

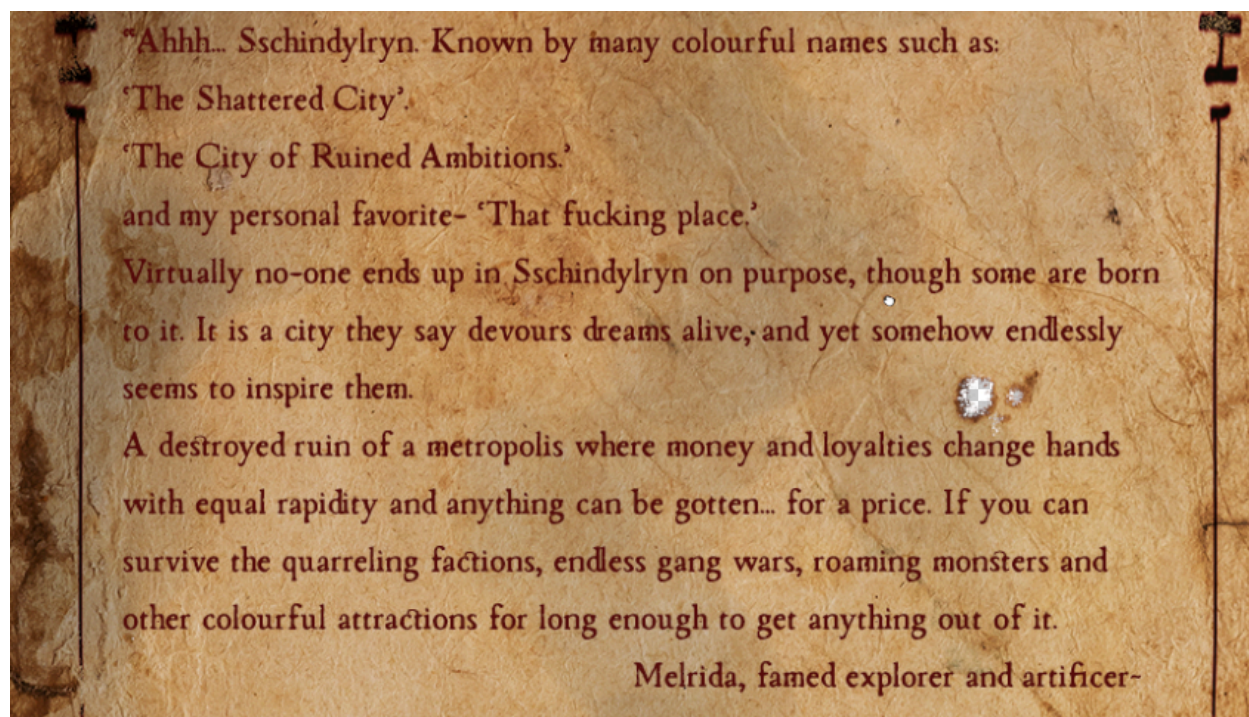


-Forward-



-Using this information-

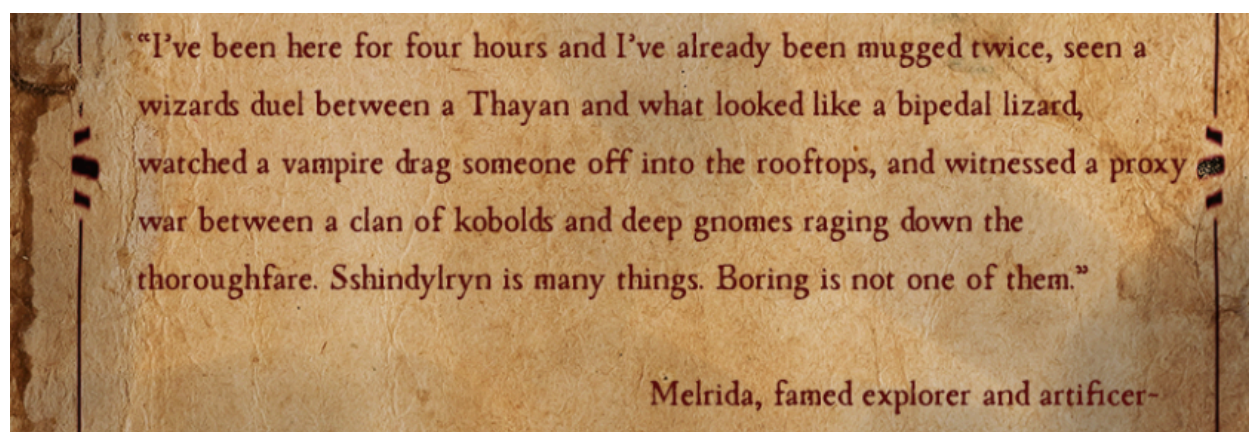
Unlike nearby Maerimydra, which has been in relative lockdown for ages, Sschindylryn's closer proximity to the surface and heavy involvement as a trade city means that information about it is far more widely available. That said, to those not from the city or the underdark itself, much of Sschindylryn's culture, customs, and intricacies should remain largely opaque. If you are reading this from the perspective of an outsider, attempt to take the information here as broad, vague strokes rather than the full, well known guide that a local to the Underdark would know it as.



-Legacy-

Sschindylryn is a city that has changed faces many times in a relatively short span of history. It has been the site of ancient Kuo-Toa god-kings, a nexus of portals to rival that of Sigil, the battleground for one of the Underdark's largest wars, the domain of the history's most benevolent Lolthites, and countless other often contrasting or contradicting historical developments. What remains consistent within the city is chaos and change... something that takes an almost supernatural hand in Sschindylryn's development. Having been nearly wiped off the map by war with neighboring Menzoberranzan, the remnants of the city struggle to repair and survive both exterior threats and their own internal predilections.

What is, only is for so long, and then becomes anew. This makes Sschindylryn a hotbed of ambition and plots... for truly, anything can happen here. A rare mutability in the often static underdark.



-Government-

Government in Sschindylryn is a complex affair in that it largely doesn't have one. After the war with Menzoberranzan shattered and dispersed the city's military, the ruling body was dissolved and instead split into racially and socially segregated sectors all centered around the markets. Each district is a fairly autonomous district distinct in both law and custom. The only overlap is the massive central markets, where third party mercenary companies are traditionally hired to keep the 'peace', **currently the Zhentarim**. These mercenaries answer to a council made up from each organization and district with the unenviable task of trying to balance their typically opposed needs.

The current powers with representation on the council are-

- **The Patient Council:** Mostly composed of drow from the northern districts, the Patient Council is what remains of the drow nobility and leadership after the dismantling of the war. While publicly satisfied and content with the new mercantile direction of the city, even their chosen name suggests otherwise. Many work behind the scenes to return control of the city to its rightful owners, which in their eyes, of course, is themselves.
(Primary Contributions: Diplomacy. Wealth. Population. Military.)
- **The Darksteel Council:** The eastern districts and caverns have long been the domain of the regional Duergar. After the dismantling of Sschindylryn's military, the deep dwarves took over the district entirely and dug in against possible reprisal. While the motives of the Duergar largely remain inscrutable, the clans currently seem focused on fortifying their territories and arming an increasingly concerning military force.

(Primary Contributions: Chattel. Armaments. Military)

- **The Red Council:** In the post-war chaos and the injection of foreign interests and commodities, the Red Wizards gained a foothold in the city that has yet to be revoked. The combination of their mercantile acumen and valuable arcane goods and expertise makes the organization something the city cannot currently easily survive the loss of.

(Primary Contributions: Magical goods. Chattel. Wealth.)

- **The Pale Council:** Agents of undeath have a complicated history within the city, beginning with an internal war between Lolthite priestess that saw many of the cities clergy turn to Kiaransalee. In current eras, the cults have largely gone underground but remain represented by a powerful vampire from the Southern Districts. Their complex relationship with the city is strangely civil, and thus their place on the council remains.

(Primary Contributions: Diplomacy. Peacekeeping. Military.)

- **The Bleak Council:** The war saw much of the city destroyed, devastation that can still be seen in all districts to this day. The Bleak Council represents a collective of commoners and laborers that slip through the cracks of the other organizations. Necessary to maintain and rebuild the city, but not powerful enough as a whole to stand up on their own. The svirfneblin stone carvers of the city are also part of this council.

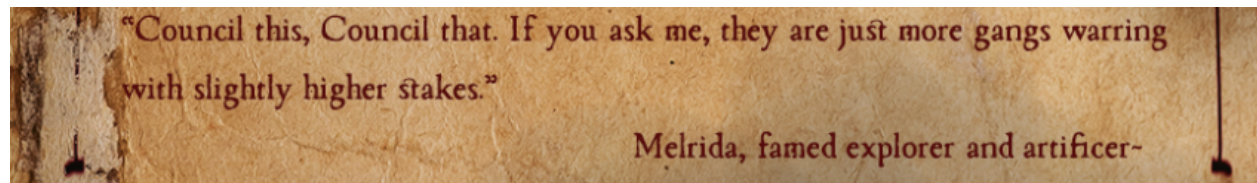
(Primary Contributions: Population. Labor)

- **The Gold Council:** Composed of the mercantile elements of the central markets who have no direct allegiance to any of the other councils, these myriad business owners fall under the Golden Council. Largely, the Golden Council has little to say or involve itself with in regards to the city as a whole and focuses on what does and does not disturb the flow of gold through the city.

(Primary Contributions: Goods. Wealth. Trade connections.)

- **The Silent Council:** The final council chair belongs to the Academy of Hungry Shadows. A dangerous enough organization within the city to warrant a seat, and yet one that no one has ever shown up to fill. At council meetings the chair remains empty out of respect, a silent reminder that somehow speaks loudly.

(Primary Contributions: Reputation. Intrigue. Intelligence.)



-Military-

Sschindylryn has no official military to speak of, and due to treaties with Menzoberranzan, nor can it have one. Instead, each district council maintains its own standing military force if it can... though some like the Bleak or Silent councils are largely exempt from this expectation. There remains an agreement between all districts that in the event of an attack the combined forces will unite under the leadership of the Council collective, though the likelihood of this is dubious at best. It is far more likely that each district would retreat into their own territories and leave the rest of the city to fend for itself.

In peacetime, the Patient Council makes up the bulk of the expeditionary forces, patrolling the regions around the city and sometimes even the surface, while the Darksteel Council ensures that all sides are provided, at the very least, basic and mass-produced equipment from the Spiteforges. Nominally the Red Council is expected to lend its aid with magical defenses, though these are rarely called upon and thus the veracity of this oath remains questionable.

Smaller, less militarily stable groups such as the Gold and Bleak councils are largely expected to either fend for themselves or be absorbed by the larger councils in the event of a war, and while the Pale Council has promised the aid of undead defenders, few expect or are particularly thrilled about the possibility of this. The Silent Council refused to take part in the war that shattered the city, and isn't expected to take part in any future conflicts that do not directly threaten them.

Sschindylryn's core defenses come both from a slew of natural bottlenecks and chokepoints that litter the surrounding terrain and the city itself, as well as a network of portals that the various council forces have access to. Not only does this allow the city to protect itself with comparatively smaller forces, but it allows for extremely effective ambush and flanking maneuvers to be executed. That said, the city has fallen before, and faith in these methods has been heavily shaken... even if they are enough to deter attack from anything less than another organized country.

In battles past, a mixed unit tactic of heavy duergar front lines with ranged drow crossbow brigades and spellcasters has proven to be highly effective and was a favored formation of the cities defenders. Whether such tactics can still be executed in these more divided times, however, remains uncertain and untested.

While Sschindylryn is located beneath the wealthy reaches of Cormyr, it has in recent years slacked on raider expeditions into these regions both due to a proliferating adventurer community and the resulting disruptions to trade they can cause. As such, most organized raids from the city tend to be more careful affairs at greater distances that use the city's famous portals to access more distant targets.

-Culture-

Economics: Sschindylryn is a gilded ruin, with mansions glittering with wealth standing side by side with sagging squallor. The peaks and valleys of the city are often both obscene and in close proximity. A tremendous amount of goods and gold flow through Sschindylryn but the vast majority of the region remains in tatters from the recent war. This fills the city with desperation and ambition dangerously in arms reach of each other, where opportunities are too good to pass on and death is too fast to outrun. The differences between a pauper and a prince are only a good score apart.

The core riches of the city are primarily found in and around its central district where goods from all over the region (and most recently the surface) mingle. Dwellers in the deep congregate to taste sunlit exotics, where those above risk all to come down and experience the forbidden delights of the underdark. Trade governs everything, and wealthy merchant lords have as much power as most nobles.

Slavery: Unlike nearby Maerimydra, slavery in Sschindylryn is not so restricted an affair. Slaves and chattel from every region, the surface included, can be found within the city. Largely housed and trained in the Duergar's District of Endless Labors, humans, goblinoids, elves, and far more exotic affairs can be found and purchased throughout. This lax control comes at a price however, and an underground movement within the region exists to both free slaves and extricate them away, often to the surface-- something the city's Councils continue to try stamping out where possible.

Architecture: Sschindylryn is a city built upon a city built upon a city, and ruins from the many earlier incarnations can be found just beneath the surface all across its territories.

The earliest known civilization was that of an ancient and uncommonly powerful Kuo-Toa empire, and geology suggests the caverns the city occupies were indeed once flooded. The piscine influence, fluid and scaled architecture of these ruins inspired the later designs of the city, and can be seen everywhere on those buildings that survived the war.

The destruction of the city uncovered much buried, and it has become a popular site for archaeologists, artifact hunters, historians, adventurers and occultists who delve into the ancient substructures in search of lost truths, wealth and power.

The newer buildings in the city seem to slowly be discarding these older designs and adopting more traditional layouts and architecture befitting the varied cultures that are building them, making the already chaotic city even more varied than it was before. This can lead to a single city block having a dozen different building aesthetics.

Fashion: Fashion in Sschindylryn is as inconsistent as the city itself: a moment to moment, culture to culture, being to being affair. It is as cosmopolitan as its populace and thus wildly different fashions and styles can be witnessed all over. This makes for absolute fashion anarchy and a prime business opportunity for warring seamstresses and tailors, who often form their own gangs to both protect their territories and destroy rival designs. It is not impossible to think one is being mugged in the streets of Sschindylryn only to confusingly have a hat or piece of attire destroyed by the agents of a rival clothier.

Local Dishes: Unlike most predominantly drow cities, the varied population and lack of any nearby fungal farms of necessary size to supply a city results in a far broader dietary variety. Of particular abundance, thanks to nearby Lake Thallmir and the rivers surrounding the city, is under-aquatic life. Food that includes fish, molluscs, Kuo-toa, water-snakes, and a variety of other similar creatures comprises the largest focus of food in the region, though the vast trade network means that these are still supplemented with many other dishes.

Entertainment: Venues of entertainment currently remain one of the city's most derelict aspects. The varied nature of the population makes entertainment that appeals to enough of everyone to stay in business difficult, though different districts often have their own little venues sequestered away. The only real establishment of any broad appeal currently remains "The Toy Box", a tavern and inn that frequently hosts entertainment from musicians and performers both obscure and famous, and has helped foster the early careers of some now extremely noteworthy bards.

Beyond The Toy Box, various gambling dens tend to be the most frequently visited and agreed upon sources of entertainment, no small wonder in the city of gold and chance-taking. These virtually always fall under the watchful eye of the various street gangs that vie for the city's underworld.

Music: Much as with entertainment as a whole, Sschindylryn's music scene is decidedly focused on "The Toy Box", and while individual savants and practitioners surely exist throughout the city, few places cater to music as a celebrated concept as that particular venue. While a great deal of instruments and cultural styles flow through the city, none have particular sway or hold on the populace.

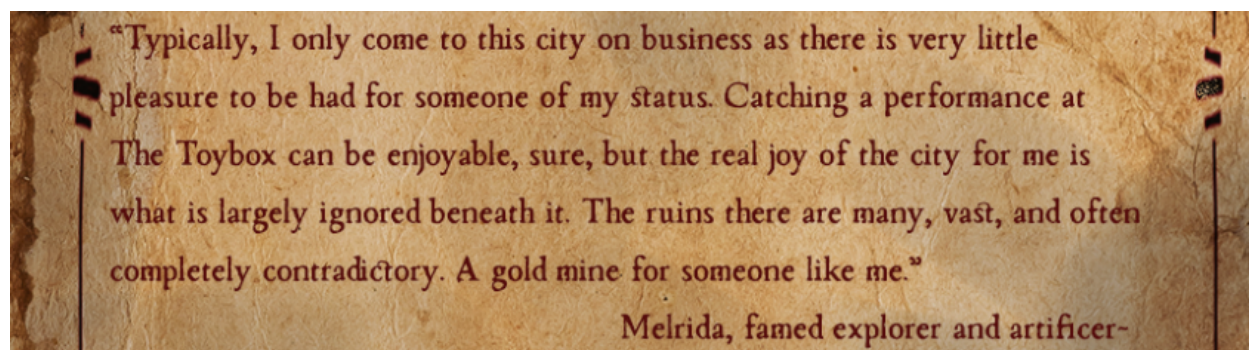
Holidays: Holidays are a complex affair in the Shattered City, as any real concept of unified culture has since splintered into racial and factional districts and the melting-pot that is the central market districts is so varied as to lack any stable identity. Despite this, a few broadly recognized holidays exist, though they are more moments of reflection and loathing than celebration:

- **"The Bastard's Toast"** Menzoberranzan's destruction of Sschindylryn was an opportunity of empowerment for some, but all continue to still feel the sting of defeat to this day. Thus, on a specific midwinter cycle, the eve of the final battle, most of Sschindylryn's natives will raise a toast to the northwest-- the rough direction of Menzoberranzan. While the gesture might seem out of respect, the drink is always held with a hand gesturing obscenely at the same time: acknowledgement of defeat, but refusal to respect.
- **"The Net Run"** Once per year, roughly near the spring cycles, a mass spawning of the most popular river fish around Sschindylryn is closely monitored by local fisherfolk. When this reaches its zenith, an albino species of giant subterranean river crocodile awakens from hibernation and sets off after the spawning pools as a group. What results is a massive surge of fish down the river with the crocodiles right behind.

During this perilous chase, daring fisherfolk will board boats and attempt to ride the surging waves of fish, catching as many as they possibly can in the process. Failure to balance this with rowing results in the river crocodiles catching up and devouring both them and their boats in the process, something that happens to a few boats every year to the joy of onlookers. This event is so popular that both sides of the river are filled with observers from the city over, and is the closest thing the city knows to a community moment.

Slang (WIP): Being a cultural melting pot with radically different social stratas, Sschindylryn has acquired over time a wide ranging set of slang and shorthand in undercommon. Often, these words flow side by side with the region's unique brand of thieves-cant, though anyone can be familiar with the terms in time. Below are some of the most commonly used by locals. *(More to be added with time.)*

- **Bones:** Blanket term for undead. *(Even those without bones.)*
- **Bumbler:** A derogatory term for giants. An uncommonly large person.
- **Burn:** A traitor. An untrustworthy sort. Unreliable.
- **Choked:** Financial Pressure, a reference to The Choke tariff blockade.
- **Eyeball:** A mildly derogatory term for a beholder.
- **Fetter:** A slave or servant. Occasionally a rebuke for loyalty.
- **Gift:** Slang for a Drug, particularly one for sale.
- **Gobs:** A blanket term for all goblinoids.
- **Goldfinger:** A merchant.
- **Gray:** A mildly derogatory term used for duergar.
- **Handsmen:** Guards. A reference to removing hands from thieves.
- **Ink:** Sly term for pirates, a reference to the Sligo Qu'madonest.
- **Quickpalm:** A thief.
- **Sinner:** An Assassin or someone who accepts hitjobs.
- **Spiderfuckers:** An extremely derogatory term used for drow.
- **Snag:** A gang member from the slums.
- **Sneer:** A Red Wizard.
- **Squid:** A deeply derogatory term for Illithid.
- **Stirge:** A vampire.
- **Tourist:** A term specifically used for surface dwellers staying in the city.
- **Whisper:** A spy.
- **Yip:** A derogatory term used for Kobolds.



-Demographics-

While drow remain the most populous race in Sschindylryn- it is only barely. The war culled their numbers dramatically and their holdings are in too much ruin for them to recover with any level of expediency. A tremendous and growing duergar population likely makes up the next largest demographic, with the rest of the races too chaotically intermingled to census with any reliability.

Races of Sschindylryn:

Drow: Once the unquestioned power of the city reduced to rueful contributor. Gone are the days of drow supremacy and widespread control. Now there are just as many commoner and destitute drow as any other race. There are even drow slaves in the duergar territory, a concept completely inconceivable before the fall of the city.

The drow of Sschindylryn exemplify their seditious and cruel kind, but have slowly begun to separate into two distinct camps: Low and High Drow. Lower drow are largely made up of those from the southern ruins. Those disenfranchised by the war, or those born into its resulting poverty. They tend to be a younger, angrier breed with no real hope for the future, and thus typically prone to involvement with the city's many gangs and criminal organizations. High drow, conversely, hold onto their past legacy and fight to reclaim it at all costs. Largely made up of nobles and the affluent from the northern districts, they view their low cousins as pitiful examples of everything drow should endeavor to avoid. That said, they are not above manipulating them to their ends and greater gains.

Extraplanar: Both Sschindylryn's extensive and often unpredictable portal network, as well as its trade and travel with so many other cultures, give the city an uncommon amount of beings touched by incredibly distant realms. Planetouched beings of every describable sort can probably be found *somewhere*, though the wicked nature of the city

naturally dissuades those from traditionally benevolent backdrops from staying in the city long lest they end up in chains.

Goblins: Goblins are a frequent sight throughout the city. Laborers, slaves, and survivors, they pick through the refuse on the edges of civilization and have no real society or organization to speak of.

Orcs: Orcs are prized laborers, military chaff, and slaves, and commonly so due to the proximity of the King's Forest. Their problematic tempers, however, mean that they are rarely found outside of fetters. Those that do exist free tend to squat in the southern districts where few are willing to traverse, typically ending up as bruisers or enforcers for gangs.

Bugbears: Bugbears fall into a similar camp as the orcs, and are typically used as labor and little more. Those that congregate together tend to do so in gangs and as thieves that focus on ambushing prospective prey in the less secure areas of the city.

Hobgoblins: Prized for their intelligence and military doctrine, hobgoblins are often used as supplementary forces in various mercenary groups or bodyguards, or as slave-drivers through the city. There is at least one well known hobgoblin gang on the rise, if with considerable opposition.

Giantkin: Good slave labor, but often too stupid for any reliable role involving discipline. What free examples of these exist are either eking out a harsh life in the southern districts or helping rebuild the northern districts under the watchful eye of drow contractors.

Kobolds: Due to an incredibly close proximity to a neutral kobold village, their population within Sschindylryn is fairly high on average. While some are goods traders or engineering aides, most are exiles that end up in Snags (street gangs) where they put their cunning and trap-making to use in lairs and contested regions.

Kuo-Toa: The Kuo-Toa have an ancient connection both to the city and the surrounding regions. Indeed, the oldest ruins of the location seem to be from some ancient and prosperous civilization of theirs. The modern Kuo-Toa, however, are little more than a local nuisance. The damage caused by the receding waters that allowed Sschindylryn to be built has never truly been recovered from, and the various tribes seem to have largely destroyed their legacies fighting over the dwindling waterspace.

Rumors persist, however, of ancient collectives still hidden in undiscovered wells, as

well as the old gods of the fish-folk reawakening in the ruins and calling to all who will listen... Kuo-toa and otherwise.

Noble Giants: Aside from a small hold of local fire giants who occasionally make raids out of their keep, no true giant civilization lives in any meaningful distance from the city as a whole. The duergar clan of Hellvault remains the only group within the city to maintain any discernible connection with these giants.

Duergar: During Sschindylryn's earliest years, the city took in a clan of Duergar fleeing a failed war from some distant cavern network in turn for their building expertise, labor, and military assistance. What started as a relatively small clan soon attracted more and more refugees from around the area and slowly grew to sizable enough force that the drow attempted to intervene, using them as shock troops against Menzoberranzan in order to cull their numbers after the war.

Unfortunately for the drow, the rival city won the conflict and decimated the drow territories as a response. As an added cruelty (and to keep the drow in check), they largely left the Duergar holdings alone, meaning that the drow could not simply retake their own city. Now the deep dwarves have carved out massive holdings large enough to rival their drow neighbors, and entrenched themselves irrevocably into the city both physically and socially.

Dwarves: Few dwarves visit Sschindylryn out of fetters. Most that do, do so as part of some larger organizations or holdings, and, in the utmost rarity, as merchants. The tremendous Duergar population makes any occupation in the city immensely treacherous and few remain in the city for long of their own volition.

Svirfneblin: The Deep Gnomes have a tremendously strange and unlikely place in the city. Once entirely enslaved, during the fall of the city they were able to free themselves. Having nowhere to go however, they brokered a deal with the beleaguered city councils. Instead of fleeing into the neighboring reaches or accepting their chains again, they offered their services as expert stone-carvers and machinists in trade for their relative autonomy in the southern districts.

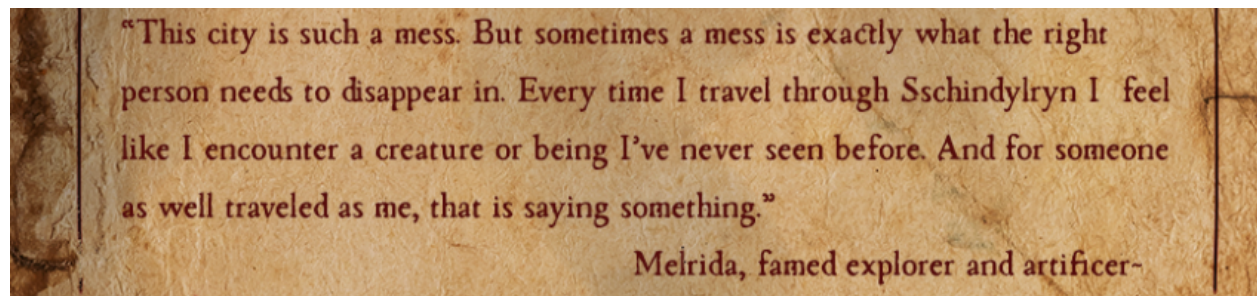
The city, desperate to rebuild its architecture and infrastructure both, could hardly turn down the deal and though it rankles them to this day the agreement is maintained. The deep gnomes now mine and cut the stone from the tremendous southern quarries using complex machines, and most new buildings constructed in the city are made from the results of their labor.

Undead: Undeath has a unique place in Sschindylryn's history. In years past, the ruling priestesses of the Lolthite-run city feared that their efficiency would draw Lolth's wrath for lack of strife, and agreed to do war with one another to placate the dark goddess. The results of this increasingly bitter conflict saw some priestesses turning to Kiaransalee to continue their war, and necromancy proliferating through the region as a result.

In the modern age, most of the undead live in the city's massive, towering mausoleum at the base of the southern quarries. Ostensibly, they caretake the city's dead and are under agreement not to raise or corrupt any corpses that are given into their care. In return, they are allowed to prey upon the southern districts so long as they maintain reasonable numbers. That this practice has been so carefully maintained is largely in thanks to the vampire that controls the district who is said to be a strangely uncompromising creature when it comes to deals.

Humans, Elves, Halflings, and other Surfacers Races: Of the surfer races, humans overwhelmingly make up the largest percentage. This is in part due to the relative xenophobia of the two largest foreign embassies in the city, Zhentarim and Thayan respectfully. Elves, halflings, gnomes, and other surface races can also be found here and there, though are usually tied to the mercantile economy in some way. It is as rare as it is dangerous for these races to attempt living in the city with any normalcy.

The Strange: Monstrous, exotic, strange, even unique races sometimes find their roots in Sschindylryn thanks both to the cosmopolitan nature of the city, as well as their cultural separation from the historically loathed surface races. Extraplanar creatures, aberrations, shape-changers, and even a few constructs find Sschindylryn one of the few places in the world too busy with its own affairs to care about their uncommon nature most of the time.



-Geography-



Sschindylryn is situated in the Middledark of the Deep Wastes, roughly eight miles beneath the King's Forest of Cormyr. It resides within a pyramid shaped cavern on the shore of Lake Thalmiir (Though the inlet is sometimes called Lake Daerbraun by some locals) that is two miles high, and roughly two miles long on each of its three sides.

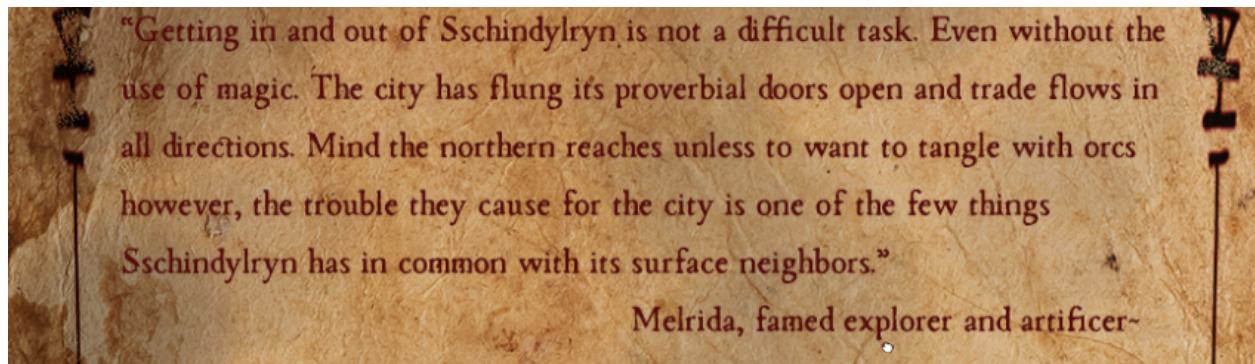
Great trenches and moats, both pre-existing and more recently dug, surround and lace across the city. This makes its boundaries difficult to traverse without either going through choke-points or specialized means, all centered around a layered, ziggurat shaped marketplace.

The exact territory 'around' Sschindylryn is made nebulous by the area's proliferation of both naturally occurring and harnessed portals, most of which predate the construction of the city itself and are assumed to be a result of one of the many civilizations that existed prior. This means that the reach of the city extends well beyond its borders, sometimes to far flung locales. This is one of the reasons its mercantile redirection is so successful.

A result of this is a lower concentration of Faerzress compared to most underdark cities, as this would make the portals either impossible or immensely unpredictable. This gives the region a very different ecology to most, and can be seen reflected in societal aspects like travel, ecology, diets, and magical use.

The city's situation beneath Cormyr's Kings Forest means frequent skirmishes with orc tribes in its upper reaches, and the occasional clash with adventurers. Sschindylryn has altered its raiding habits to mitigate the latter, but these encounters still occur from time to time.

The overgrown remains of an ancient trade road to Maerimydra to the north still exists to some degree, but despite many attempts it has not yet been reestablished and reopened. The recent rumored troubles in the neighboring city makes this, to many, a blessing in disguise.



-The Districts-

THE CENTRAL MARKETS



The main reason most come to Sschindylryn, the Central Markets are an affair to behold: a ziggurat of spiraling shops, merchants, stalls, booths, and barkers. Prior to the war with Menzoberranzan the markets were much smaller, and most of the plaza was dedicated to a central castle from which the priestesses ruled. When this castle was leveled, the mercantile lifeblood of the city claimed more and more, and used the rubble to build the sprawling shops that litter it to this day.

Now, virtually anything can be found in Sschindylryn if one both knows where to look and has a keen sense of deception. Unlike the similarly fabled Shadowmarkets of Maerimydra, where deals are sacred and theft receives horrifying punishment, The Central Markets are an endlessly churning cesspool of deals and deceit. For those who can spot the difference between what is real and what is fake, riches and wonders await.

The Central Markets are ostensibly managed by the Gold Council, though most of the Councils have a say on what goes on within, and the region makes up the broad bulk of Council meetings and topics. Since no military force is allowed to have sway over the markets, the Gold Council employs the use of mercenaries to maintain 'peace', most currently the Zhentarim, much to the deep seated frustration of the Red Council, within whom the Zhentarim previously warred. The Zhentarim outpost is likewise seated here, near the gates to the Southern District.

"While I freely admit I prefer the Shadowmarkets of Maerimydra fame personally, Sschindylryn's Central Markets are a great deal more accessible. The goods tend to be less obscure as well, a nuance that can run both ways."

Melrida, famed explorer and artificer-

THE DISTRICT OF SILVERED WEBS



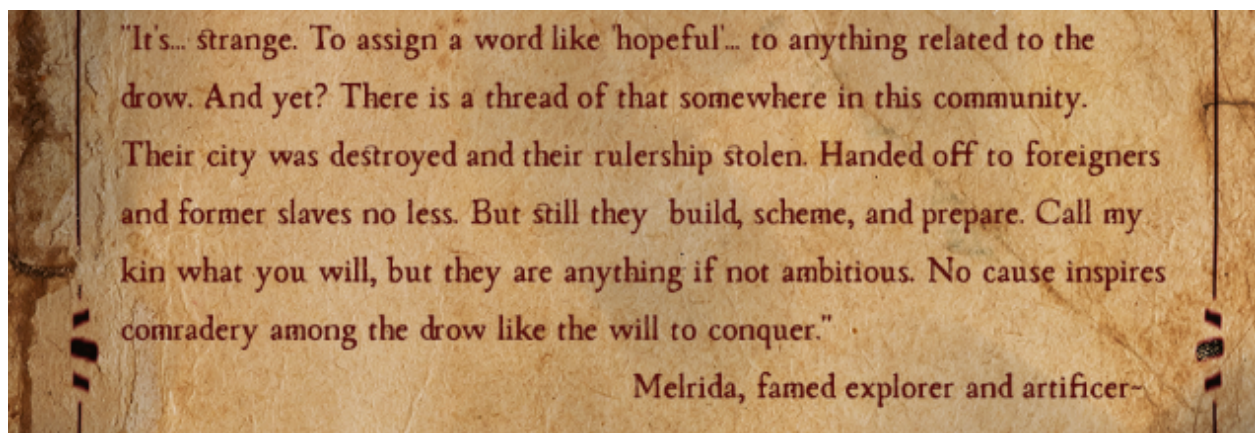
The district of Silvered webs is what remains of what was previously the drow Noble District in Old Sschindylryn. While drow holdings in the rest of the city have largely been lost, the drow still hold a major presence here. The exterior reaches of the district were completely leveled in the attack and the remaining noble families were driven back to the interior heights before capitulating to the enemy. This has resulted in the surviving members of the drow aristocracy and nobility being relegated to those relatively small environs while the rest of the drow population rebuilds and lives in the exterior reaches.

With nowhere outwards to build, the nobility currently build up, and the back of the District of Silvered webs is a glittering wall of palaces and manors reaching all the way up to the ceiling that the common drow can only look upon from afar.

Even the common drow in this sector are considered High Drow, and look down upon

their lower kin who live in the southern and other districts of the city. A great deal of effort and wealth is being poured into the rebuilding of this district, with stone being carved and sent across the city by deep gnome cutters from the quarries. The aristocracy are well aware that without a prospering population to rule, their own power and influence will dwindle. Unfortunately for them, sabotage and setbacks in the construction areas are frequent, with no culprit yet identified.

Also worth note, as they are technically part of the district, and yet apart, are both The Toy Box, the cities most popular establishment, and the Academy of Hungry Shadows, the seat of the Silent Council and famed institution of assassination. The ruins of the old Temple of Lolth are also found here, jutting up on a hill like a monument to failure.



THE DISTRICT OF ENDLESS LABORS



The District of Endless Labors is the cruel and uncompromising domain of the Duergar, the result of an agreement from ages past. Once a small collection of tunnels and caverns, the Duergar laboriously, through determination and endless slave labor, turned the district into a sprawling hive devoted to subjugation and toil. Now this labyrinth is equal parts forge, prison, and fortress.

Originally under the control of a singular clan escaping the wrath of a failed conflict, many clans have since moved into the region and joined the district and its developments, the culmination of their efforts being the ultra-prison and factory: The Spiteforges. Built atop a harnessed volcanic vein and reinforced with the strongest abjurations available, the legacy of this prison is such that none have ever escaped, even the extraplanar creatures trapped there, and most infamously the ancient red dragon Malifexxia.

The District is also the location of the Thayan Enclave and thus the Red Council, the organization's predilection for slavery and tyranny making them acceptable neighbors and allies even if they naturally do not agree on all things. The Thayans are allowed to traverse the district freely, even if they must abstain from entering the Spite Forges themselves.

"Never been there. Never want to go there."

Melrida, famed explorer and artificer-

THE DISTRICT OF LEGACIES LOST

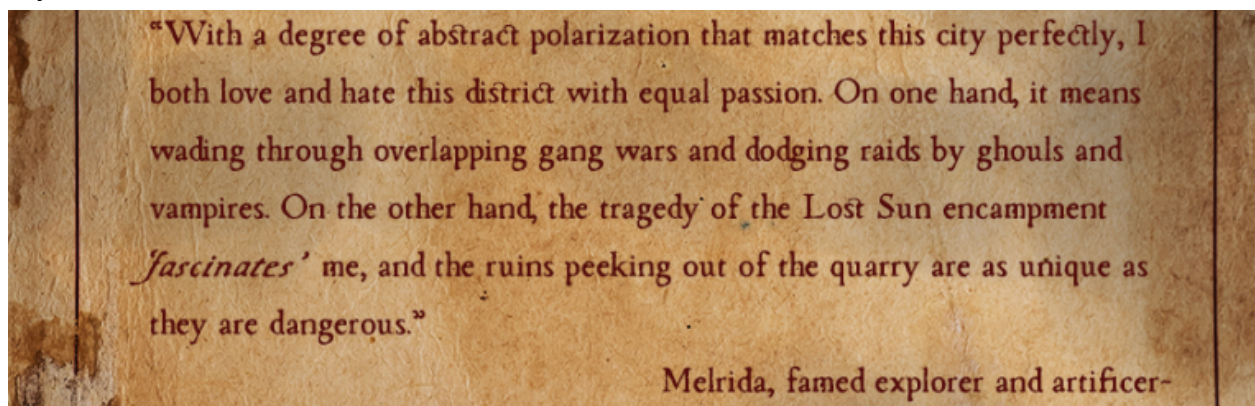


The District of Destinies Lost is the newest and yet least stable region of the city. Originally nothing more than a quarry for the construction of the rest of the city, Sschindylryn's destruction and resulting displaced population saw the eventual rise of ramshackle building efforts and an attempts at a new life. The refugees expected the assistance of the city's major powers, but none would risk spreading their resources thin on behalf of those beyond their own control, and thus the district slowly fell to squallor and half built attempts at structures. These cycles, the slums themselves are known as "The Tangle" by locals, due to its messy layout and often layered buildings. Anyone not from the area risks getting lost without a guide.

Now the district is what passes for slums in the city, collecting the very worst of the population into one tumultuous zone, something most of the rest of the city is content with. It is here that most of the city's many warring gangs get their start, and endless turf wars spill across the region constantly. Those born to the district overwhelmingly die there eventually, and those who end up destitute here virtually never escape... but the lure of wealth, power, and freedom stokes the fires of the savage hearts in each new generation.

The massive quarries that the city was built from still exist, and are still in use by the clan of svirfneblin who have managed to leverage their freedom from the city. The complex machines of gear, chain, and levers grind cycle in and cycle out, hauling up new stones to their insular village of Gnarlstone to be cut and shaped. The deep gnomes largely keep to themselves, and given the contextually valueless nature of the stones they haul back and forth, few bother with them.

At the center of the quarry is a tremendous, towering mausoleum that houses much of the city's undead population. It is overseen by a surprisingly pragmatic vampire named Iz'anth T'sarran. He and his children are allowed to prey upon the locals of the district in trade for this service, yet another thing the children of the slums loathe the rest of the city for.



-Places of Renown Within-

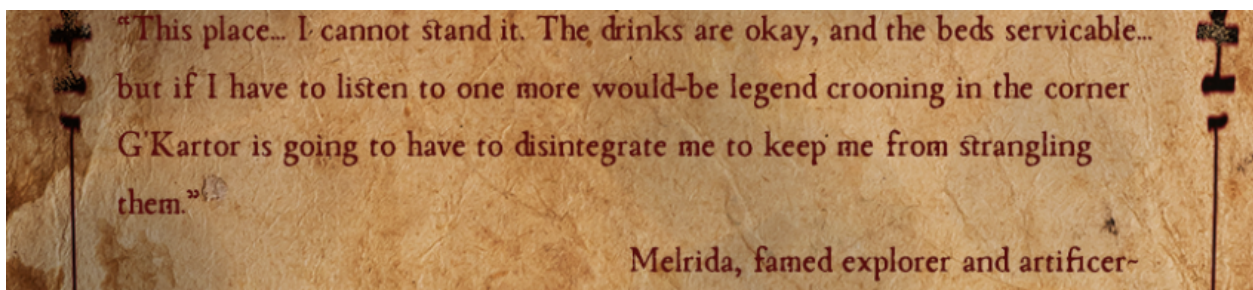
THE TOY BOX



The Toy Box is the predominant source of leisure and entertainment in the city, a sprawling tavern and inn with a network of portals leading to innumerable places. One of the few central places to largely escape destruction during the war, it has remained a mainstay for the general population and a frequent stop for adventurers of every stripe.

Its survival during the conflict is largely attributed to the establishment's strange and conspicuous owner, a tremendously irate Eye Tyrant named G'Kartor. How or why this grim, humorless creature came to own the city's only true local of frivolity is one of the tavern's most discussed secrets. Between the beholder and the bouncer, a retired duergar adventurer named Kord, the often violent patrons are kept surprisingly well in check.

The Toy Box serves many roles for the city: rest-stop, inn, tavern, entertainment venue, meeting place, and so on. None are so at odds with its owners as its unchallenged reputation as a place of artistic patronage. Several semi-famous to outright legendary bards and artists got their start within the small venue, making it something of a place of pilgrimage to those rare artisans and performers who call the underdark their home.



HOME OF THE ETERNAL SMITH-LORD



Within the publicly accessible regions of the duergar district is the Home of the Eternal Smith-Lord, a cavernous temple devoted to several duergar gods and goddesses. This temple was built over an older temple of Lolth that served as an outpost in the area pre-war, destroying and replacing it completely. This act above all others sparks enmity between the two peoples in the city who otherwise have shared a prosperous and largely unconflicted allyship. To the Duergar, however, the temple of Lolth built to overwatch their original settlers was a similar insult to be righted.

The temple honors several gods of the gray dwarves, but none so much as:

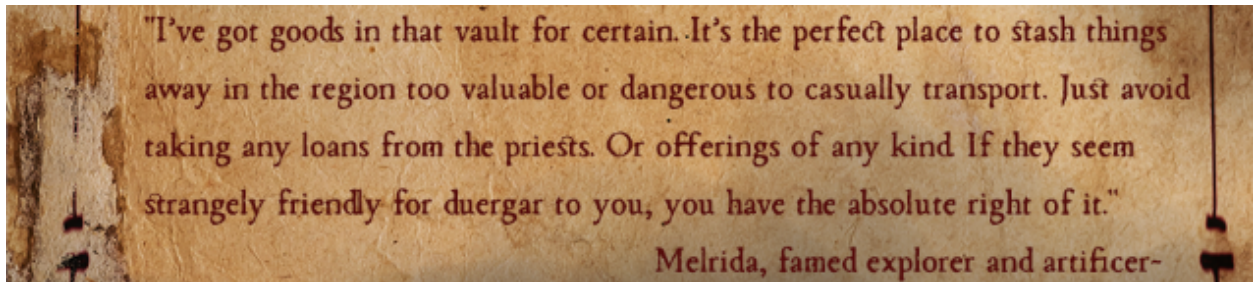
The Master of Greed, Abbathor.

The Exile, Laduguer

The Queen of the Invisible Art, Deep Duerra

Though the temple is obviously focused on the needs and cultures of the duergar, the grounds welcome all, taking in the wounded and sick in trade for sermons of dogma or minor oaths of cooperation. The Abbathorian priests also sell goods, ensured to be marked up as much as possible for those in the most need, to adhere to their patron's teachings.

A centerpiece of the temple is the chained remains of a winged outsider that was an agent of Waukeen seeking wealth stolen from one of her sacred holdings. The creature was trapped, bound and stripped of its flesh, bones plated in gold. Said to be 'alive' still, it serves as a warning to all who enter the temple and covet the mounds of gold and treasure on display in it. No one is above reprisal. For those less invested in such tales, the vault giants with their burning blades and magical sight will have to do.



THE ACADEMY OF HUNGRY SHADOWS



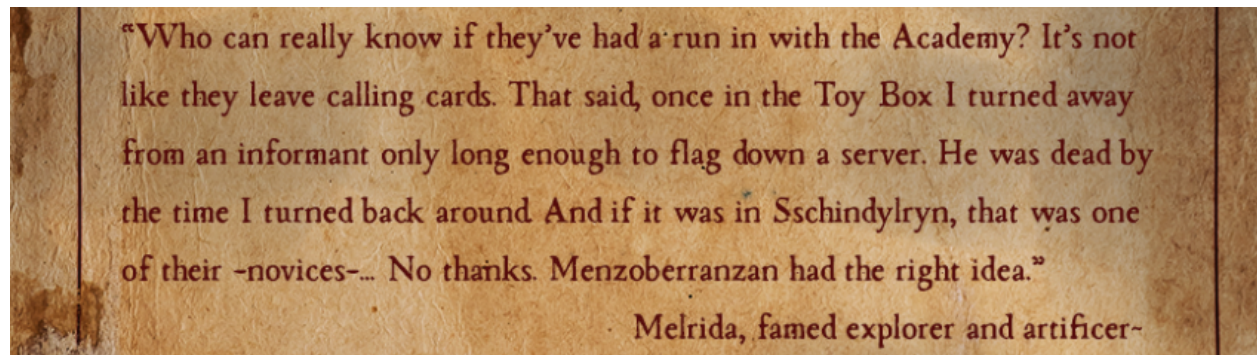
Few places in the region are as mysterious and infamous as the assassins' Academy of Hungry Shadows. Built at the dawn of the city by a wealthy and secretive patron, it has

remained out of and above the conflicts of the region without fail. Such is the reputation of the Academy that when the armies of Menzoberranzan rolled over the city, the tower was left alone entirely.

What goes on within that tower is the stuff of endless debate and supposition, though a few credible things have snuck out over the years. It is said that the Academy steals children from all over the underdark, and on rare occasions, beyond. These children are trained from the opening of their eyes in the most ruthless and exacting martial regimens, producing some of the most wildy lethal and efficient practitioners of silent murder in the region vast.

Academy assassins fetch cripplingly exorbitant prices but an exemplary record. Younger, less experienced students are often employed around the city and surrounding regions, while the most senior of the students make use of Sschindylryn's vast portal network to strike out all across Toril. Indeed, the tower itself is said to host a dizzying array of portals specifically for this function, some of them connected to other planes entirely.

Ostensibly, the Academy holds the Silent Council seat, but has never needed to send anyone to fill it.



QUARRYSPIRE



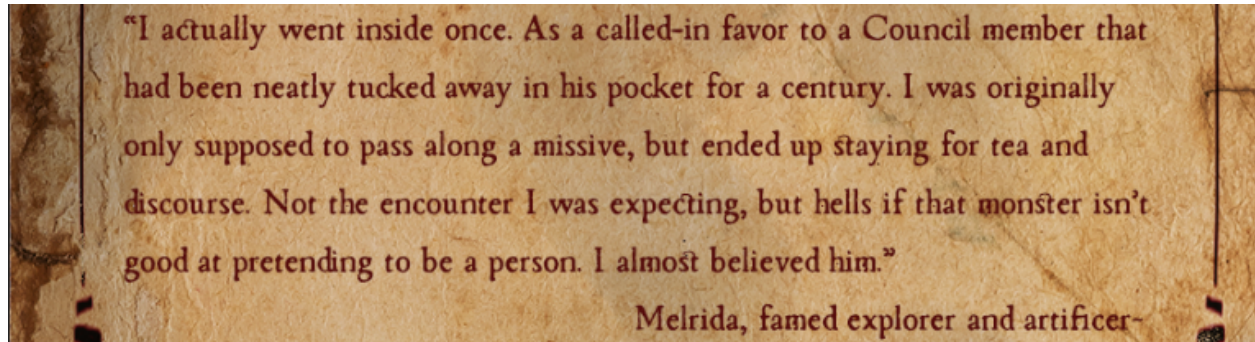
The Quarryspire is a relatively recent addition to the city, a massive, towering mausoleum built at the very base of the largest of Sschindylryn's quarries constructed in the wake of the war to contend with the great quantities of bodies left behind. While most of the dead interred there are drow, particularly noble drow, it has become increasingly common for the city's dead to be brought and interred here by the tower's unlikely guardians.

Shortly after its construction, the architect was revealed to be the vampire Iz'anth T'sarran, who moved into the secret and fortified chambers at its zenith. To the surprise of the city, the vampire and his minions reached out for immediate parlay, offering to continue stewardship over the structure so long as it and its children were allowed to "reasonably cull" a small portion of the disenfranchised and lost of the Southern districts.

Already beleaguered from the war, caught off guard by the situation, and in no place to begin a conflict anew, (much less against the very best of their re-risen warriors) the Councils of Sschindylryn uneasily accepted this truce. Since then, the arrangement has remained flawlessly intact, and annual inspectors are sent to the tower to investigate and ensure that the bargain is indeed being held.

The tower itself is a dizzyingly high artwork of architecture, covered top to bottom in

complex carvings and statuary exalting in the most terrible of their slayers, priestesses, and High Houses. Both the grounds and the spire itself are protected by a vast array of undead and traps at the service of its de facto ruler.



LOST SUN ENCAMPMENT



Also in the southern reaches of the city, beyond the slums themselves, is as unlikely a place as can be found in the Underdark. When the war with Menzoberranzan spilled across the city, many slaves were able to free themselves and flee into and out of the city. Many of these slaves, with nowhere to go, ended up in the slums themselves... eking out a miserable survival alongside their once-captors.

A trio of these surviving slaves were adventurers from the surface, captured and held against their will for many years until breaking free during the major conflict. A druidess, a cleric of Kelemvor, and a paladin of Lathander, none of whom felt at ease leaving so

much suffering in their wake. Finding a hidden cavern tucked away in the southernmost edge of the slums, they dug in around an old tower they discovered and created the Lost Sun encampment. From here they provided food and shelter, healing and hope to creatures so twisted by their surroundings and faiths that, for several years, barely anyone took them up on it.

When the vampire Iz'anth T'sarran moved into the Quarryspire, it was these three who defended the district against his children, and once, even the lord himself. Though the paladin was lost in that battle, the event fostered uncommon trust in the group, and more began to visit their encampment unbidden. Now it is a regular soup kitchen and hospital, though the heart of the cleric has grown cold and the druidess is stretched beyond her capacity. It is uncertain how much longer this impossible place will survive against the ceaseless attacks from the undead and the cruel instincts of those they attempt to help.

-Places of Renown Without-

“YIP-TOWN”



Though most from Sschindylryn call this network of caverns “Yip-Town”, it’s actual name

is “Juroshog di wer Bekdrir Zezhuanth,” which translated loosely into undercommon is “Throat of the Sleeping Ancient.” This honeycomb of crisscrossing old lava tubes has long been flooded with runoff from the rivers that circle nearby Sschindylryn. The dormant thermal vents throughout heat up the water, giving the spectacular array of waterfalls that run through it a steamy, hazy atmosphere.

The massive central caverns are a funnel that lead down to a whirlpool of tremendous size at its base, dominated by statuary of indiscernible age and era of a draconic figure of unknown species bound with chains and watched over by a cabal of hooded, feminine figures. The kobold settlement woven through these tunnels and the great cavern itself spills up the walls, through the crevices, and even up onto the famously large mushrooms that grow here... all facing this central display.

The small reptilian settlers have long revered the statue, though the exact origins and purposes of it have changed several times throughout the region's history, and largely seem up to the reigning chieftain to decide. The previous chieftain considered the imagery a sign that their slumbering god was being held at bay for some ancient transgression against the drow, and thus focused the settlement on trade and appeasement with the nearby city. The new and current chieftain, Luyosa, continues to meditate on what direction the town will take under his direction.

In the meantime, Yip-Town continues to be one of the largest sources of food for the nearby city. The humid nature of the seemingly endless hot springs give way to rampant fungal growth, and hardy subterranean fish swarm the pools which the kobolds collect and bring to Sschindylryn for trade and sale.

Most curiously are the rise of rare “Urd Kobolds” throughout the settlement’s history: an uncommon breed of winged, flight-capable kobolds largely attributed to some magical radiation or effect from the ancient structure at the cavern’s central nexus. Both these Urd Kobolds and even outsiders with clear draconic heritage are considered almost holy beings, revered in the city so long as they do not disrupt it.

“Look. I’m not saying it’s terribly classy to go spend the cycle lounging around in kobold hot springs. I’m simply saying *it’s relaxing*. Beyond that, the ancient architecture is unquestionable fascinating. The locals often throw tribute into the swirling vortex at its base, believing that what is sucked down is devoured by the ancestor itself. Strengthening both it and their bond with it. Lest you get any cute ideas about these diminutive looking lizard children, they are stronger and more organized than they appear, and unruly visitors are hurled into the vortex with great, yipping joy.”

Melrida, famed explorer and artificer-

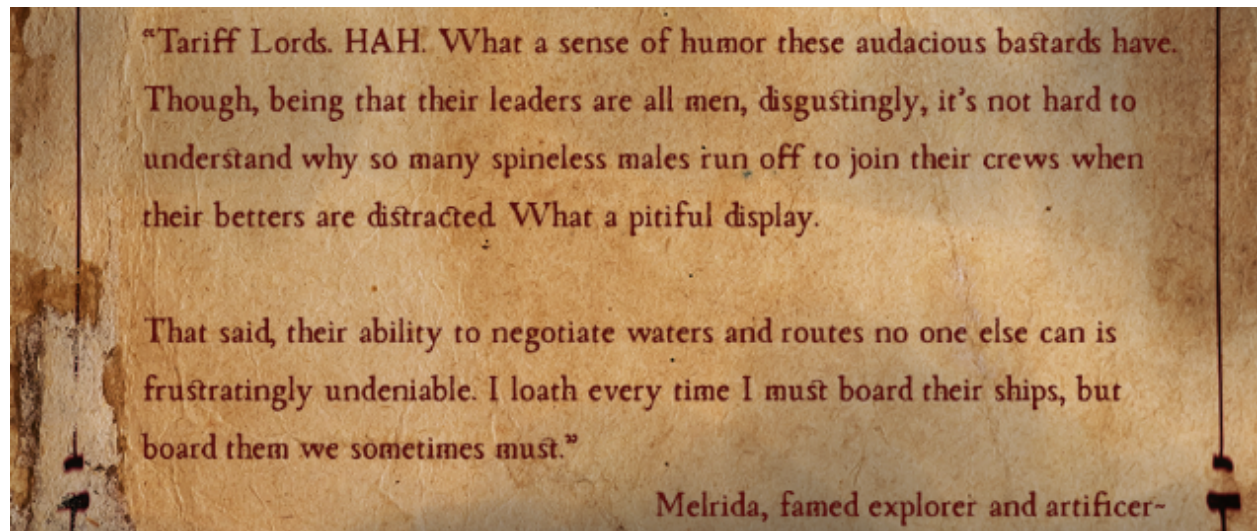
“THE CHOKE”



The largest of Sligo Qu’madonest (Ink Sailor) encampments is actually far from their most famous site of occupation, the Lake of Shadows. Before the fall of the trade lines between Sschindylryn and Maerimydra, this settlement acted as a pirate’s port and blockade between the cities, a function it largely still maintains. In the current era, the organization has retired from overt piracy (officially) and focuses on the less obvious

extortion of waterways and trade around the city. The name of their primary base is called "The Choke" for this very reason, as it restricts watercraft from coming into or out of the city easily without their hands getting access to it at some point.

The 'retired' pirates can be found all over the sprawling network of bridges, docks, warehouses and taverns that litter these ramshackle settlements in their traditional mauves and golds and with hair dyed jet black. The Choke is mostly split into four distinct regions called the Blades, matching the four sabered flag the organization uses to identify itself. Each blade is run by a Tariff Lord, a pirate in all but name. These four lords constantly vie with both each other and their underlings for control of the four massive towers denoting their territories. These towers long predate the arrival of the pirates and are said to host unbelievable treasures from generations of pillage and ancient stores acquired when the structures were originally claimed.



-Factions of Renown-

THE SHATTERED HOUSES



The invading army of Menzoberranzan was brutally thorough in its dismantling of its rival, and the ruling drow of the city were the primary focus of this aggression. Most of the High Houses of the earlier era were wiped out entirely, and those who survived did so by capitulating to the conquerors. A few Houses simply had the fortune to live along the furthest reaches of the District of Silvered Webs, the war ending before the armies reached their doorstep. Whatever the circumstance, these surviving Houses became the new face of Sschindylryn's drow culture, and largely continue to be.

Below are the current Eight Houses of Sschindylryn.

- **First House Tlintaerth:** House Tlintaerth was the driving force behind the surrender of Sschindylryn, claiming to have rationally foreseen the fall of the city against the superior force. While this has caused great enmity between them and the surviving remnants of the older Houses, this choice allowed them to maintain

their estates and resources through the war. The result is a mercantile powerhouse and one of the most influential organizations in the city. They are also the driving force behind the reconstruction efforts of the drow territories and Sschindylryn as a whole.

(Primary Resources: Trade. Wealth. Connections. Real-estate.)

- **Second House Xunva'alier:** House Xunva'alier controls most of the major waterways through and around the city, and provides the vast majority of its aquatic resources. Much like Tlintaerth, they abstained from the conflict to keep their fleet of fishing and pleasure barges from being sunk, and thus came out the other side in an advantageous position. Also like Tlintaerth, this has won them a great deal of ire.

(Primary Resources: Transportation. Fishing. Luxury. Kuo-Toa Slaves.)

- **Third House Tyrnazeth:** House Tyrnazeth commands the largest remaining standing army, and is the primary contributor to the Sar'vex (Sschindylryn's drow soldiery). Once a relatively middling House, their armies were left to guard the rear of the city and thus largely escaped destruction when it fell. The House briefly quarreled with House Tlintaerth for control of the future of Sschindylryn's drow, but were unable to outmaneuver the rival house's cunning Matron. Now their forces are constantly spread across the city, ensuring that the presence of the dark elves is ever felt and keeping them from being able to attempt a coup in the process. This history makes the house a popular one for remnants of the destroyed Houses, many of whom were absorbed after the war.

(Primary Resources: Trained Soldiery. War Machines. Reputation.)

- **Fourth House Rea'vrantill:** The Matron of House Rea'vrantill was the previous High Priestess of the city before her temple was destroyed in a battle, and rival Lolthites looted both it and her holdings of all religious artifacts to reinstall in their own city. While the House has very few resources to their name anymore, they still hold a great deal of respect in the religious communities and continue to lead the city's Lolthite congregations behind the scenes. While the Council fears the influence of the Goddess of Strife in the city and demands that no new Lolthite temple be constructed, rumors persist of House Rae'vrantill collecting wealth and building one in secret somewhere within the city.

(Primary Resources: Divine Backing. Zealots.)

- **Fifth House Nozgruula:** Sometimes called "The Cursed House", Nozgruulans are a bitter, morose house that specialize in divination magic and bear an utterly fatalistic outlook on life and the future. The House has averted every major

tragedy that has befallen the city thus far, but as a tradition, regularly sacrifices its members to avoidable mishaps to 'maintain the vision'. Their belief is that the timeline can only be altered so much before critical backlash, and thus they hold a lottery to see whom among their number must stride into foreseen calamity and simply accept it. The only member above this temporally inclined sacrificial tradition is the somber, exhausted Matron of the household, who is said to be patiently awaiting some foreseen cataclysm that even their house cannot avoid.
(Primary Resources: Prognostication. Reputation.)

- **Sixth House Zyanth'ill:** The drow of house Zyanth'ill are corrupt even by drow standards, having abandoned the protection of the District of Silvered Webs for a fortified chasm nestled some small distance to the east. This chasm boils with the heat of a lava flow; the very same that feeds the relatively nearby spiteforges. Unlike the forges however, this particular molten river lacks the unique mineral that disjunctions spellcasting and thus House Zyanth'ill are able to practice their dark arts without complication. Demonologists in the extreme, the house venerates and intermingles with fiends and fire aligned races of various sorts, making tieflings and other half-breeds common among their number. They are the only drow with any real remaining alliance with the duergar, house Zyanth'ill and the Hellvault clan maintain staunch trading relations and are even known to bond on incredibly rare occasions.

(Primary Resources: Duergar Allies. Conjurers. Fiendish Allies.)

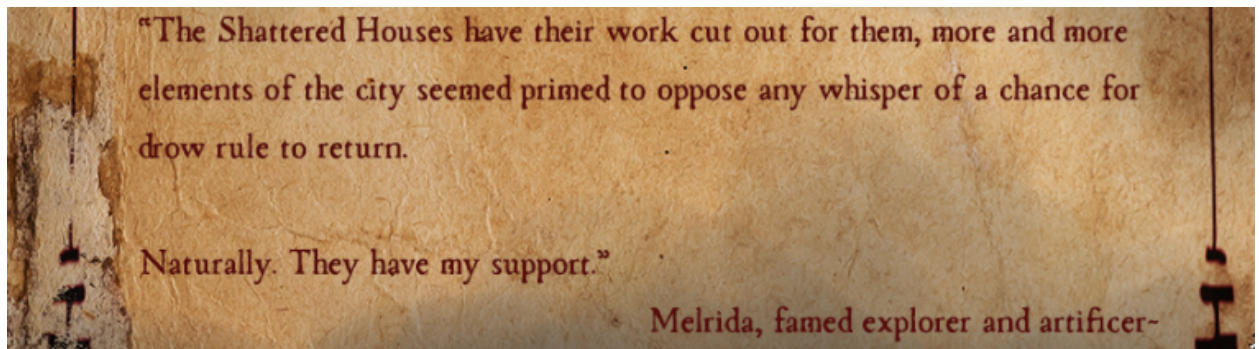
- **Seventh House Aathrin'zu:** The seventh House of Sschindylryn is a tenuous one, held in place largely due to the influence of a single, seemingly immovable individual. B'yilla Aathrin'zu is a drow adventurer who became matron of her house during the Menzoberranzan war by strength of arm and though she eventually surrendered to Menzoberranzan along with the rest of her house, her efforts managed to keep her holdings partially intact. The result is a house resembling a cult of personality based around her, with B'yilla representing their only true strength of merit. Though few would be foolish enough to offend or confront her outright, the slow corrosion of drow politics and sabotage are wearing the house thin and it's assumed to only be a matter of time before the reviled eighth house overtakes them. If they survive at all.

(Primary Resources: Famous Adventurer.)

- **Eighth House Dalharuken d'Sschindylryn:** (*"The Sons of Sschindylryn", or, House Dalhaurken as it is more commonly called.*) The incredibly controversial Eighth House continues to fight for every square inch of territory and prestige they can against most of the rest of the houses. This unlikely organization is a

house in nothing but name, and its origins as a snag gang from the District of Destinies Lost continue to haunt its every step. Run by a collective of male youths rather than a singular matron, the group flies in the face of drow tradition in every conceivable way. The core reason this faction continues to stand its ground is suspected to be in part from support originating from the city's other major organizations. The level of infighting House Dalharuken causes between the Shattered Houses keeps the flame of inner turmoil burning brightly and drow resources tied up, something that can only benefit the other powers vying for Sschindylryn's future.

(Primary Resources: Underworld Ties. Large Population. Clandestine Backers)



DUERGAR OF THE SPITEFORGES



The Spiteforges are a sprawling prison-forge situated atop a volcanic line deep within the territories of the Duergar. This legendary prison services more than just the city, and has accepted prisoners from all over and beyond into its inescapable, hellish clutches. It is not uncommon to see prisoners of incredible ferocity or repute paraded through Sschindylryn's streets on the way to the Spiteforges. Once within, however, they are unlikely to ever be seen again. Not only is the domain a multilayered hellhole of checkpoints, traps, and armies of duergar, but a rare radiation from some mineral in the volcanic rivers disjuncts spellcasting, and makes translocation of any sort a death sentence. While it is possible to be released from the prison, such cases are inordinately rare.

Overseeing this domain of drudgery and torment are the duergar Spitewards. Equal parts jailors and foremen, these cruel overseers manage both the prisoners and the monumental factory lines they endlessly toil upon. Some rare few of the duergar also keep a unique presence in the city as specialized bounty hunters called Spiteseekers, a terrifying prospect for anyone they are sent after. Capture by these skilled agents of brutal subdual means a one way ticket to the Spiteforges and a lifetime of blistering toil from which there is no hope of escape.

Below are some of the most powerful Duergar Clans in Sschindylryn.

- **Clan Machinehammer:** The Machinehammers have long been an industrious clan of duergar dating all the way back to the initial exodus that led the gray dwarves to Sschindylryn's territory. As their name suggests, the family possesses a rare gift for engineering and surprisingly complex machinery. This skill secured both their place within the city and their rising dominance over the other duergar clans, something that continues to this day. Despite the intricacy and ingenuity of some of the clan's many works, their machines remain devoid of any art or wonder. Simply tools honed with cold efficiency and typically put toward brutal ends.
(Primary Resources: Political Weight. Engineering. The Spiteforges.)
- **Clan Hellvault:** Few clans stand apart from the typical expectations and assumptions about duergar as the Hellvault clan. The ancestors of this particular line of gray dwarves became obsessed with fire in all its many forms, making pacts with giants, elementals, and even sometimes fiends in their quest to tame it as their own. As a result, a great deal of the Hellvaults are mixed blooded, and decidedly more lively than their dour, solemn kin. Despite this, most duergar traits remain unchanged, and the fiery dwarves are just as greedy, vicious, and obsessed with toil and subjugation as any clan can claim to be.

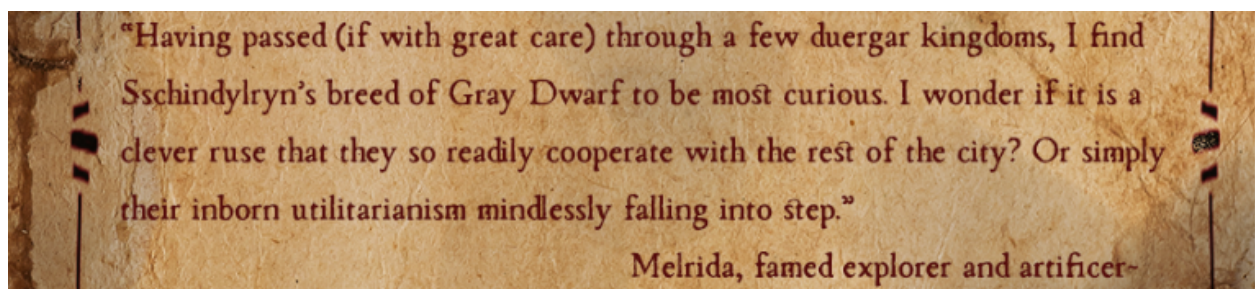
(Primary Resources: Connections. Military. Fire Affinity.)

- **Clan Barrenguard:** The Barrenguard Clan is arguably not even a clan of Sschindylryn. Their scattered holdings pepper the reaches around the city in all directions, preferring a network of disparate outposts to one collective holdfast. This makes their members tremendously valuable to travelers willing to risk association. Few people know the region as well. It also makes them disconnected from the politics of the city and rare to actually offer aid without often exorbitant compensation. Barrenguards and their iconic heavy crossbows make up the majority of the infamous Spiteseekers, as their wide ranging and regional familiarity makes them excellent hunters and trackers in the pursuit of prey.

(Primary Resources: Scouting. Hunting. Geology.)

- **Clan Ashfeast:** Of all of the clans who claim the regions around Sschindylryn as their own, the Ashfeasts have claimed, connived, and conquered the most. As such, most of the duergar around the city either are or are distantly related to the Ashfeasts in some way. At least as is claimed. The clan makes up the majority of the gray dwarves' military as well, a fact they are stolidly proud of. Only an incredible amount of infighting between the various familial sects of the clan keeps them from overtaking the Machinehammers as the dominant duergar force in the region.

(Primary Resources: Military. Population. Resources.)



STREET GANGS (SNAGS)



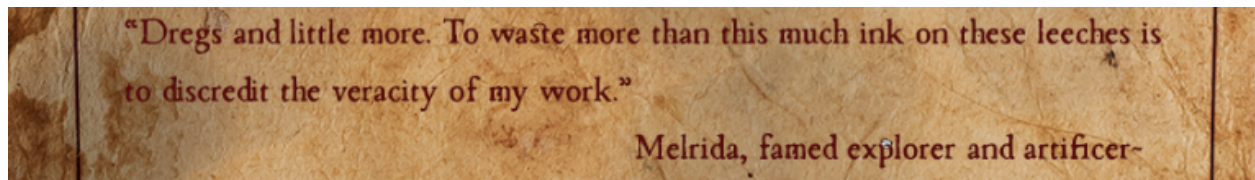
Sschindylryn has no shortage of castoffs: those still destitute from the war, or born into it, criminals or failed mercenaries drifting through, or travelers who became trapped in the city and are unable to easily leave. Some even chased ambitions to the Shattered City hoping to capitalize on its mercantile boom or intriguing opportunities. It is not every day that a grand city of the underdark is split open and made available for those beyond. What they all have in common is that there is no true place for them in Sschindylryn, and desperation breeds desperation. Oftentimes groups of these lost souls band together for protection and form one of the city's constantly rising and falling gangs.

Locals often called the gangs "Snags", as most of them originate in "The Tangle," another slang colloquialism for the labyrinthian slums of the southernmost reaches of the city. While the majority of these gangs are too small to attempt claims or business in districts other than the southern, some rise to prominence and influence enough to cause ripples in Sschindylryn proper. Extortion rackets, larceny, outright banditry, and other, more subtle versions of organized crime are the purview of these groups. The successful gangs are experts at riding the chaotic lines of the city for gain and can be almost indistinguishable from legitimate businesses at times. Others live explosive, often short lives of wild game and chance, settling for nothing but the biggest and

loudest scores.

Below are some of the most well known Snags in Sschindylryn.

- By technicality, a collection of tailors and seamstresses who have committed to an unlikely, and largely private war with one another. Theft, assassination, kidnapping, stolen credit, and other deeply personal conflicts continue to make surprising appearances throughout the city on behalf of this rather unique proxy-war.
- **The Rubied Eye** (Often called 'A Ruby' in singular) are an upscale band of loan-sharks, moneylenders, and landlords that specialize in crooked deals and too-good-to-be-true-because-it-is deal making.
- **Multhiir's Revenge**, The Havokbacks, and The Fallen Lords are all composed of scattered military and mercenary forces from the war who have banded together to put their training and brutality to use. These groups tend to be extremely unsubtle and quick to violence, making up the majority of gang wars that spill openly into the streets.
- The **Wurmchildren** are mostly made of kobolds, lizardfolk, and other reptilian creatures who venerate a dragon said to be nesting somewhere beneath the city. While they primarily stay in the sewers running under Sschindylryn, they sometimes make raids for food and supplies throughout the city, or war with the Stonecutter village, who, due to a past misunderstanding, they view as bitter rivals.
- The **Deadfingers** are a gang of dhampir, undead, necromancers and cultists who venerate the vampire overlord of the ruined southern district. Whether or not the vampire has any actual association with the gang, remains uncertain.



THE THAYAN ENCLAVE

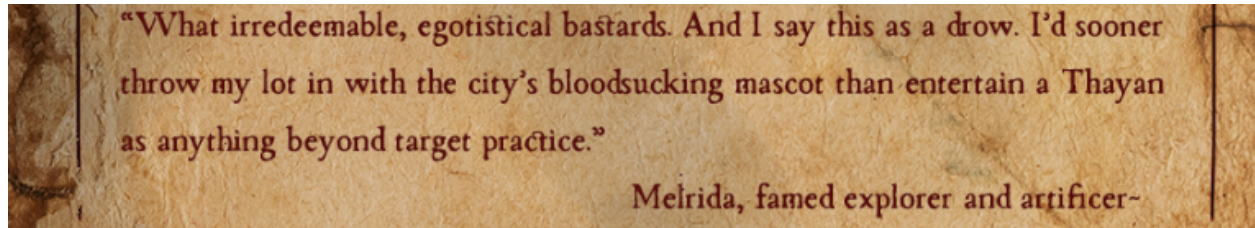


Sschindylryn hosts a rather impressive Thayan enclave, a tower teleported into the side of the allied duergar holdings. From here, the Red Wizards reach out into the city and attempt to strangle the market on magical wares, as well as join the nearby duergar in the trade of sentient chattel. The exact leadership of this enclave has changed several times, but their goals remain resolutely the same: the consolidation of arcane power, wealth, and influence. From their tower they have achieved much within Sschindylryn.

Originally, the Thayans managed to oust their Zhentarim rivals in a bid for surface influence in the city, using a combination of underhanded tactics and strangled supply lines to slowly drive them out. For several years this exclusivity was maintained. More recently however, the organization found themselves in a minor war with elements of the drow underworld and have found their position weakened enough that the Zhentarim were able to renegotiate a deal with the city. Now the Red Wizards consolidate their power and influence as they prepare for the coming, inevitable conflicts.

More and more resources are being diverted to the enclave, as the Thayans are loath to lose their hooks into the nearby Cormyrian region, a place they traditionally have struggled to influence. This puts the Red Wizards assigned to the enclave in a precarious position, which may well contribute to the frequent overturn of leadership

within. Most recently, a famed inquisitor of the nation has been reassigned to the location, and currently acts as chief advisor for the organizational proceedings in the region.



THE ZHENTARIM

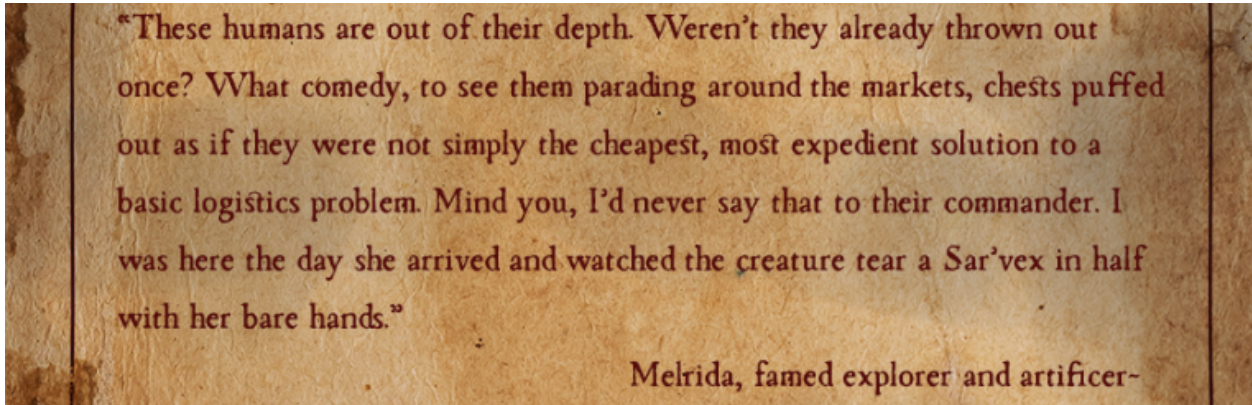


The Zhentarim presence in Sschindylryn has waxed and waned dramatically over the past many years due to infighting with the rival Thayan enclave. Unfortunately for the mercenary order, they have largely been on the losing end of these conflicts; going so far as to have their own enclave burned down in an upheaval years past. Ever the opportunists, with recent insecurities around the rise of Moander's plague and fears of it reaching Sschindylryn (alongside rumors of Maerimydra falling), the collective Councils agreed to turn over a disused barracks to the mercenary order and reinstate them as impartial soldiery. Why and how this sudden change of heart occurred remains a debated thing, the primary push coming from the unlikely Patient Council of all places.

The Black Network still feels the sting of their fairly recent removal from the city and the losses they suffered, and have turned the new venture over to a command of unlikely

pedigree and quality. These vicious specialists and diplomats have made short work of getting themselves reinstalled in the city and council affairs, and already patrol the central markets en force. Similarly, skilled diplomats and merchants from distant enterprises have been recalled to the new station to ensure the failures of the past are not repeated.

For their part, the Zhentarim are putting forth an uncommonly cooperative face towards the community, engineering themselves politically into the good graces of the various councils as they attempt to make themselves an indispensable presence in the city. Behind closed doors, however, the black, gauntleted fists of the Network still eagerly close around the throats of anyone who would oppose their agendas.

A rectangular image of a parchment scroll with a light brown, textured background. The text is written in a dark red, serif font. The quote is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The text reads: "These humans are out of their depth. Weren't they already thrown out once? What comedy, to see them parading around the markets, chests puffed out as if they were not simply the cheapest, most expedient solution to a basic logistics problem. Mind you, I'd never say that to their commander. I was here the day she arrived and watched the creature tear a Sar'vex in half with her bare hands."

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Melrida, famed explorer and artificer-

THE SLIGO QU'MADONEST



The Sligo Qu'madonest (Loosely translated to "Ink Sailors") are a cadre of arguably insane boatment that ply the waters around Sschindylryn and some estimated far beyond. Once a small-time gang of river pirates in the golden era of the city, they gained notoriety around nearby Maerimydra for their famed ability to navigate the extremely valuable Lake of Shadows without incurring the wrath of its Deep Kraken Lord.

Similar to many raiders, the Sligo Qu'madonest dye their hair black, or deep purple. This seems more linked to their namesake as an aesthetic than any attempt to camouflage themselves, as evident by their penchant for rich maroons and glittering golds.

After the fall of the city in the war with Menzoberranzan, their numbers swelled with refugees, ex-soldiers, and male drow who opted to flee the vestiges of the matriarchal drow community for something (in their eyes) with a more level playing field. The Sligo consider themselves to be a Meritocracy ruled over by four Tower Captains, and thus provide a rare opportunity for the typically subjugated drow men of the region. Something that puts them directly at odds with the Houses who seek to maintain and rebuild the city.

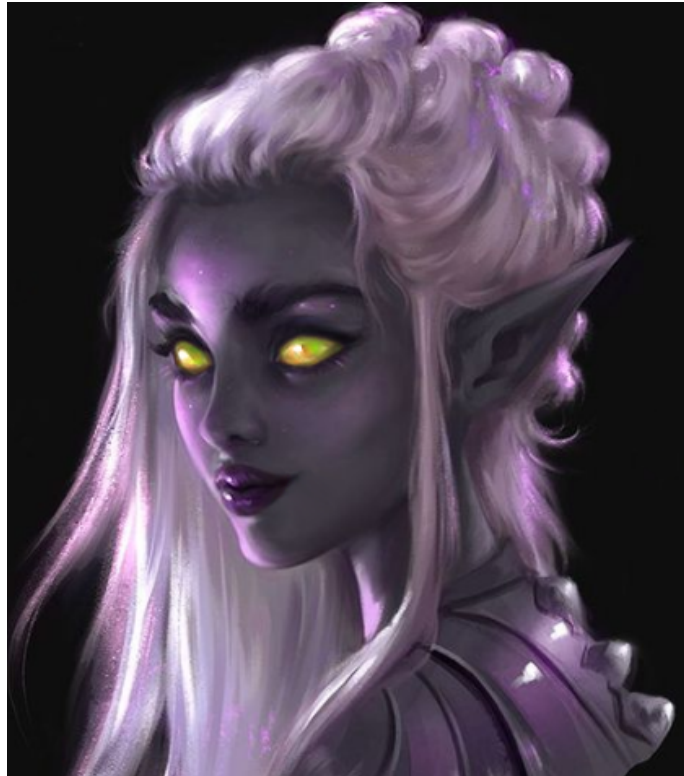
Though mostly composed of drow males, their numbers contain a great swath of unlikely races and creatures of all genders, including a Shiver (Group) of Weresharks

who act as guards, escorts, and general deterrents to competition in the riverways. Membership remains a secretive ordeal, however, cloaked in unseemly rumors and speculation. Some believe they worship the Kraken that kindled their reputation, while others fear their veneration runs deeper and darker still.

What is known is that membership requires a secretive initiation ritual from which many do not return. Whatever this ritual is, remains as closely guarded a secret as the rest of their internal affairs.

-Beings of Renown-

MIZ'RI TLINTAERTH

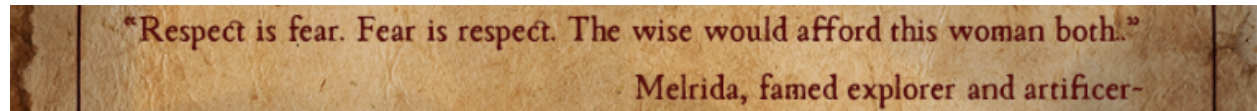


Enigmatic leader of House Tlintaerth and often the voice for the Patient Council, the drow Matron Mother has a storied history within the city that is as much infamous as famous. Through strife and upheaval even predating the war, she maneuvered her House from humble origins to increasing positions of greatness. Seeing her opportunity during Menzoberranzan's invasion, she was able to not only spare her family destruction, but swoop up the holdings and resources of several rivals in the process.

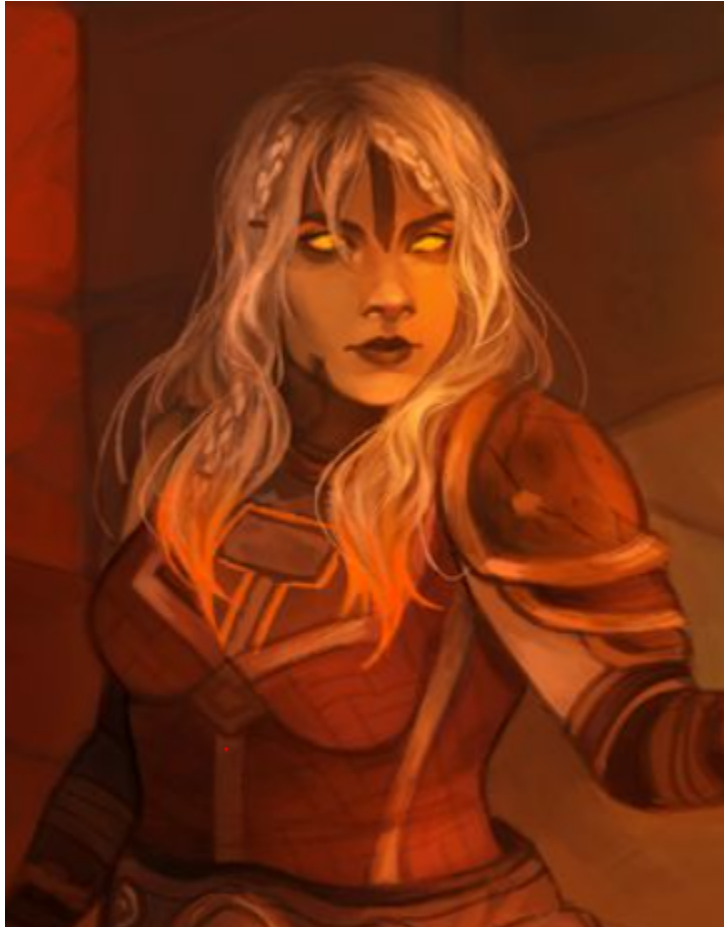
Now the Tlintaerths are ubiquitous with Sschindylryn and its drow population. While she does not control them, her influence is unquestionable.

Sometimes called the 'Golden Eyed Devil,' her exact history and origins remain uncertain, as few remain with the clout to publicly scrutinize them. Some claim that she used to be nothing more than a simple gang leader, while others quietly contest that she isn't drow at all, but some sort of smiling horror pulling the strings of the community for her own gain. For her part, Miz'ri Tlintaerth's goals seem concerningly charitable to many in the city. She leads and heavily funds the restoration and rebuilding efforts for the drow and fervently battles for their presence in the city to remain unquestioned.

Abstractly, it is perhaps this curious streak of philanthropy that makes the strife natured drow the most suspicious, offset only by the vicious cruelty with which she disposes of rivals.



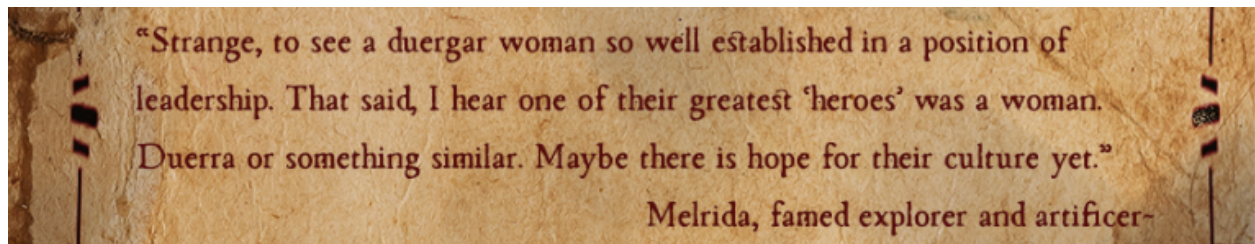
ZANRIE MACHINEHAMMER



Zanrie Machinehammer is the current Overseer of the Spiteforges and the de facto leader of Sschindylryn's duergar. The leader of a clan of warriors and engineers, Zanrie is a stolid, brutal woman whose pitiless ingenuity ensures that the sprawling prisons continue to run with sadistic efficiency. The Machinehammer clan is responsible for most of the complex traps and mechanism of the duergar territories, eventually coming to power when they brokered a deal with Menzobarranzan's invading armies. The duergar went from being a small presence in the city relegated to its edges to being on virtually equal footing with the drow.

The clan leader herself rarely leaves the Spiteforges, typically relying on other diplomats or officials to fill her seat at the council when needed. Her obsession with the facility is unequalled, and every year sees more and more of her mad designs put to the test upon the backs and labors of the prisoners. In a rare move of cooperation with the city at large, it was her clan that helped Stonecutter Village build the complex quarry machinery that hoists the incredible amount of stone from the depths below.

Zanrie's legacy also encompasses her unique and terrifying whip. Both tool and weapon, it was taken from a Balor once imprisoned within the Spiteforges. Made of magically contained magma, the horrific weapon is capable of shearing through stone, steel, flesh and even magic... and has only added to the already terrifying legend of the clan leader.



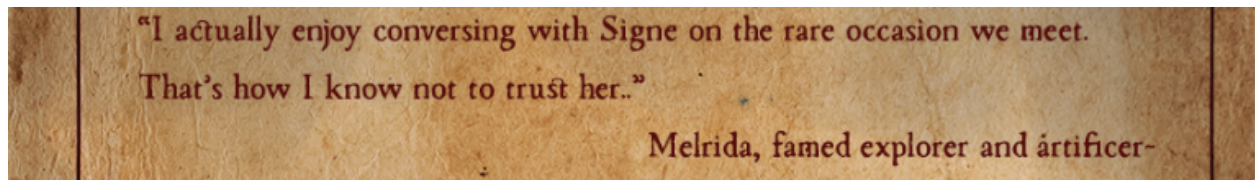
SIGNE HATHRENNE



Signe Hathrenne is one of the nearby thayan enclave's most dangerous weapons. A savant at games of diplomacy and barter, she is the glue that flawlessly holds the

thayan and duergar communities together through mutual greed and tyranny. The thayan agent is a quick study of other cultures and regional values, able to ingratiate herself with ease where others often stumble through faux pas.

As such, she remains the most outspoken voice on the Red Council, often having to reign in her fellow wizards and keep them in check when confronting the other races and cultures of the city. The diplomat is well aware of ego's price, and takes great measures to ensure that the enclave remains both a permanent fixture of the city, and a profitable one.



ZETHINE JALEEL

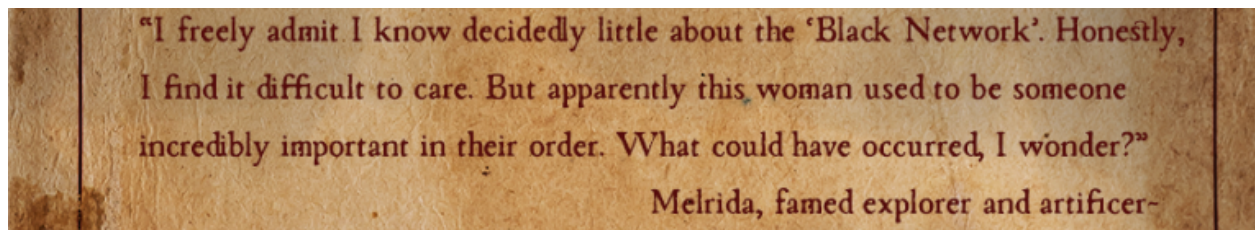


Zethine Jaleel is the Zhentarim Commander reassigned to the Sschindylryn outpost. Commander Jaleel's military history is a violent, upwards slaughter that brought her all

the way up to the prestigious rank of Zhent Lord on measure of pure, unmitigated brutality. What led to her demotion and reassignment to the Shattered City remains unclear, partially due to her summary executions of those who inquire too closely on the matter. What remains is an incredibly violent, if brilliant, military leader feeling spurned by the fate that brought her to what she frequently verbally refers to as a “Backwater hole, barely worth being a latrine.”

The marooned Commander brought with her a trusted retinue of her old unit, largely placing them in charge of patrolling and peacekeeping the central markets as expected. Like her, these slayers of the Black Network wield their unit’s signature red falchions to destructive ends when pressed.

So far, however, the Commander has done very little actual commanding, still furious over her placement in Sschindylryn. She remains rather derelict of her responsibilities, beyond the occasional satiating punishment for failure-- new recruits are often culled quickly for relatively minor infractions. Fortunately, her crew remains competent and largely runs the outpost in her stead. How long this strange arrangement can last remains uncertain.



IZ'ANTH T'SARRAN

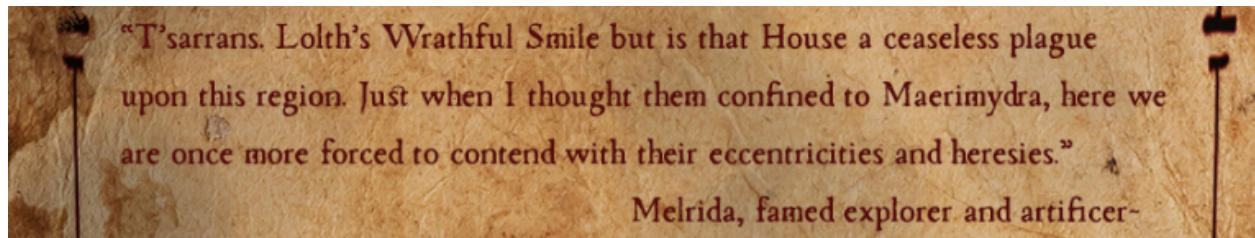


The current Lord and Caretaker of Quarryspire, Iz'anth T'sarran is a ruthless and charismatic vampire who fled Maerimydra with his children, taking advantage of Sschindylryn's instability to install himself as de facto ruler of the southernmost reaches. The District of Legacies Lost. From here he maintains his strange arrangement with the city, keeping peace in return for feeding rights upon the region's most vulnerable.

Iz'anth frequented the city himself to take part in the forays out for food and entertainment until he nearly perished at the hands of a trio of adventurers taking an unlikely stand for the district. The relic sword carried by the group's Paladin dealt the vampire a wound that can never heal, and Iz'anth has since allowed his underlings to fetch prey in his stead. This has created a shadow war of sorts between his minions and the budding community of vampire hunters and gangs in the slums.

The vampire himself is said to be a charming, sociable monster, entirely eager for discussion and diplomacy. The creature views itself as a proper noble, and indeed comes from such stock in its drow lineage. Likewise, the residents of the slums are considered his purview and abstract responsibility, if in the way a rancher might protect his herd. More than once, Iz'anth's minions have shown up to the defense of the district when outside powers encroached a little too far. Likewise, the vampire has promised his creatures and spawn as soldiers should another war arise in the city.

Iz'anth or one of his children typically holds the current chair of the Pale Council.



LUYOSA THE DRAGON PRIEST



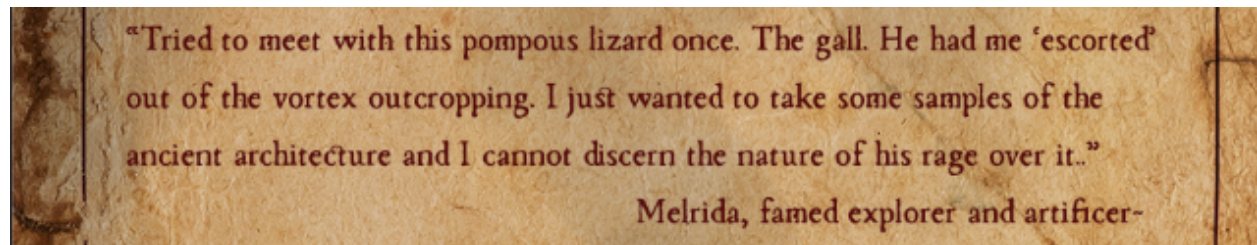
Reigning chieftain of Juroshog di wer Bekdrir Zezhuanth, or "Yip-Town," the kobold settlement hidden away outside of Sschindylryn. The blood of dragons runs strongly through Luyosa's veins, and his body displays this with the clear visibility and strength he uses to lead the settlement. Many of Yip-Town's denizens are dragon blooded or descended in some way, but none so more than Luyosa.

Relatively new to being chieftain, he replaced his suspected father (the kobolds mass

clutch, and thus direct parentage is ambiguous at times) after an assassination that left the village confused and directionless. It is each new chieftain's duty to decide the new direction for the community, and currently Luyosa continues to contemplate on the matter in stolid isolation, staring for hours or even days into the swirling vortex at the base of the settlement.

Nearby Sschindylryn remains anxious as to this potential change of dictum due to how heavily the city relies on Yip-Town's food surplus. While it is unlikely the kobolds could fend off direct war with the city, their warrens of traps and precautions make such an outcome deeply costly for all involved.

For his part, Luyosa seems like a patient, wise leader, prone to savage violence only when the security of his township is threatened. He, like the rest of the tribe, welcomes those of draconic descent regardless of their mixed heritage. Thus the town hosts a surprising number of other races who have fled the cruelty of the surrounding regions for a chance at a rare simple, mostly secure life. At least for the moment. Past chieftains have chosen the path of war and strife, and only time will tell if Luyosa decides that is the way forward for the community. If the powerful dragon child learns of the origin of his brood father's assassination, it could have far reaching ramifications for the entire region.



"Tried to meet with this pompous lizard once. The gall. He had me 'escorted' out of the vortex outcropping. I just wanted to take some samples of the ancient architecture and I cannot discern the nature of his rage over it."

Melrida, famed explorer and artificer-

UNDERDRUIDESS LAKTA NUEVAN

-and-

PRIESTESS KINCAID



It would be difficult to find a more unlikely pair in Sschindylryn. A druidess intent on protecting and feeding the city's lost, and a priestess hellbent on destroying the region's undead. This pair, along with the now slain paladin Mordel Khaizer, were originally slaves in the city, adventurers who explored too deep and paid the price with captivity and hardship. When the city fell, however, the trio escaped into the ruinous southern districts to hide and recoup the weapons and equipment they'd hidden when capture was all but ensured.

At Mordel's insistence the group remained even after the fall of Sschindylryn, creating the Lost Sun outpost as a place for refugees and the destitute to come for protection and food. Even in these desperate times, however, few to none would actually come to them, preferring starvation to the suspicious aid of assumed enemies. This all changed when Iz'anth T'sarran claimed dominance over the slums, and war between the groups began.

None save these adventurers were equipped to deal with the undead menace, and eventually more and more took refuge in their camp or begged for their aid during raids. One of these calls to arms proved to be a tragic ambush however, and the paladin Mordel was slain by Iz'anth himself during a climactic battle. Iz'anth, wounded, retreated... but the damage was done. The trio had long been conjoined at the heart and Mordel's death dealt a shattering blow.

Now the outpost is a far more grim place. Lakta does her best to provide a welcoming warmth to the refugees, but the heartbreak can clearly be seen in her eyes and dragging at her feet. Kincaid took up Mordel's legendary blade and hardened her heart towards vengeance. She lost all care for the city's lost souls and offers her aid only at Lakta's request. The priestess' cold gaze remains affixed upon one of two places. Mordel's grave, or Iz'anth's tower glittering darkly in the gloomy distance.

For its part, the outpost maintains a unique place in the shadow of the wicked city. The slum gangs have long agreed to leave them be (except the Deadfingers) and even the city itself curiously seems to ignore their presence. The outpost is regularly visited by more souls than it can rightly support, but Lakta continues to do her best to provide. Most interestingly, several drow youth have quietly taken up the camp's cause, learning by example and experience behind the uncaring Kincaid to slowly become capable vampire hunters.

KHAZARK LUTHAIN



Inquisitor Luthain has long served as an esteemed Thrashkir and judge in the Thayan home regions. Due to the particularities of his insights regarding corruption, Luthain was given rare travel privileges and an ordained duty to hunt between distant enclaves on the periphery of Thay to seek out and confer judgment upon any problems or insurgencies. The Thrashkir performed this duty with unquestionable success and soon garnered a wide ranging reputation among the disparate Khazarks as someone to be greatly feared. In part because Luthain judged not only the unruly members and subjects of distant projects, but the enclave leaders themselves.

This changed most recently after his arrival to the foreign enclave of Sschindylryn. Finding the project teetering on the edge of collapse and barely maintaining a presence in the city, Luthain stepped in and organized a violent reprisal against an opposing organization under the pretense of having the enclave prove both loyalty and competence. Nearly the entirety of the old guard were wiped out when this attempt failed, and many suspect that this was the intent of the Thashkir from the start. Now, the enclave hosts more and more of his own Knights and allied wizards by the cycle, and relations with the nearby duergar have been reaffirmed. Thashkir Luthain has taken the mantle of Acting Khazark until such a time he appoints a replacement. Citing "A great deal of work to be done in the city." needing to be accomplished first.

The Inquisitor himself is a shrewd, dangerous tactician, with a reputation that garners a great deal of respect from his peers. His most noteworthy physical feature is that of a

massive scar covering the side of his head, ruining one of his eyes and decorated with a bronze face shaped plate implanted beneath it.

Of nearly equal legend to his own is Luthain's personal Knight, Rethior the Tower. A titanic warrior of nearly unhinged disposition that only Luthain seems to be able to keep in check. It is this armored titan that the inquisitor sends out when threats fail and lessons must instead be writ in carnage.

MORE TO BE ADDED IN TIME.