled all night long about how he cheated that crazy long beard, see. Next morning wasn't nothin left of em but a pile of ashes, and that red ruby wasn't nothin but a lump of coal. They likes doing that, see. Likes to trick you, likes to give you cursed things, things that eat your soul. Just like old Grignar got et.

"But the gold, see. That be harder for em to hex. Too much trouble, and not enough fun for em. You let others take the 'big prizes' and just stick with the gold. That how you live a long time, see. And stand behind someone else. They always got tricks, see, they likes em. You let em play out before rushing in head first. Once I seen this long beard, he was fatter than Snag of Yazak. He got a bunch of us together and says we going to smash some pointy ears. Well, we likes that just fine. So we find em, but they's ready for us see, and a bunch of the boys rush in with their hammers swung, and noggin hitters twirlin, and that fat long beard, he just smiles from ear to ear. And I stood there watchin him, cause I know they likes tricks, see. Then he starts mumblin, under his breath like, and I swear the Dark Prince hisself come jumpin outta the fire. ...no, it was the foulest thing I ever saw... and it cut into the boys just as likely as the pointy ears.

"So makes sure you see the trick before you rush in see, cause they always gots one. That how you live a long time. And don't look them in the eyes! Oh! Never does that whelp, or they roast you! Wolf Pelt do that once. He think his hex just as big as the long beard's hex, and he stare him down. Not last long. All that left of Wolf Pelt now is wolf pelt he wear... and that full of holes. So full of holes, only thing left is this here skull on my helm, and it all black and crispy too.

"Remember that whelp. Never looks one in the eyes. That how you live a long time. And when the job done, then you go home. Don't stand there kicking yer feet in the dust waitin for somethin else to do, see. Them long beards will slap chains round yer feet and march you off to Isshum like as look at you. You lets them come to you when they got killin to be done. Don't never go to them looking for it. That how you live a long time..."

Coruscating Tower

Dwarves and gnomes come from all over the Shimmering Lands to study at the Coruscating Tower. The masters of the Tower put just as much emphasis on warfare and tactics as they do on magecraft, and even novitiates of the school are considered to be among the finest warriors that the land has to offer. Located on the bay of Fyngul, the Coruscating Tower acts as the Shimmering Land's eastern stronghold against giants and other denizens of the Dawn Lands.

After serving for a period of time in the eastern armies, students of the Coruscating Tower may be sent on assignments across the nation. Graduates may become masters of the school, but are free to seek their fortunes elsewhere if they so desire. Many are sought after by provincial

conclaves as trusted councilors and advisors, and put into positions of power in local militia.

Estate Servants

Many of the free folk of the Shimmering Lands chose to serve the estate of a dwarven elder in some form or fashion. Dwarven elders rarely like leaving their estates, relying instead on a virtual army of servants dedicated to seeing to their needs. Estates are secluded, secretive, and highly competitive with their neighbors. Although conflict between estates is common, outright warfare is highly discouraged by the Elder Conclave.

Serving an elder's estate brings its own rewards. Those who serve faithfully and perform above expectations can expect to rise through the ranks quickly into positions of power. Many move on

ORGANIZATIONS

to public service, with the eventual hope of being granted an estate of their own someday.

Gleaming Company

A fraternity of adventurers, the Gleaming Company formed when veterans of the Battle of Drangyr banded together after the giants were defeated and the dwarves won their new homeland. The band was, and still is, devoted to exploring new territories and ferreting out whatever secrets they come upon. The order's main headquarters are based in Tairhyeld, and many members have ties to merchants and other rich and powerful members of society. Chapter houses also exist in Demhyeld, Fyngul, Gromhyeld, Jarduhl, and Kohlgor.

The Company's symbol is a shining lantern, often made of brass, and many wear it in some form or fashion upon their person. Members of the Gleaming Company often travel to other lands, especially those the dwarves know little about, however many are just as drawn to explore the mysteries hidden in their own nation as well. Members are duty bound to help one another when in need, and are required to lend aid to their local Conclave when requested. Otherwise very few restrictions are put on their activities.

Provincial Military

Military service is a highly respected profession in the Shimmering Lands, where every dwarf may be called to defend their home land in times of need. Those who choose a military life full

time, and who show the proper aptitude, will become leaders of their people.

Provincial Conclaves have control over local militia, and are responsible for protecting the borders of the nation. In times of peace these forces can be bought and bartered for by local estates and other individuals of influence. Such deals often facilitate unofficial military actions both within the borders of the Shimmering Lands as well as abroad.

Vehdnen Syndicate

Most folk of the Shimmering Lands know of the Vehdnen Syndicate, though few ever speak of it openly. The Vehdnen gnomes of Gnen have long been a force to reckon with in their home city, but over the past several decades their influence has spread across the nation. Lidol Vehdnen, patriarch of the family, is a devout follower of Belnos, and also one of the most ruthless men in the Shimmering Lands.

Any thieves that operate from Fyngul to Tairhyeld, do well to pay their respects (along with their "guild dues") to the family. Those that don't are rarely ever heard from again. Membership in the Syndicate has no restrictions, although leadership roles can only be held by gnomes who can trace their family heritage back to Gnen. The Vehdnen take care of their own (even non-family members) and should any guild member run into trouble they can call upon the full resources of the Syndicate. Such help is not without cost however, as the Syndicate always expects something in return.

FAITHS

Exarch Juraed in his Mourning Day Address

“Take heed, lest you forget the ancient fires Zugzul sent down upon the world to cleanse it!

“Yes, Zugzul sent down the fire, and it destroyed much of the world! But we survived! We survived because we are the chosen ones... We must claim the Fire. We must claim it, and use it against the enemies of Zugzul, for his greater glory!

“And we will. We will put all who oppose us to the fire. We will burn the elves in the northlands, and the giants to the west – and in the Dawn Lands as well! Yes... we will even burn the lizards in their degenerate swamp... for none can escape the Fires of Zugzul...”

“None can escape...”

“So take heed! And stand prepared, lest you yourselves be caught in the fires! For unless you serve He Who Burns the World, you are his enemy! And all of his enemies will perish!”

The Ancients

Belnos, Garal Glitterlode, Khoronus, and Zugzul form this pantheon, held together by a belief in the old Blackmoorian technomancy and the superiority of that society. A fifth entity known as the Dreamer, mysterious and insubstantial, personifies the power of the radiance, a source of energy that radiomancers are able to draw upon from beyond the Gates of Light. Different sects hold individual immortals in higher esteem with Belnos often being seen as an outsider, even by those who venerate him above the others. Most residents of the Shimmering Lands pay lip service to the immortals of this faith, even if they are not devout followers.

Cult of Dominion

A secretive sect, the Cult of Dominion worships Slizzark. Most members of the Controllers Guild are indoctrinated into the cult when they become full fledged members, and many in clan Karlheig are brought up from birth at least with some understanding of the faith. Coastal settlements have more active sects, presumably because they have greater access to Slizzark's servitors, many of whom favor watery environments.

Fiery Forge

Worshippers of the Fiery Forge venerate Zugzul. In him they see the forge that will shape dwarven lands as well as the dwarven spirit. Many of these sects also combine worship of the Warrior

with that of darker beings such as Demogorgon, Orcus, and sometimes even Slizzark. The worst kinds of fanatical zealots are drawn to this religion, believing that it is the Moadreg's destiny to rule over the lesser races in the world. The majority of these practitioners are dwarves, as few other races are tolerated.

Oracles

Khoronus, Skuld, and Kagyar all have oracles about the lands. These individuals are reclusive even by most Moadreg standards. Hermits and madmen, most oracles are shunned except by the most desperate, or the most greedy of souls. The old saying applies - be careful what you seek, for it may find you.

Silver and Gold

A pragmatic religion, the Church of Silver and Gold takes its name from its two patron immortals, Belnos and Garal Glitterlode. The two share equal prominence within the church, where devotion and pride in one's craft is just as important as making a profit. This faith, which is mostly practiced by traders and merchants, is the one that outsiders come into contact with the most frequently. It is also fairly widespread throughout the gnomish population within the Shimmering Lands, although most folk are less than zealous in their devotions.

Way of the Stone

A relatively new faith practiced mostly among the disenfranchised dwarves of the Shimmering Lands, the Way of the Stone is a naturalistic philosophy preached by priests of Kagyar. Both Belnos and Garal Glitterlode sometimes feature as supporters of Kagyar, who admonishes his

followers against the evils of Blackmoorian technology and extols the virtues of living a life that is in tune with the stones of the earth. Although in other faiths Garal is often a supporter of technomancy, when depicted by the Way of the Stone he encourages his followers to rely more upon their innate ingenuity rather than the crutch of Blackmoor's doomed technology.



MYSTARA 2300 BC



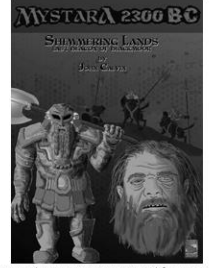
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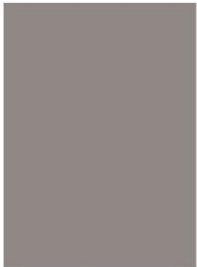
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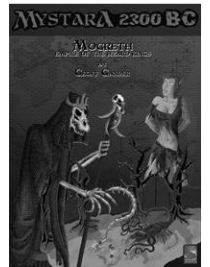
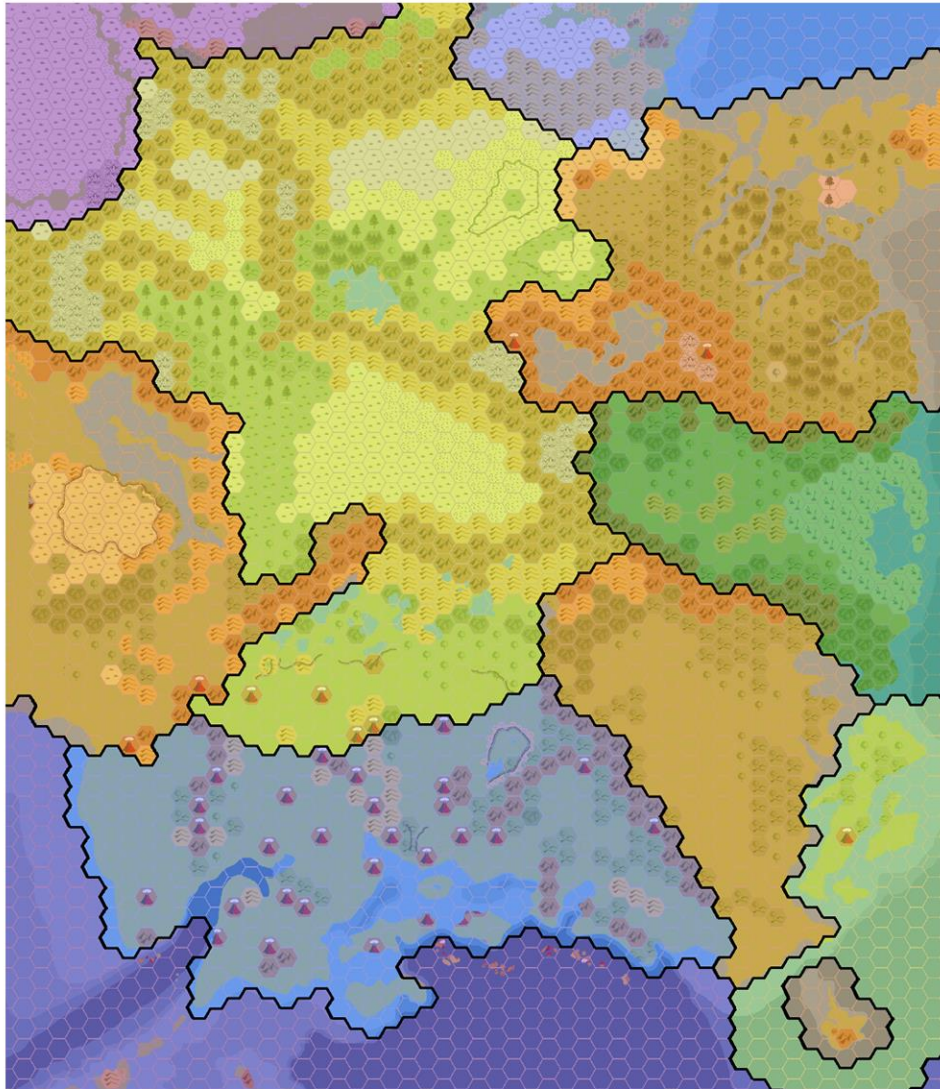
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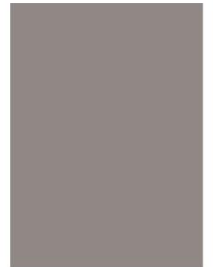
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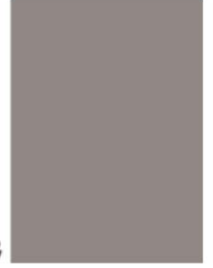
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THE MAKERS



PIRATES



MYSTARA 2300 BC

GAZBC GAME ACCESSORY

SHIMMERING LANDS LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR

BY JOHN CALVIN



THE SHIMMERING LANDS, LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR. THE HOME OF THE MOADREG IS A DARK AND FOREBODING LAND WHERE THE HORRORS OF THE WASTING CONTINUE TO PLAGUE THE WORLD. DECEPTION, INTRIGUE, AND TREACHERY ABOUND ON THE DWARVEN FRONTIER. TRULUY, THE LAST BEACON OF BLACKMOOR