

ANCIENT HATRED

*Sometimes there are things that you wish had been
devoured by the Scourge.*

• QU'RA'BAN'EEL, ELVEN TROUBADOUR •

In this adventure, the group learns that some feuds can last a long time indeed... While traveling through Barsaive, the player characters are drawn into the conflict between two recently-opened kaers that are bonded through a common history—and emotion. It is up to the group to settle the issue, one way or the other.

SETUP

While traveling through Barsaive the group witnesses the climax of a battle between two small groups of dwarfs. The dwarfs fought fiercely and the battle ends just as the player characters arrive. A band of dwarfs who fought under a red banner showing a golden fist got the upper hand and drove off the opposing dwarfs. The victorious dwarfs took the opposing dwarfs' banner, which is of green color and shows a mug of ale, as a trophy. The victors seem to be carrying the losers' banner to their nearby campsite.

EVENT ONE: RED FIST

If the group pursues the victors, they can follow them to their camp that lies in a nearby cavern. The dwarfs are celebrating their victory and are in a good mood, so it shouldn't be too hard for the group to start a conversation. The group learns that this skirmish was spurred by an ongoing feud between the two dwarf clans who have been living in this region since long before the Scourge. The group is invited to stay in the dwarfs' kaer for the night, since it is safer than camping outside. They are treated in a friendly and respectful manner as long as they don't mention to have had contact with the opposing clan.

While staying in the kaer, the player characters learn that the conflict once was a rather peaceful competition until a dwarf from the opposing clan tried to sabotage the kaer's wards shortly before the Scourge. He got caught and was executed, followed by an attack on the other clan. Since then, there have been many small skirmishes between the two clans that have increased in violence and frequency over time. When the kaers opened again, the fighting continued.

The dwarfs will try to hire the player characters to fight with them next time.

EVENT TWO: BRONZE MUG

If the group trails the soldiers of the dwarf band that lost the battle, they encounter them in a nearby forest where they tend to their wounded. The dwarfs find the characters suspicious and initially mistake them for mercenaries sent to finish them off. It should not be too hard for the group to get friendly with these dwarfs, since they gratefully escaped with their lives and need any help offered. The group is invited to stay in the clan's nearby kaer. The dwarfs secretly hope to be able to win the player characters for their side.

The group learns that there has once been an infiltrator who tried to manipulate their kaer's defenses shortly before the Scourge. When they closed their gates, the infiltrator confessed and the kaer was saved. The infiltrator then became integrated into the dwarf's society and his descendants still live among them to this day. But shortly after the kaer opened its doors, their neighboring "Clan of the Red Fist" started to attack them again. The dwarfs of the "Clan of the Bronze Mug" don't believe in a peaceful solution and attempt to hire the player characters to defeat the Fists.

EVENT THREE: INVESTIGATING

The player characters can investigate some more after learning that each of the two factions ordered the opposing kaer's defenses to be manipulated. They learn that several dwarfs on each side went missing shortly before the kaers shut their doors. The manipulators could have been among them. The infiltrator in Bronze Mug kaer who was allowed to live has a small grave near his family's living quarters. When the player characters examine his grave, they can find evidence that a Horror once marked him. The details of this are up to the gamemaster, but might include residual corruption, the dwarf's spirit appearing to them as a neutral party, or a clue in the grave's markings that are apparent only to a knowledgeable outsider.

CLIMAX

With this information, the group might try to mediate between the two opposing factions, as evidence of a Horror's influence might unite the clans against a common enemy. Of course, the player character should be prepared to prove that either clan is otherwise free of taint!

If the mediation between the two parties escalates, the player characters just have two options: siding with one of the clans and fight or leaving each of them to their fate.

SEQUELS

If the group manages to mediate between the clans the two clans will be living in peace for a while, even establishing a new settlement where both clans can live together. Of course, unless the Horror is found and dealt with, this peace won't last too long.

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