

THE KHAZGAN

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF KHAZGARIM, CHAMPIONS OF OVAZ



"THROUGH FIRE AND TRIALS DOES THE BLADE TAKE SHAPE"



The Khazgan Dwarves are the most ancient of their race, their line stretching all the way to Ovaz the Eldest. For millennia they have resided in the great mountain halls of Khazgarim, ever expanding within the roots of the world. Through their long ages of toil, they mastered the stone which they inhabited. Keeping to themselves, they lifted high halls and tall towers stretching far above the mountain peaks. But, of all their crafts, they had perfected the art of war. Forever were they beset by foes on all sides of their kingdom. Whether the giants from the North or the horrors from below, each Dwarf rests at night with an ax close at hand. Through the trials of war, the Khazgan also formed unbreakable bonds with the Humans residing in the foothills. With hard work and fierce fighting, the Dwarves of the great mountains have lasted the long test of time, their ancient blood running true to the present day.



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VALUES & ATTITUDES



Kept in their many traditions, the Khazgan Dwarves rarely come above ground if they can help it, unless trade or war commanded them to do so. When they aren't at war, their hands are never idle. They strike the ground harder than any foe, if they were so lucky to witness such strength.

Long before war pervaded their every action, the Khazgan would build marvelous mansions of stone, towering in their grey magnificence. Though nearly all of their dwellings are laid to ruin, for the hands who upheld them have long been slain, what remains still sits as an accurately beautiful account of what had once been.

MASTERS OF METALWORK

It was below the halls of Khazgarim that the Dwarves had first concocted bronze and acquired iron, putting them to use on many battlefields. No Dwarven hold has come near in comparison with the Khazgan's original innovations in metallurgical marvels. The finding of such metals lead to the Dwarves creating an isolationist kingdom, not sharing any words of those who aren't their own kin; the Dwarf kingdom seldom grew in size and prospects, relying on their Kriyhûd kinsmen to supply them with victuals and timber as they forge their weapons of war.



PAST TO PRESENT

The oldest tradition of the Dwarves of Khazgan is the art of remembrance. Stories and lore passed from father to son, mother to daughter, for generations since their race began. The memory of the Dwarven people is crucial to their survival, if all their knowledge and craft was lost to them they would be naught but stunted yet hardy fools. In times of old, there was an order of remembrancers, who held all knowledge and wisdom of their race, as well as many secrets of their mortal counterparts. It is said this order remains to this day, though no tall-folk have ever heard whispers of his existence.

BARTERS BY NATURE

In all the realms, there are no weapon smiths or masons that can match the Khazgan Dwarves. These industrious beings have long been revered as the foremost authorities in the realms of smithing and construction, with a reputation that precedes them and commands great respect and admiration. The Khazgan mastery in the sharpening of iron and the tempering of steel is unmatched, and their neighbors eagerly pay exorbitant fees to obtain their renowned arms. It was the Dwarves, pioneers in the art of stone carving, who first harnessed the power of precision in their majestic mountains. Throughout the ages, they have diligently quarried high-quality stone to furnish their own fortified dwellings and homesteads, and even those of foreign nations, for the right price. And true to their heritage, even during the turbulent era that followed, their skill remained steadfast and unwavering.

Beneath the hallowed halls of Khazgarim, where the echoes of the Dwarves' metallurgical masterpieces resound, there is an age of innovation and awe-inspiring ingenuity. It is here that the Khazgan Dwarves, with a steadfast thirst for discovery and a burning desire to craft weapons of untold power, first concocted the secrets of bronze and acquired the precious resource of iron.

The Khazgan people are born with an insatiable hunger for the forge, a yearning to slice and shape the very earth in order to extract the precious metals that lay hidden beneath. It is this burning passion that consumes them, driving them ever deeper into the heart of the earth and pushing them to new heights of ingenuity in the creation of war machines designed to crush their enemies.



But there was a danger in this unbridled fervor, a risk in pursuing their craft with such single-minded intensity. It was clear to even the most unobservant of onlookers that the Khazgan were courting disaster, fanning the flames of their passion until it threatened to consume them.

Yet, in their stubborn determination to maintain their legacy, the Khazgan Dwarves continued to press forward. With the aid of their allies, the Lodish, and the unwavering gaze of a populace too blinded by their own longing for glory to see the dangers ahead, they delved ever deeper into the mechanics of war, heedless of the storm clouds gathering on the horizon.

The legacy of their discoveries reverberates to this day, for no hold of Dwarvenkind has ever approached the heights of the Khazgan's pioneering spirit in the art of metallurgy. Driven by their indomitable passion for crafting weapons of unparalleled strength and durability, the Khazgan Dwarves built themselves an insular kingdom, shunning all outsiders and sharing no knowledge with those not of their own kin.



LORD & COUNCIL -

Amid the grandeur of Khazgarim's halls, the esteemed High Lord of Khazgarim holds counsel silently, flanked by the High Keeper and the Guild Overseer. The Keeper serves as prelate to the worship of the ancestor gods meanwhile the Overseer wields a keen eye within the hold. Most importantly, the High Lord has the authority to grant approval for new laws and to secure the resources of the hold's coffers.



UNWAVERING JUSTICE -

To the stout-hearted Dwarves, the specter of slavery is a wretched remnant of antiquity, a searing brand that scars like a chisel's mark deep in the mountain's heart. Mighty Khazgarim, bastion of Dwarven liberty and fortitude, stands firmly against the oppression and enslavement of sentient beings, extending its protection to all from the pernicious bonds of ownership. Thrice-cursed is the notion of trafficking, selling, or trading in mortal lives within the walls of Khazgarim, and any who dare to entertain such evil are dealt swift and unyielding justice.



ANVIL OF ARTISTRY -

In the intricate workshops of Khazgarim dwells the Dwarves who harbor a profound talent for weapon-crafting. The fire that churns within their spirits seems interwoven with the very soul of the metals they forged, allowing the Khazgan to sculpt instruments of war that reverberate with a power seldom witnessed in other weapons. This interweaving of skill and art - of fire and whispers of ancient tongue - flow together in harmonious collaboration, revealing a brilliance that could only be birthed from the extraordinary minds of the Khazgan Dwarves. And thus, each stroke of their hammer, each spark from the anvil, continues to breathe life into the fabled legacy of the Khazgan weaponsmiths.

FAITHS & BELIEFS

"IT IS A CURSE FOR THE DWARVES TO KNOW NOTHING BUT WAR"



Far into the ground the Dwünir under Ovaz reside, surrounded by the very stone that their Father - the allmaker - Yorivid embodies, believing to be closest to him in that manner.

Foremost among these deities is Ovaz the Eldest, progenitor of the modern Dwarven race; Ovaz, that venerable Ancestor, claimed the underground as his home, and was the first to lay the foundations for the Khazgan Dwarves after uniting the peoples under one cavernous shelter.

Ovaz was a pioneer for the progression of the Dwünir, for their civilization is protected by Stone, bringing in safety and defense to the faithful Khazgan. Only adding into their militaristic way of life, to remain ready should anyone - or anything - attempt to bring them down.

Ovaz's influence over his people can be seen everywhere. From their sheer strength, capable of carving out the very earth itself into new homes for their kin, to their war armaments. Teaching the Dwünir the secrets to forging battle-hardy weapons capable of both withstanding and inflicting great blows, using material present within the very depths of the realm.

This way of life has brought the Khazgan Dwarves prosperity through remaining close not only to Ovaz the Eldest, but their Father, surrounded by his very essence, knowing that little can harm them, for he is their Creator - he knows what is best for his people.

THE REMEMBRANCE



The Remembrance is a solemn Khazgan tradition that takes place in the great underground hall of the ancestors. Every year, the descendants of the ancestors gather to pay their respects to those who have passed on before them. The ceremony begins with the Dwarves donning their finest clothes and lighting candles for each of their ancestors. They then proceed to dust the tombs of their ancestors and to leave offerings of food and drink, which they believe will be eaten by the spirits of their ancestors. The Remembrance is a time when Dwarves reflect on their heritage and show respect for those who have come before them.

“FORGING THE NEW YEAR”



The Forging of the New Year is a joyous Dwarven tradition that marks the beginning of a new year. During this tradition, Khazgan blacksmiths gather to forge a new weapon that represents the coming year. The forging takes place in a great hall, where the blacksmiths work together to create a masterpiece of metal and fire. They work around the clock, taking turns with the hammers, until the weapon is complete. Once the weapon is finished, it is presented to all of Khazgarim at a grand feast. The weapon is then taken outside and used to light a great bonfire, which signals the start of the new year.

HOMELAND

THE GREAT HOLD OF KHAZGARIM



Khazgarim was the first hold to be built by the Dwarves of yore, it being said that Ovaz the Father was the first to strike the earth on that hallowed stone. At the height of its glory it was expanded for many leagues under the mountains, even spanning the entire mountain range. Though as their people dwindled and their underrealm infested, many passages and halls were sealed off, being long forgotten by future generations.

At the surface of the mountains, many watchtowers were raised to survey the valleys and hills at the feet of the mountains. Amongst its lofty layers is the high court and the ancient throne of Thoragan the Great, which has for long been left empty. In the shadow of the throne is a large square table, where the elders and guild masters meet to discuss matters of state and of foreign affairs. It is said that one session of Dwarven debate could last many months, with certain controversial subjects lasting for a year or more.

The upper layers of the city were filled with the grumbling and shouting of greybeards, leaving the high hallways left unattended to be spared from the shouted discourse.

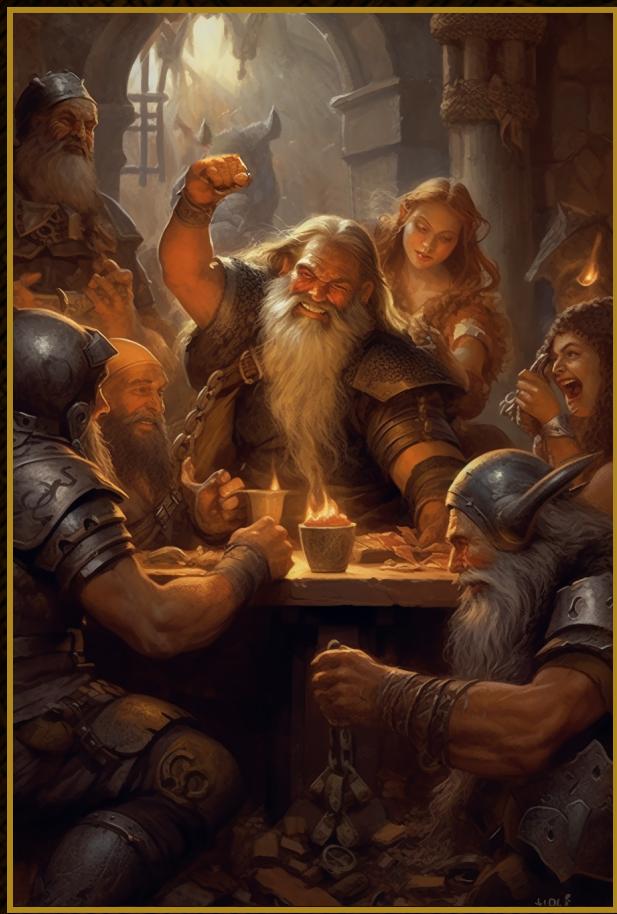
In the lower layers of the hold were the crafting guilds and the great forges with roaring fires warming the whole of the hold. It was said the cavernous halls of Khazgarim's bowels were scorched with heat, and that none but true Dwarven craftsmen could withstand its burn. Above this lies the great hall of Frimdun, with high pillars meeting a black cavern ceiling. Along the paths in the great hall, many giant skulls could be found neatly arrayed about the columns, each inscribed with the names of the Dwarves the beast had slain.



At the forefront of the great hall, is the mighty gate of Ovaz, where the great father first delved into the Khazgan. Beyond the great gates, to its side lies the Wall of Wrath, wherein the Dwarves of many ages past and unto this very day have laid down their grievances into the stone of their home, so that the affronts may never be forgotten. It bore the names of many mortals long since passed, though the ire that carved their names lives on forever in the minds of the stout folk.

The stonework, however plain, is strong and crafted to last centuries, few cracks ever being seen in the foundations of the mountainhome. The inner halls of the Dwarvish people are lined with mansions and homesteads carved into the rockwall, each window pouring light into the halls they hemmed. The structures of the hold were gray and colorless, save the occasional banner bearing the device of the current Lord of Khazgarim on which bright colors were woven.

FAMILY STRUCTURE & RELATIONSHIPS



The Khazgan Dwarves boast a rich and proud heritage, with lineages that stretch back to the earliest days of their people and extend to the outskirts of their hold. In Khazgan society, the family structure is deeply intertwined with their vocation. Children are raised from a young age to follow in the footsteps of their parents, with the craft of their forefathers passed down through the generations.

As such, it is not uncommon to find entire families of Khazgan Dwarves who specialize in a particular trade, be it weapon-making, stonemasonry, or mining. The most distinguished families are often those whose skill and expertise have been honed over many centuries, with their names becoming synonymous with craftsmanship of the highest caliber.

Despite the importance of these familial ties, Khazgan Dwarves are not without conflict. Indeed, quarrels and disputes among clans are not uncommon, and the Dwarves take great pride in their ability to settle disputes through negotiation and compromise rather than resorting to violence. In rare occasions where disputes cannot be resolved through compromise, a battle of honor is offered, where each of the two opposing families or clans pick one of their own to represent them in battle, where they wrestle unarmed for glory.

MUSIC & ART



The Khazgan Dwarves had little time for song or scroll, for their minds were bent on the defense of their homeland. What art they made was in their gleaming axes and thick armor and shields. What music they made was found echoing in the foothills, drums beating low as they marched to their doom or horns ringing clear from the walls of their home. Though above all their crafts is their mastery of stone. Long did the ancient Dwarves of the Khazgan delve in their mountains, before any great migration. Their mastery over their craft is as old as their race itself.

Though they may not be known to play the lute or drums, through the power of words, the Khazgan Dwarves recount the feats of their forefathers, paying tribute to their bravery, resilience, and ingenuity. Their oral history encompasses everything from the exploits of great warriors to the wisdom of their sages. Listening to these tales, one is transported to a different time and place, fully immersed in the rich tapestry of Dwarven culture and history. The art of storytelling is a revered tradition among the Khazgan Dwarves, and their stories are viewed as sacred and essential to the fabric of their society. For the Dwarves, the retelling of historical events and legends is not merely a form of entertainment; it is a way of preserving their heritage and keeping their ancestors' memory alive.

FASHION & BATTLE GARB



The Khazgan Dwarves hold little regard for the ostentatious display of wealth through glittering jewels and precious metals. Instead, such decorations are reserved for offerings and tribute to their deities, or exchanged for essential goods to sustain their way of life. Though their attire boasts hues reflective of their guild or lineage, the garb of the Khazgan Dwarves is austere and utilitarian, often integrated with the armor they forge, for war looms constantly on their minds.

In their monochromatic cityscape, merged with the very stone and earth of their hold, it was the soldiers who donned the colors of the battlesuit. Yet, illuminating the dark underbelly of their mountain domain, the Khazgan women blazed with vibrant shades rivaling the brightest hues of the heavens.

A Dwarf's beard was their crowning glory, a sacred symbol of pride and dedication to their craft. They often wore their beards intricately intertwined and woven, a testament to their passion and perseverance. But above all, a Dwarf's beard was a battlefield asset, carefully knotted and braided to protect it from harm when combat inevitably ensued. Only here, in their follicular finery, did the Khazgan Dwarves truly treasure and exhibit the trinkets of their ambitions and desires.

WARMER WEATHER CLOTHING

MALE



WARMER WEATHER CLOTHING

MALE



COLDER WEATHER CLOTHING

MALE



COLDER WEATHER CLOTHING

FEMALE



BATTLE GARB



NOTEWORTHY MEMBERS OF CULTURE



Gala Frostwhisper, Oracle -
Enigmatic and wise, Gala Frostwhisper is an oracle whose visions have shaped the destiny of the Khazgan Dwarves in ways both sublime and inscrutable. The silver-threaded runes embroidered on her sleeves resonate with the whispers of ancient prophecy. Her wispy red beard is adorned with gemstones that shimmer and glimmer as the light dances through them, reflecting the endless kaleidoscope of possibilities glimpsed within her visions.



Tholden Earthsong, Lorekeeper -
Steeped in wisdom and knowledge, Tholden Earthsong is the embodiment of Khazgan history and culture. Tholden's long, green-tinted beard gently cradles the bones of ancient creatures, weaving tales of old hunts into his very appearance. As the Lorekeeper, he recites haunting ballads with his mellifluous voice, preserving the collective memories of the Khazgan Dwarves within their children's minds and hearts.



Dwella Shadowstride, Adventurer -

Khazgan's fierce gale, Dwella Shadowstride is the fortress against the travails of her world. Her mapped skin is wreathed in the tattoos of the fallen foes, body hardened by the trials of battle, and eyes that hold an unnerving stoicism. She pushes through the labyrinthine trenches and jagged mountaintops, charting the abyss, studying critical forms of combat, and fighting alongside her kin in battles yet unseen. Her prowess on the battlefield is a testament to her relentless training, and her knack for anticipating conflict is eerily accurate due to her uniquely broad experience adventuring Akand.

Erald Stonehue, Master Runesmith -

A stoic craftsman of great renown, devotes himself to the ancient art of Runesmithing.

His expressionistic flair is evident in his work, creating masterpieces infused with his very spirit. The bones of his greatest hunts lie braided into his russet beard, paying homage to his people's connection with nature. Often lost in contemplation, Erald strives to capture the essence of the hillocked landscape in his runes, blending the borders between the spiritual and the corporeal.

CREDITS

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