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# Chapter 1

## Kobarthrond

Tarv stood straight and still, his eyes peering over the city's main entrance hall one last time before he ended his shift. Guarding the city was usually uneventful; the only invaders Tarv had ever needed to repel from the city were bears and other wild animals. In a more turbulent time he may have been part of an army marching off to fight for some great cause, but in this age of peace he stood *inside* the gates, looking inwards. Not that he minded—he was a Dwarf, after all, and like most of his kind he was most comfortable nestled within the carved bosom of his mountain.

The entrance hall was cavernous and showy. Wide columns stretched to the ceiling, so high that it was hard to see their tops among the distant dark. The floor of the hall was tiled with polished marble, tapping sharply with each footstep from the Dwarves going about their business. Because it was so close to the main gate, over the generations this hall had developed into a marketplace for dealing with visitors from outside. The city received only one or two traders per day, and so most of the merchants here still served the local Dwarves. Occupying the stall nearest to Tarv was a silversmith, whose tables were decorated with scales and stacks of coins and ingots. Silver was the city's main export, and it was mined and smelted here in the mountain. In the stall next to that one was a wood carver, selling ornaments. There were larger markets deeper within the city, but this was the place to find those goods made to appeal to outside buyers.

The stone walls were engraved with elaborate patterns and images from the history of the city and its people. These walls were carved straight into the rock, not constructed, and rippled throughout them were veins of a pale blue mineral. Where the blue touched the engravings, it was polished to be

[illegible]

Like ore, innate yet polished in our walls,  
should you be true yet shine within these halls.

# Dwarven–Mannish dictionary

## Alphabet

Ɑ ā	Ɱ g	Ɐ k	Ɒ n	ⱱ r	Ⱳ ū
ⱳ b	ⱴ h	Ⱶ l	ⱶ o	ⱷ s	ⱸ v
ⱹ d	ⱺ ī	ⱻ m	ⱼ th	ⱽ t	Ȿ z

## Vocabulary

**āzthu** *adj.* true, pure

**bām̐k** *v.* be (in some state)

**bro̐lz** *n.* hall, corridor

**dū̐lt** *prep.* like

**gī** *prep.* in, within

**gorg** *conj.* and

**ī̐m** *n.* son

**ī̐z** *v.* polish, refine

**kob** *n.* ore

**krithsū̐lb** *adj.* natural, essential

**kū̐gz** *n.* wall, barrier

**mārā̐g** *adj.* floating

**mir** *n.* city

**thā̐ku** *adv.* yet

**trobu** *v.* shine

**rond** *n.* house, home

**vā̐ldū̐n** *adj.* fallen, sunken