

**WARHAMMER**<sup>®</sup>  
**FANTASY**<sup>™</sup>  
ROLE-PLAY

**LORDS OF  
STONE AND STEEL**

THE DWARF REALMS OF KARAZ ANKOR  
AND THE REDOUBTABLE HOLD OF KARAK NORN

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# ◆ KARAZ ANKOR ◆

## THE ANCIENT EMPIRE OF THE DWARFS



From the beginning of history, the traditional homeland of the Dwarfs has been the Worlds Edge Mountains, the vast, forbidding mountain chain that marks the eastern boundary of the Old World. In ages past, the Dwarfs built their massive underground strongholds among the towering peaks and gaping chasms.

The tale of the Dwarfs is sorrowful. Their once great empire has been worn down by constant struggle against Goblins, Skaven, and other foul creatures. Over the course of centuries, they have fought with determination to defend their realm. It is a bitter struggle and many of the Dwarfs' magnificent holds have fallen — ruined or occupied by evil creatures. The achievements of the past are now mere memories, ancient sagas sung in half-empty halls.

In the most ancient times, the tough and hardy ancestors of the Dwarfs thrived and multiplied in the bleak lands of the southern Worlds Edge Mountains. In time, they migrated northward from their ancestral homelands.

Their progress took detours as they followed veins of ore northwards, mining out the exposed seams and moving onwards in search of gold, iron, gemstones, and workable stone. As the Dwarfs spread out, they left clans scattered throughout the Worlds Edge Mountains.

The Dwarfs spread they founded strongholds, small realms centred around a fortified mine dug into a productive seam or source of gems. Some ventured to the north and west into Norsca where they settled amongst the cold mountains, while others travelled east across the Great Skull Land and to the Mountains of Mourn. For a while, these dispersed Dwarf clans maintained contact with each other, but they would be separated by the coming of Chaos.

The strongholds of the Worlds Edge Mountains are remnants of an empire known as Karaz Ankor, meaning 'Everlasting Realm' or 'Mountain Realm', the Khazalid word for mountain and extreme durability being the same. The great city of Karaz-a-Karak, meaning Everpeak in Reikspiel, lay at the centre of this empire.



## DWARF KINGS

Throughout Karaz Ankor, holds are ruled by kings (and, less frequently, queens). The title of king is a hereditary one within the royal clan and passes from the king to his eldest son upon the king's death. When a king does not have a suitable heir, it is his duty to choose a successor from within his clan and supervise his training. Such important decisions are made in conjunction with the council of elders. A king rarely acts against the advice of his council, although the council rarely question the wisdom of a king who has proven his mettle.

The highest-ranked individuals in a hold are the members of the royal clan, the lords of the mountain holds bordering the Empire and eastern Norsca. No member of the proud noble clans would wish to live in the lands of men if they could help it. Even the lords of fallen holds hope to remain in the mountains and recover all they have lost. Those rare nobles who do suffer to live in Human territory do so because they believe it to be the most effective base from which to strike out to reclaim their lost holds (or because they fear to meet the gaze of Dwarf nobles in command of their own possessions).

Dwarfs put great store in the lineage of their kings. A royal line is supplanted only if it is extinguished or disgraced. In such cases, a thane or prince from another hold may be invited to become king, or another high-ranking clan may become the royal clan. Exactly what happens is decided in council by the thanes of the hold, with counsel from influential guilds and clans.



## THANES

Dwarfs are not fond of titles and like to keep such things simple. With the exception of the king and his direct heirs, the princes of the royal clan and notable members of the noble clans are referred to as thanes, even if related to royalty. Thanes may hold offices, but these are not hereditary. Each swears an oath of allegiance to the king and holds their office at the king's whim.

If a king dies, a thane of the royal clan may be promoted in the line of succession, or a new kingship may be claimed if the clan retakes an old hold, or establishes a new one. All leaders swear oaths of loyalty to a king, who, in turn, swears such an oath to the high king of Karaz Ankor.

## DWARF QUEENS

There have been examples of reigning Dwarf queens, but in most cases, a queen is not a permanent ruler, only a regent. Once she chooses a suitable husband or her heir becomes suited to rule, her reign typically ends. If there is no queen, then the previous queen (usually the king's mother) serves as dowager queen.

Following Valaya's example, queen consorts play major roles in the running of a hold, sometimes effectively co-ruling with their husbands. Dwarf queens have their own informal councils to gather information, and also gain knowledge from accompanying the king when he holds his weekly audiences in the Great Hall. When not attending audiences and council gatherings, queens tour the various deeps of a hold talking to working Dwarfs and guild elders at their workshops, mines, and barracks.

## KINGS AND WEALTH

In a Dwarf hold, property is often proportionate to status, and as a hold is the king's domain, it is he who has the most. Clan halls, forges, even mines are all effectively 'leased' by the king and this is how the income of a royal clan is generated.

In addition to land leasing, the hold's king will also place levies upon all the craftguilds, request a proportion of all gold and precious minerals excavated from mines, and take remuneration for pickaxes, helmets, and even lanterns. Dowries, too, are subject to royal duty, and a king's blessing upon any union often hangs upon the treasure that can be made as a result.