

Mag'duar Dwarves

“The King is dead! Long live the King!”

“We are strong, like the Earth. We are hard, like the Earth. We are stubborn, like the Earth. We are eternal, like Winter”

Fiction Piece:

“What took you so long. You were supposed to be back with those supplies a moon ago.”

“I would hardly call an extra day a moon.” said Bruzmog Hammerstone shakily as he approached the house of stone and clay. He was leading a wagon full of supplies he had left town to fetch several weeks before.

“Well you didn’t miss much. Work in the mine has been slow due to the cave-ins. With those supplies we should be able to stabilize the shafts and get back to some real work.” His wife Gongrelin said as she looked up at him from the chair she was seated at outside their home.

“Well it is near dark so the work can begin tomorrow, right now I want to eat and relax. It is quiet around here anyway. Where are the kids.” Bruzmog looked around trying to spot his son and daughter who were 11 and 12 years old respectively.

“Oh, a group of the kids are off playing games. I told them to be home by dark so I would expect them.....” His wife trailed off as one of the other villagers came running up in a panic.

“The mine....” the dwarf said panting, barely able to stand up straight. His face was covered in dust that fell off his beard in clouds when he shook his head too much. “...It’s collapsed, the whole entrance is sealed.”

“Well that doesn’t sound too concerning.” said Gongrelin clearly uninterested. “It is near dark and no one was supposed to work in there today anyway, we should be able to fix it in the morning.”

The dwarf finally catching his breath a bit looked up in exasperation. “The kids” He muttered out before he paused to suck in more air again. Gongrelin and Bruzmog looked at each other before grabbing pickaxes and taking off towards the mine.

As Gongrelin and Bruzmog approached the mine a crowd had already gathered outside. A human at the entrance to the mine was hacking away trying to get in. Bruzmog turned to one of the nearby folks outside a bit confused; only one person was trying to get into the mine. “Does that mean.....
“

“No, not necessarily, the human just doesn’t know anything besides kids are trapped in there, we are still waiting for the foremen to come down the hillside to let us know if we should be digging them out or not.” The towns member turned forward and looked up the hillside of the small mountain that the mine seemed to enter. As they looked up, a couple dwarfs were sliding down the rockface before landing on the ground to address the crowd.

“The air shafts are intact” said the one, the other one looking a bit relieved because he was still too tired from the climb to speak in a voice loud enough for the crowd. “The entrance is caved back pretty far, it may be awhile so we better get comfortable and someone.....” The foreman looked back at the

human anxiously trying to claw his way into the mine still. "... Please explain to the human he can stop that now." He sighed as he walked away.

The townspeople began to disperse, returning quickly with food, drinks, tables and chairs. They set up a fire pit and began roasting food and while scarfing down ale muttering back and forth and laughing rather loudly. As the crowd began to form in this enjoyable manner the human looked up from his digging confused. He ran up to one of the dwarfs panting. "Aren't any of you going to help get the children out."

Bruzmog chuckled softly as he forced a mug of ale into the humans hand. "We appreciate your care for our children, but rest assured, human, the children will be fine. No duar would be stopped by a measly mountain, not even a child. Now come, drink with us while we wait."

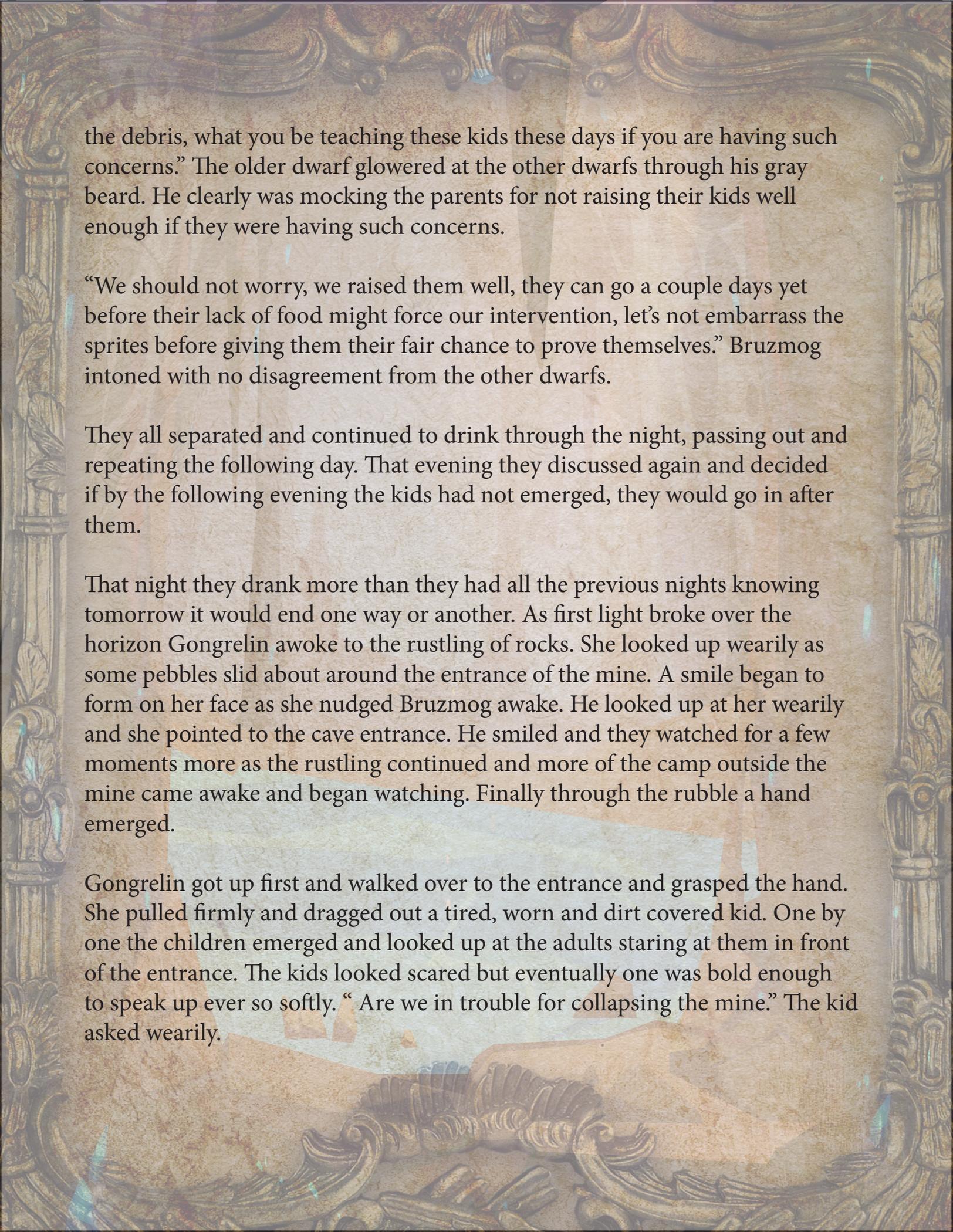
The night went on in happy bliss till all the dwarfs were passed out around the campfire. The next day the party began again and went through the night. The third day the party continued again into the evening as the dwarfs waited. On this evening a few of the more senior dwarfs converged to consider what had happened so far.

"Well" the one dwarf began, "are we sure they have water, i mean i would be embarrassed if they went into a mine without proper water pouches but it is worth considering I daresay."

"Nonsense," Gongrelin chimed in, "Even if a couple of them were childish enough, they had 9 of them in the group."

"Right you are" another jumped in, "but would they know how to handle any injured."

"Are you mad, they should have sensed the cave-in a mile away and dodged



the debris, what you be teaching these kids these days if you are having such concerns.” The older dwarf glowered at the other dwarfs through his gray beard. He clearly was mocking the parents for not raising their kids well enough if they were having such concerns.

“We should not worry, we raised them well, they can go a couple days yet before their lack of food might force our intervention, let’s not embarrass the sprites before giving them their fair chance to prove themselves.” Bruzmog intoned with no disagreement from the other dwarfs.

They all separated and continued to drink through the night, passing out and repeating the following day. That evening they discussed again and decided if by the following evening the kids had not emerged, they would go in after them.

That night they drank more than they had all the previous nights knowing tomorrow it would end one way or another. As first light broke over the horizon Gongrelin awoke to the rustling of rocks. She looked up wearily as some pebbles slid about around the entrance of the mine. A smile began to form on her face as she nudged Bruzmog awake. He looked up at her wearily and she pointed to the cave entrance. He smiled and they watched for a few moments more as the rustling continued and more of the camp outside the mine came awake and began watching. Finally through the rubble a hand emerged.

Gongrelin got up first and walked over to the entrance and grasped the hand. She pulled firmly and dragged out a tired, worn and dirt covered kid. One by one the children emerged and looked up at the adults staring at them in front of the entrance. The kids looked scared but eventually one was bold enough to speak up ever so softly. “Are we in trouble for collapsing the mine.” The kid asked wearily.

The adults smiled as Bruzmog moved forward and spoke. "You might have been, but you proved yourselves today young ones. Like true Duar you did not let the mountain stop you. Welcome to adulthood."

Description:

The Mag'duar are a strong and independent race, they are born of the earth and mountains and reside in the northeastern regions of the Aular Continent. Their traditions and beliefs that cast them as either crafters or stern and capable defenders of their territory, stretch back to the Incursion. Their combined government and religious structure is the oldest, still existing organization on the Aular continent. The Mag'duar, or Earth Dwarves or Winter Dwarves as they are sometimes called by other races, are fiercely independent and have never once declared themselves to be officially allied or affiliated with any other government or organization that did not have Mag'duar roots; that is until the Sacred Grounds Pact was established.

The Mag'duar capital is Demebor'duar, a massive metropolis and the heart of the Garr. It is from here, in the Palace of the King, that the Regent speaks for all of the Mag'duar. While all know that it is the Regent who speaks, any Mag'duar that you ask will tell you that the King is their true ruler. The Mag'duar government, in conjunction with their religion, states that the King of the Mag'duar Dwarves is divine, sitting alongside their Forgefather and Hearthmother as the third part of their Dwarven Triad. The Regent of the King, chosen by the King in life, speaks the divine words of the King in the land of the living while he exists in this higher state. In the living world, the King of the Mag'duar is entombed in a room at the center of the Palace of the King, adjoining to a room where the Regent and the King's council discuss matters of state and foreign affairs. When an issue comes up in council that the Regent does not have the authority for, he retires to the King's chamber and communes with the king. Sometimes this lasts for days, until the King reaches

a decision and passes his divine wisdom to the Regent, who then carries out his wishes in the mortal world. When the king's rule has come to an end, or the Regent grows too old to perform his duties, the Regent passes from this life and is coronated as the new King of the Mag'duar. This becomes a time of great celebration for the Mag'duar as the King's service in death is a reminder to the living Mag'duar about duty and their responsibilities.

Mag'duar itself is a harsh land that is covered in both mountains that seem to stretch for an eternity, and a winter that has never relented once in the thousands of years of Dwarven history. The dwarves have separated the land into two distinct regions, the Garr, or urban regions, and the Volstead, the rural areas. The dwarves of each different region carry distinctly different world views and accents, sometimes making the Mag'duar look like two separate groups. Class or clan differences aside, the Mag'duar are a hardy bunch that may be slow to trust, but as an old human expression states, "Prove yourself to a Mag Dwarf once, and he'll be an ally until winter blows over."

Other Dwarves:

Jorhaul'duar: The Jorhaul Dwarves, or Sea Dwarves, are the other predominant race of Dwarves on Aularia. From their massive ships they search the high seas for the lost Val'duar. The Mag'duar traditions state that this quest will not be successful, but the Mag are usually accepting of their cousin dwarves. Even though the Jorhaul follow a false King on their Divine Triad they are protected under the edicts of the Hearthmother and are to be accepted as one Mag would accept another.

Common Dwarves: Often without a Kingdom of their own, most common Dwarves have found their ways into all parts of Human society. They are of Dwarven blood and still protected under the Hearthmother's wishes, but many have decided to leave even following the Triad and found new faith in their

new homes. They may have lost their way, but the traditions of old still ring strong in them and many find comfort with those from the Kingdoms of Earth and Salt.

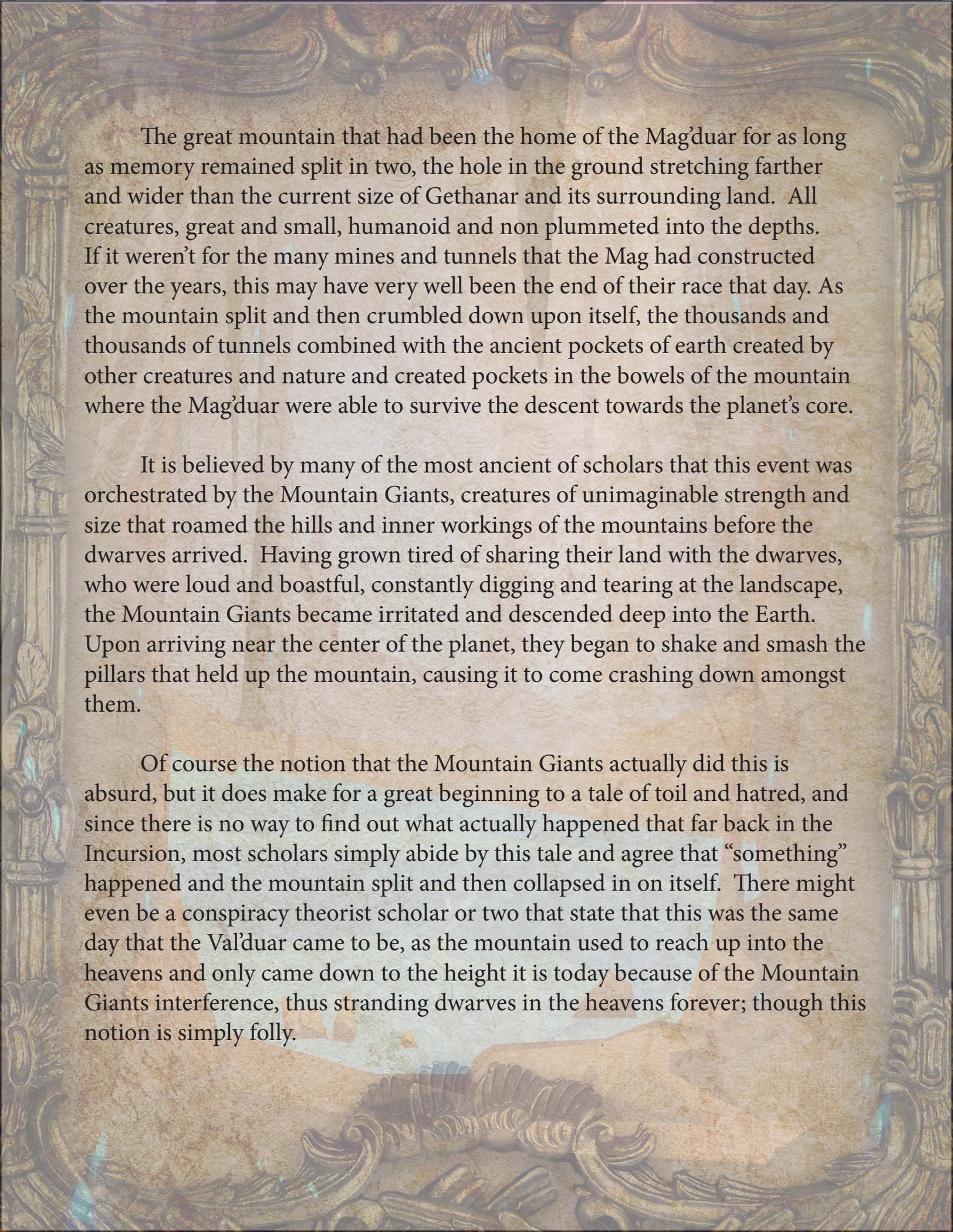
Val'duar: The Kingdom of the Sky is a matter of debate between Dwarven religions. While the Jorhaul have dedicated their race to locating the Kingdom, the Mag instead believe it to be a place too far to travel to. As promised by the King of Earth, the Val'duar is the place that lies on the far side of death for the Mag. There they will be reborn and rewarded for their lifetime of hardship and service to the crown and clan by finding a paradise beyond the clouds.

Aurin'duar: The Kingdom of the Sun, a group of dwarves that is extinct today. Only the oldest records of the Mag speak of Aurin'duar's existence, it was a Kingdom that lay in what today would be western Gethanar. They were a race of dwarves much like the Mag or the Jorhaul, with their own unique traits and beliefs, their extinction may have been the greatest loss in Aularia's history.

History:

The Incursion:

It all began with a thunderous noise. The sounds of stone pillars smashing against hardened walls and wooden doors. The ear-splitting screech of the earth tearing itself asunder and dwarves falling into the abyss haunts the nightmares of many a Mag, thus being the most prominent of children's tales. The "Night of Descent" began quiet and warm. The fires of the hearth bounced joyous images off the walls of houses and many a dwarf was seen clinking their mugs together with another of their kin. The rumble began low and slow, unnoticed by most. It wasn't until the clarion call of the warning horn was blown that anyone even knew there was an issue.



The great mountain that had been the home of the Mag'duar for as long as memory remained split in two, the hole in the ground stretching farther and wider than the current size of Gethanar and its surrounding land. All creatures, great and small, humanoid and non plummeted into the depths. If it weren't for the many mines and tunnels that the Mag had constructed over the years, this may have very well been the end of their race that day. As the mountain split and then crumbled down upon itself, the thousands and thousands of tunnels combined with the ancient pockets of earth created by other creatures and nature and created pockets in the bowels of the mountain where the Mag'duar were able to survive the descent towards the planet's core.

It is believed by many of the most ancient of scholars that this event was orchestrated by the Mountain Giants, creatures of unimaginable strength and size that roamed the hills and inner workings of the mountains before the dwarves arrived. Having grown tired of sharing their land with the dwarves, who were loud and boastful, constantly digging and tearing at the landscape, the Mountain Giants became irritated and descended deep into the Earth. Upon arriving near the center of the planet, they began to shake and smash the pillars that held up the mountain, causing it to come crashing down amongst them.

Of course the notion that the Mountain Giants actually did this is absurd, but it does make for a great beginning to a tale of toil and hatred, and since there is no way to find out what actually happened that far back in the Incursion, most scholars simply abide by this tale and agree that "something" happened and the mountain split and then collapsed in on itself. There might even be a conspiracy theorist scholar or two that state that this was the same day that the Val'duar came to be, as the mountain used to reach up into the heavens and only came down to the height it is today because of the Mountain Giants interference, thus stranding dwarves in the heavens forever; though this notion is simply folly.

Thus began the Age of Iron, as the Mag'duar refer to it; a period of time in which Mountain Giants hunted the Mag for sport and enslaved all they could find, forcing them to build pointless structures and grand monuments to the race of Giants to repay for all their "thoughtless plunder and disrespect" to Aularia's natural resources. The one thing that the Mountain Giants did not count on, is that even those of the lesser races (for this is how they referred to all who were smaller than Giants) can be resentful of those who call them servants.

The Age of Aular:

At the beginning of the Age of Aular are the first true records from the Mag'duar historians, written on spare skins and tablets of stone to document and correlate their struggle against the Mountain Giants. The Underworld of the Mountain was immense, stretching for distances unknown, tunnels twisting this way and that so as no one could tell which way was up. Through the confusion and the enslavement of the Mag, their truest of traits began to shine brightly, and the phrase "stubborn as a dwarf" was born. The Mag created a resistance faction against the Mountain Giants and began to free their brothers and sisters in servitude to their Giant overlords. Time after time, year after year, small groups would fetter away whichever way they could to their villages hidden in the darkness. It took nearly 100 years to transform one of their major hidden settlements into a populace that one would call a city, but it was from this city, whose name has been lost to time, that "The Uprising" began in earnest.

There is nearly no documentation of this period of resistance due to the secretive nature of what they were trying to accomplish, but also partly due to the aggressive searches by the Mountain Giants to find and enslave all of the Mag'duar people. Whenever they would find one of the smaller settlements, the Mountain Giants would make an example of its people and collapse the pocket of earth in which it was found, killing any who remained in hiding. It

is strongly believed that during this period, the Mag'duar became so efficient at making weapons and armor to protect themselves that they could craft a full set of armor from mere rocks. Though even if it is hard to believe, the quality of a dwarven smith is not to be argued against, even when they are presented with nearly nothing. As they continued to struggle against the Mountain Giants, their numbers began to dwindle and hope in "The Uprising" began to burn with more rage over the years.

The Age of Dawn:

The Age of Dawn came and with it the birth of a dwarf named Garzel Ironheart. He was born into the slavery of his family to the Mountain Giants. Even with all the turmoil and oppression, Garzel did not allow the stories of the sky and of the "giant blinding star in the sky that prevents the darkness and warms the skin" to go to waste - he joined the resistance and very quickly rose through the ranks. His charisma and quick thinking got his division out of harm's way so often, they came to rely on him. As time went on and the raids on the Giants continued, he was promoted to Field Commander due to his amazing talent for strategy and his now unquestionable experience in survival. His followers often said that there was nothing more stubborn than Garzel when planning a mission and making sure everyone knew exactly what they had to do.

His greatest moment came when the Mountain Giants were planning a great feast to celebrate the subjugation of the Mag's. The Mountain Giants commissioned their overseers to direct the dwarves in building great statues of the leaders of the Mountain Giants, whose names have now been lost to history. Garzel caught wind of this, and began working in secret with the miners who were gathering the stone for the statues and the dwarves who were actually making the statues. Garzel told the architects to put blasting power inside the base of each statue at key points without the knowledge of the Mountain Giants (small hand movements and quick actions were often

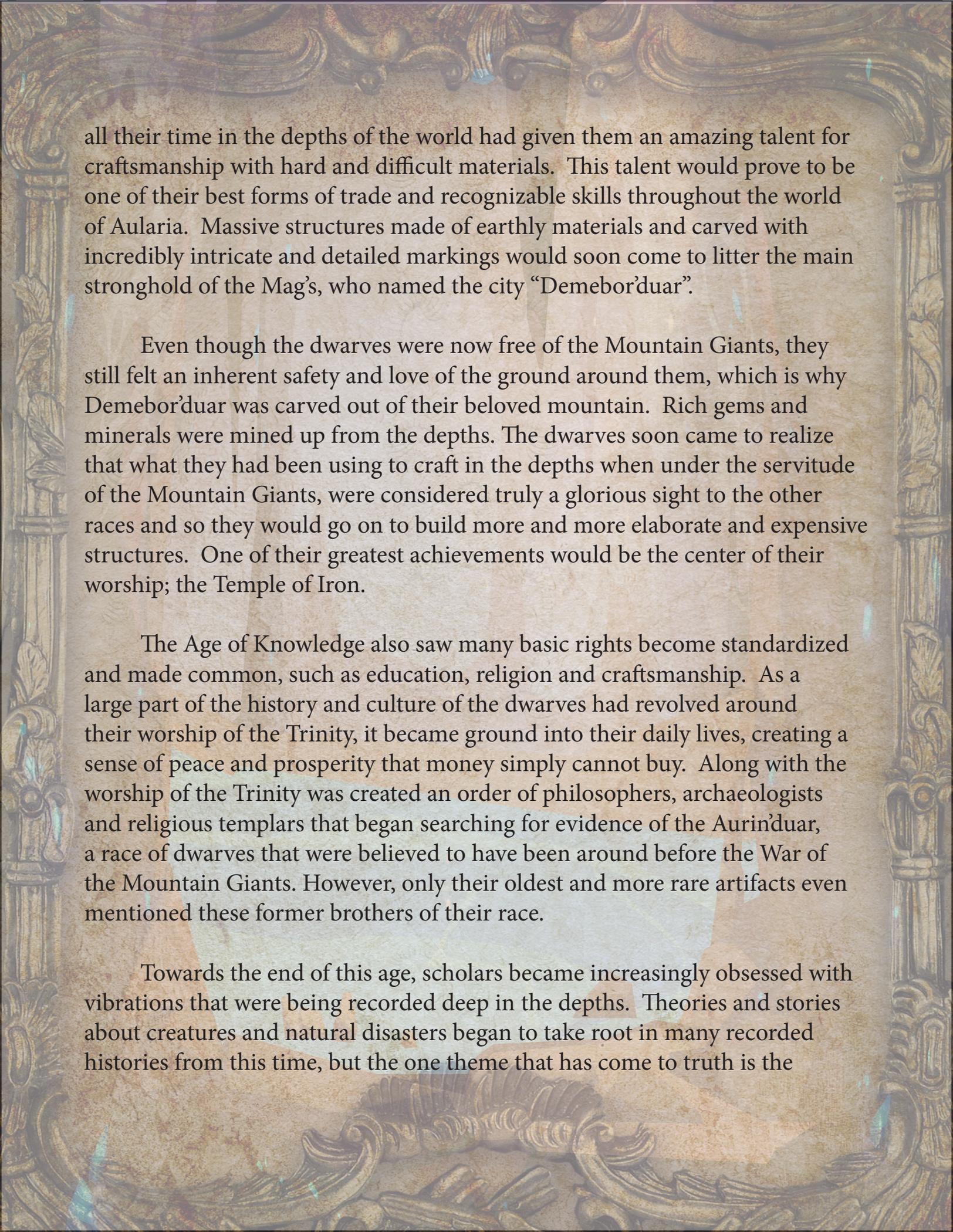
overlooked by the Mountain Giants due to their size).

When the day of the celebration arrived, the statues were placed around the gathering as a sort of ring, which was explained to them as showing their “unbreakable strength” against the dwarves (explained to them by a dwarf, of course). At the height of the dancing, when the caves trembled with their drums and stomping feet, Garzel and his crew leaped into action. Exploding the blasting powder, the enormous statues (some of which were 100 feet tall) tumbled down, weakening the structure of the flooring and causing the cave to collapse. The Mountain Giants had not realized that the stones from their own statues were being taken from directly below where the feast was supposed to occur, and the resulting lack of structure led to their own pitfall. The iron spikes at the bottom, however, were all a result of The Uprising, as was the oil slick and fire. Even large monsters cannot survive a large drop, slicked walls, impalement and fire.

After generations of enslavement, the Mag'duar were finally free! Following on the trails of their victory, they unanimously elected that Garzel Ironheart was to become their next Regent, following his brilliant (and effective!) strategy to take down the Mountain Giants. Under his leadership, order and stability finally began to return to the previously separated dwarves and they began to work toward escaping their caves of servitude and worked toward what they most desperately wanted: to return to the surface world.

The Age of Knowledge:

The Age of Knowledge would signal the beginning of a time of peace for the dwarves. Without the threat of enslavement and living on a mountain that was already not inherently desirable by a majority of the races, the dwarves were left to their own devices. A majority of this Age was developing a form of architecture that was not just useful, but also beautiful to behold. Nearly



all their time in the depths of the world had given them an amazing talent for craftsmanship with hard and difficult materials. This talent would prove to be one of their best forms of trade and recognizable skills throughout the world of Aularia. Massive structures made of earthly materials and carved with incredibly intricate and detailed markings would soon come to litter the main stronghold of the Mag's, who named the city "Demebor'duar".

Even though the dwarves were now free of the Mountain Giants, they still felt an inherent safety and love of the ground around them, which is why Demebor'duar was carved out of their beloved mountain. Rich gems and minerals were mined up from the depths. The dwarves soon came to realize that what they had been using to craft in the depths when under the servitude of the Mountain Giants, were considered truly a glorious sight to the other races and so they would go on to build more and more elaborate and expensive structures. One of their greatest achievements would be the center of their worship; the Temple of Iron.

The Age of Knowledge also saw many basic rights become standardized and made common, such as education, religion and craftsmanship. As a large part of the history and culture of the dwarves had revolved around their worship of the Trinity, it became ground into their daily lives, creating a sense of peace and prosperity that money simply cannot buy. Along with the worship of the Trinity was created an order of philosophers, archaeologists and religious templars that began searching for evidence of the Aurin'duar, a race of dwarves that were believed to have been around before the War of the Mountain Giants. However, only their oldest and more rare artifacts even mentioned these former brothers of their race.

Towards the end of this age, scholars became increasingly obsessed with vibrations that were being recorded deep in the depths. Theories and stories about creatures and natural disasters began to take root in many recorded histories from this time, but the one theme that has come to truth is the

existence of a volcano known as Strakha Caldera. The rumblings and stories were the precursor for the explosions of this great mountain, filling the skies with ash and the ocean with lava. It is because of this explosion that a great land bridge was created between the northwestern corner of Mag'duar and Isselheim. For a period of nearly 20 years, Isselheim and the Mag'duar were able to visit and trade over the land bridge; the significance of this can be seen today by the runic systems that dwarves write with and their willingness to trade with others, as the relationship with Isselheim was very beneficial for both sides.

Unfortunately, it was simply not meant to be, as the end of the 20 year period came to a close with the land bridge breaking apart and becoming impassable. Because the Mag'duar were not keen on traversing the ocean and preferred to stay on land, as well as due to a general lack of established and ingrained trade from Isselheim, the two nations eventually gave up the fairly new relationship and allowed it to dissolve into the annals of history.

The Age of Salt:

Early in this age the Mag met their cousins known as the Jorhaul'duar. They discussed their different cultures and possibly uniting under one banner, but they seemed to have different visions and many disagreements erupted. The first was over Val'duar, the Jorhaul'duar believed it was a physical place that one could just find, whereas the Mag believed it was a fool's errand to reach a mythical land that was part of the afterlife. This led to much strife and discord as religion, including the afterlife, is a large part of both systems of belief. The next was the Jorhaul expanding its empire over the land of Aular. While the Mag'duar agreed with the superiority of the dwarves over all other races, they had no inclination to undertake such a campaign of trying to conquer them all. They saw it as pointless and a waste of resources. The last and final disagreement was one that broke off all relations and led the cousin races to split and go their separate ways. While they would always hold to the tenant,

'no dwarf shall ever kill another dwarf', there could be no moving forward as a joint power with their disagreement over religion. Each came to the table with their own Regent and neither would concede the others legitimacy. While never violent with each other due to their shared tenant there has always been a sort of distrust and uneasiness between the two sides over the assumed heresy of the other.

The Age of Glory:

In the age of Glory a reagent had come to power known as Viktor Redbrow. His reign as reagent was rather uneventful as he did very little that would catch the attention of the common Duar. His reign was the epitome of mediocrity and the status quo as the Mag were quite content with the lives they had built in the mountains. It was for this reason that it took many years before any had come to realize that it had been in fact been many many years since a new reagent had been selected and the current had risen as the new king. In fact some of the older Duar realized that the current reagent Viktor had somehow not seemed to have aged a day let alone the many years he had been speaking for the king.

The questioning of the realization began slowly. Whispers in the streets and talk of what could be happening. It just didn't seem to fit; everyone knew that the reagent was supposed to die and become the new king eventually and this seemed very unsettling. The whispers in the streets slowly turned into open chatter and the council that advised the reagent suddenly felt pressured to do something. They were very loyal to the reagent as the uneventful rule came with steady progress and advancement which none of them much minded and no decision ever communicated from the king through the reagent made them doubt his loyalty to the Mag.

Still as the years went on, the unrest slowly grew and Viktor had taken notice. As questions started propping up, he artfully dodged them or changed

the subject. He began spending less time in the open and more time in the chambers communicating with the king. As unrest began to grow though more pressure asserted itself on him for answers to which he offered none.

Then one day without any warning, he simply vanished. Rumors began to spread wildly that he was an impostor who somehow killed the one who was meant to be regent and took his place. He came to be dubbed the false king and stories continued to be told about him as he over time became almost fable. A popular story is that from time to time deep in the mountains, a Mag runs into a strange hermit. The hermit who has lived there since the age of Viktor stays quiet and to himself, but the tale says he is simply plotting until he can find a way to recapture the throne.

Current Day:

After the Age of Salt, the Mag'duar people withdrew from interacting with many races. They do not choose to explore and seek out new cultures, but focus on working and improving on their own culture and skills. Every year the city of Demebor'duar gets deeper and deeper into the mountainside and the crafts of the dwarves become more intricate and beautiful. Many in Mag culture believe that it is their duty to look out for their kin, but in recent years this has become a fairly isolationist view where many Mag'duar have interpreted this separation to be a supremacy over other races, due to their superior crafting skills and stubbornness to survive. It also does not help that their scholars will take every opportunity available to discuss how their religion is one of the longest standing (and therefore correct) beliefs in all of Aularia.

While they generally do not hate other races, they do have a short temper and lack of understanding when it comes to the beliefs of the other races, or less commonly encountered races. The current Regent, Ful'gor Earthbeard, has been seen as a visionary, believing that the Mag have been isolated from the world long enough and that it is time for the dwarves to attempt to work

with the other races for the betterment of Aularia and for the enrichment of dwarven kind. As such, Ful'gor was one of the first to suggest that the Mag join the Sacred Grounds Pact, believing it would be the best thing for his people, who tended to avoid other races. Who knows? If it weren't for him, perhaps the dwarves would have become less trusting and potentially shut out others? For now though, the future of the Mag'duar people is looking bright, as they have begun to bring their people, skills and beliefs out into the world to share with others. Share a drink with a dwarf if you can, for if you befriend a dwarf, they will be a friend that you can always rely on.

Important Figures:

Ful'gor Earthbeard - Current Regent of the Mag'duar:

Member of the Ironhand Group and current regent. He was elected by the current older dwarves, ones who believe in the power and strength of their ancestors. Ful'gor was chosen for his strong diplomatic skills and classical beliefs. From an early age he had an intense love of the stories of his people, which manifested in his more "traditional" beliefs that dwarves of the current day have become weaker and less focused due to the lack of threat to unify them. Initially he was against the idea of the Sacred Grounds Pact, but after numerous meetings with his leadership and forums with his kin, he realized that instead of spreading his people thin, he could see this as a way of spreading the teachings of the Dwarven Triad and displaying the strength and dominance of the Mag'duar people. He has also earned the nickname "The Mountain" by his people as his beliefs run deep, are immensely strong, and protect his people from straying. His most recent military accomplishment comes from the Battle of Three - a quick, but brutal war over the trade rights with Gethanar and the Bara'kaa against the Daltanicans. It was called the Battle of Three due to the trading triad of Gethanar, Mag'duar and the Bara'kaa people, of which Daltanica believed that the dwarven people should be sending more of their wares to a more "deserving" people than Gethanar and the

Bara'kaa; They attempted to block trade from the mountain, causing Ful'gor to lead an all out assault on the troops, decimating them to a man.

Garzel Ironheart - Revolutionary and Leader of the Mags against the Mountain Giants. First Regent after enslavement:

Garzel Ironheart has been considered by most scholars to be the first Regent of the "Modern Age", as most of the history prior to the War of the Mountain Giants has been lost to time. The stories of his heroic plans to undercut and escape from the Mountain Giants can be seen with young Mag children, as they play games of Hide and Destroy around the city, living out his days of glory. He is also attributed for having recommended the building of the Temple of Iron to show his people's dedication to not forgetting their history of slavery and how they were able to overcome it. A common battle cry is also attributed to him, where it is a common parting between Mag's in Demebor'duar to part by saying "May your heart be ever filled with Iron", indicating they wish luck and tactical success to each other.

Kurom Shinstone - Inventor of Beard Gloss:

During the Age of Salt, a dwarf named Kurom Shinstone noticed how the Jorhaul dwarves would have beards that glimmered and shined due to their extended periods on the ocean, keeping their beards clean and lively. As a result, he created a fantastical poultice known as Beard Gloss that became a huge hit with the dwarves in the major city. Due to the cost of the materials to make it, and the fact that the materials have to be imported, it has since become a common sign of wealth for the more prosperous citizens of Demebor'duar.

Wexom the Complicated - Inventor of Puzzle Boxes:

Often considered to be a pseudonym, Wexom the Complicated was a hermit who lived near the main city. After his death, his family, greedy dwarves who never cared to stay in touch with him, sold off all his belongings, many of which were simply boxes. However, all the boxes, with the name “Wexom” carved somewhere in them, were impossible intricate and very difficult to open. It became a game of sorts to hand the boxes to a loved one on a birthday and tell them they had been given a gift from Wexom, meaning they could have whatever was in the box... if they could open it. And so, the creation of Puzzle Boxes, as they would come to be known in the common tongue, was established.

Grizelda Ungo’bottom - Standardized Education for Dwarven Youth:

Grizelda was the mother of 32 children, and as such, needed a way to keep them in line and make them productive members of the Mag’duar society. As such, she wrote down all her methods and beliefs in her diary-turned-book, which she published in her later years. Her findings were so effective and beneficial, the current Regent decided that it was to become an established standard and that any dwarves that were not to take an apprenticeship would be required to go through this “school” system. The University of Bottom Rock can still be found today in Demebor’duar with a statue of their founding educator carved out of pure Iron out front, holding open a giant door to let her students pass through.

Cleric Whitebeard - Current leader of the Dwarven Triad worship services at the Temple of Iron:

Known for his kindness and oddly flexible ways of handling conflict between families, his method of “Iron Love”, bendable in all ways and shaped when warmed with care, has become a new form of thinking among the Mags.

Traditionally, most dwarves would leave their kin or family members to solve their problems to themselves, supporting them when called upon, but Cleric Whitebeard has introduced the concept of “Active Support” to his followers, in which he advises them to check in with their family members often and listen with active ears to their woes, advising them with care and respect with what they should do.

Vicktor Redbrow - Former Reagent known as The False King:

It is still believed that the False King lives today as rumor has it he is a hermit off in the mountains. Those who have claimed to see him can never seem to find him again and have varying stories about where in the mountains he resides. Ages ago a warrant was out for his arrest should he be found so he could be properly questioned, but most these days have no interest in pursuing that warrant. Whether out of fear, mysticism or simply wonder, the will to pursue him for justice has been lost to time and those seeking him purely want to claim that he still exists. To this day the Duar still wonder if there is something greater at work in this tale that has yet to unfold.

Important Locations:

The Temple of Iron :

Deep in the heart of Demebor'duar lies a large temple made entirely of Iron. The temple is built around a hole, covered and sealed forever with a large drill. It was made as a reminder to all Mag's of the struggles of their kin and it is a common place to visit before departure on a long trip. A large statue of Garzel Ironheart resides in the center of the temple, riding the drill to freedom. The columns were shaped to look like Mountain Giants struggling to hold up the ceiling, of which dwarves celebrating have been carved into. Many merchants stop by to wash their hands with the iron dust in the urns outside and pray for good luck from the Trinity before leaving for a new venture.

It also holds a museum of holy artifacts that are on display for the public, though under heavy guard. Items like a drawing of the battle plans against the Mountain Giant, The Staff of Ascension, which is believed to have been used by Garzel's team to light the blasting powder and leverage the statues, and more have inspired many dwarves and made even more stubborn minds feel justified in their struggles.

Iron Keep:

Outside of the bounds of Demebor'duar, evenly distanced between Gethanar and the Shol, sits a sprawling compound known as Iron Keep. Officially, the compound was designed as a trading outpost, however, as the popularity of the crafts from Demebor'duar grew more and more popular, a need for surplus was created. Ful'gor Earthbeard decided to send some of the more experienced, patient crafters to Iron Keep to work their wares there, training local dwarves in their crafts while turning out products closer to their destinations. What Ful'gor didn't count on was the interest in learning the crafts of the dwarves being just as popular. It became an attraction for locals to go watch the dwarven craftsmen work during the day, their sweat and blood turning everyday materials into amazing items, showing off their skills. In turn, this eventually attracted artisans to see if they could learn under the existing masters at Iron Keep. Unlike the more traditional atmosphere of Demebor'duar, Iron Keep has developed a more relaxed, accepting style, in which proxies of the Regent have created a special writ for outsiders to learn the way of the dwarves, though they only allow a certain amount per year and require a mountain of paperwork and approvals to be completed to join them. However, being the only place for an outsider to learn the dwarven crafts, it is quite the exalted status to be accepted as a student of any of the masters of Iron Keep.

The University of Rock Bottom:

The main educational system for the Mag'duar people, the many branches of education now cover Arcane Magics, Farming, Foreign Trade and Diplomacy, amongst the remainder of the standardized education.

Stone Hall:

A massive stone building taking up a large portion of the city near the heart of traffic. It's imperious design and imposing stone figures are to remind outsiders of the strength and stubbornness of Demebor'duar's inhabitants. The building is the central building of trade, hosting a huge, sprawling market that has only two exits, a major deterrent for anyone who would come to try and scam, or sell false items to the dwarven people.

Pool of Seeing:

In an underground cave in Demebor'duar lies a large, underground lake. As most Arcane magics can be quite dangerous to cast, it became a fairly popular place to host practices and magic duels/tournaments. An unintended side-effect was the gems in the walls absorbing the arcane powers under the water and interacting with the lake itself. If a practitioner of the Arcane ways goes to the lake and casts a specific spell in a specific spot, it is said that the entire lake begins to glow and can even be used as a scrying pool. However, as this is an area under high guard and popularly used by the most powerful of Arcane magicians, it is nigh impossible for an outsider to get in to verify this information, let alone know the spell or placement one would need.

Role-Playing a Mag'duar:

A Mag shall never touch nor injure another dwarf's beard. A Mag shall never kill another dwarf, regardless of conflict, lest they forever join the Darkholm Clan and banished amongst their kin. A Mag will always look to and worship the Trinity for guidance.

Other than those basic rules, most Mag'duar are joyous, stubborn, loyal people. Hard as the earth to break, passionate as the gems they use, and filled with enough liquor to kill the average human. A Mag'duar who is a proven friend will remain a loyal friend for life. Hard-working and intolerant of laziness, the majority of Mag's will have a strong drive to accomplish whatever it is their heart is set on. Whatever they do, they do it with gusto. Celebration in town? They'll be the one to bring the best ale and the loudest laughter. Fighting against an intruder? On the front line leading the charge. Work order behind? They will literally pick up your arms to help you finish the final touches if necessary.

However, they don't deal with change that well and are stubborn to a fault. They tend to have very strong opinions and can sometimes be seen as brash and uncaring when in a verbal conflict. While they will always have the best intentions behind their actions for the kin, they don't necessarily go about it the right way every time. Their ruggedness also translates to comfort level, which is why they can go anywhere and feel right at home, even if that home is an elvish tree house that they weren't invited to, in which they decide to lecture the homeowner about how he could reinforce the doors to prevent that "pesky draft" of "fresh air" from coming in...

Views of Other Races:

Bara'kaa: The enigmatic and overly quiet religious zealots, though admittedly they seem to have little to offer, in either drink or conversation. If it weren't for the ruins of the Aurin'duar in the Shol and some mining improvements, they would be largely left alone due to lack of commonalities.

City Elves: Ha! They remind me of the dwarves fresh from a coal mine! Can't remember the last time I saw one...

Fae: All that celebration and lack of work is disgusting! Where they prefer the sky and outdoors, we prefer the dark, cold comfort of the underside of our Mountain. Though, admittedly, they do tend to be able to hold their liquor better than most...

Humans: Common and reliable, the many merchants crowding the streets and markets of Gethanar are common trade partners and valued aids where rush orders are concerned. It is very common for the smaller Duar to be confused with the human children, if it weren't for their lack of beard!

Orc: Most of them are admirable craftsmen or hard working laborers, though never better than a Mag! When it comes down to it, you can count on them when you need another (non-dwarven) set of hands.

Seraphim: The louder zealots compared to the Bara'kaa, but these ones just don't know when to shut their trap. For all the talk they do, they sure don't put out as many resources as they seem to believe they are worth when asking for donations to their cause.

Totemic: They would make good pets if they didn't talk back so much. Note to self: they don't like my real fur rugs...

Vaniiri: Don't like that thing they do with their teeth. They try to talk and dress up nice, but that ain't no good in the mines.

Wild Elves: Resourceful, yet barbaric. We both love Aularia and her natural resources, though not makin' progress in development for fear 'o hurtin' her may be a little much. Wonder if I can use those ears to shape some arrowheads...

Lexicon:

Stone Headed: Translation: Stubborn

Ex: "Timothy's mother would often call him stone headed because of how he would refuse to change his house's decoration."

Slag: Derogatory term used to state someone is disgusting or undesirable

Ex: "The bastard is such a slag, abandoning his kids and cheating on his wife!"

Pointy-ears: A racial slur used against Elves

Pole: Term used to indicate someone isn't thinking for themselves or is thoughtless/dumb. Ex: Ya wee pole! O' course she's married! Dinna you see her ring?!"

Earth Tossers: Another name for hands; typically used to indicate someone is being lazy, but can be used in many different contexts. Ex: "Grab that box with yer earth tosser's and let's go! It's nearly noon and we haven't even gone 1 mile yet!"

Outsider: Considered by most dwarves as a handy trick, a dwarf may refer to another person of a different race as an “Outsider”, but only when speaking to another dwarf. It indicates that individual is not welcome. Ex: Dwarf A refers to an Elf to Dwarf B by stating “Oi, an Outsider, watcha think?”. This simple phrase implies that Dwarf A wants Dwarf B to assist with removing the foreigner from the current location. Cannot be used to indicate they want someone killed.

Beard Hair/Growing Hair: a commonly used compliment with many forms, typically used towards food or drink, indicating it is of amazing quality. “That soup will make anyone grow some beard hair!”

Pop-Culture / Inspirations:

Gimli from the Lord of the Rings is a perfect representation of a warrior Mag'duar people. A dwarf who is hardy in winter and lives underground is a simple interpretation. The biggest difference is that dwarves in Aularia are not considered shorter than other races, as is common with many Dungeons and Dragons and other Fantasy sources. Dwarves are still considered to be broad-chested and to have elaborate beards, similar to Viking and/or Slavic heritage. Many cultural aspects can be taken from a combination of Vikings, Slavic and dwarves in high fantasy settings.

Mag Dwarves tend to dress in traditional medieval fantasy style, though some aspects of pre-1900's Russian dress can be factored in as well. This could include ushanka hats and elaborate fur coats in the colder weather. Mag'duar that are less likely to find themselves in combat enjoy showing off their wealth with jewelry or fancy dress. Mag Dwarf males are required to have an extensive, thick beard that clearly denotes that they are a dwarf. Likewise, Mag Dwarf females have braided hair that extends to shoulder length or longer and/or a beard. It is very likely that you may need a faux-beard or wig to achieve the desired effect. All Mag Dwarves must have the Mag Earth Mark on their forehead, two sets of three brown dots in a triad formation.