

Grotenheim Lore

Cities: Granholm (capital), Granwall, Grancastle, Grankard, Granrock, Gran Guignol, Granton, Grantium, Gran Central, Grania, Granhall, Granville, Gran Canyon, Granapolis, Gransterdam, Granahiem, Grantanarivo, Grantwerp

Towns: Solvfell, Jernfell, Hakfell, Gruvfell, Hoydfell, Vinfell, Natfell, Jorfell, Stenfell, Gernfell, Komfell, Orkfell, Smifell, Sigfell, Vaerfell, Skofell, Morfell, Skegfell, Dverfell, Fugfell, Ligfell, Olsfell, Grunfell, Prossfell, Skogfell, Myrfell, Kystfell, Brinfell, Olvfell, Skredfell, Kantfell, Farfell, Grenfell

Grotenheim is home to two main races of dwarves, the Mountain Dwarves and the Hill Dwarves. In Grotenheim, the middle lands are mountainous and hold the cities, built into the interiors of the mountains. The surrounding hills contain many villages and farms, where the lower class Hill Dwarf farmers live, aboveground. The non-hilly lands serve as a buffer zone where foreigners can come to trade, as no one is allowed inside Grotenheim but Dwarves, under penalty of death. Trading posts and some small villages dot these lands, set up to cater to travelers.

In the cities, a mix of Mountain Dwarves and Hill Dwarves live together, making up the middle class. This middle class consists of miners, soldiers, and smiths, of whom all the males must serve mandatory military service for at least ten years, starting upon their 30th birthday (Dwarves age slower than humans). The male farmers must also serve, but they start at age 25 and serve for only five years. Female members of the middle class do not serve in the military, instead becoming smiths and mining supervisors, though men can also serve in those positions. Female farmers do not serve in the military either, and are expected to continue farming until they are too old to do so.

After a Dwarf's mandatory service is up, they can continue as a soldier with the possibility of promotion. That is one way to enter the upper class, which is composed entirely of Mountain Dwarves. The upper class consists of military officers, merchants, and nobility. It is extremely difficult to rise through the military into the upper class, but that is how most do it, as it is much harder to become a merchant; to do so, one must obtain a certificate from the merchants' guild, which is extremely costly, far out of the range of the middle class. Hill Dwarves are not allowed to become officers.

Male members of the upper class must serve at least five years as a squire, starting upon their 23th birthday. After serving as a squire, they serve as a knight, but only in times of war. Female members of the nobility are expected to be future leaders, and are thus groomed from birth for government positions. At the age of 40, they may decide if they wish to serve as a military officer in a command position instead. Male members of the nobility are expected to serve in government positions as well, just not as high-ranking ones.

The Groten system of government is a Matriarchal Diarchy. The highest authority is that of the two Grans: the Marshal Gran and the Maker Gran. The Marshal Gran (/u/Captain-No-Beard) controls the military and security of Grotenheim, as well as espionage and intelligence. The Maker Gran (/u/astroaron) controls Groten industry and trade, as well as

some other domestic affairs. Grans serve for life, though their lives are not usually very long, as only very old (roughly around the ages of 240-250) Mountain Dwarves are allowed to serve.

Candidates for the Marshal Gran position are voted on by the other officers. The Marshal Gran is chosen from female, elderly military officers, and is one half of the Diarchy. The Maker Gran has a similar selection process, except she comes from the merchants and is chosen by the heads of the noble families. A collection of mining supervisors and master smiths must then approve the Maker Gran selection, though this is more a symbolic practice than a legal one, as it represents the industry of Grotenheim giving itself over to its new Maker Gran. The Maker Gran is the other half of the Diarchy. Each Gran has authority over her own domain, but the Grans make decisions together about all other affairs not granted to them specifically.

Grotenheim's main exports are gems, metals, and smithery, while its main imports are livestock, fruits, and grains, to supplement what is grown in the Hill Dwarf hinterlands. The Groten Dwarves make a strong liquor from malted barley and cave fungus; the fungus is a mainstay of Groten cuisine, and to those who are not used to consuming it, it can have hallucinogenic properties. Transportation inside and outside the cities is via foot or one of the tamed animals of the mountains. The mountain goat is the preferred mount for Dwarves, and Groten knights ride the mountain goats into battle, as horses are ill-suited to the mountainous terrain and much too big for Dwarves. However, for more civilian or industrial purposes, the Dewback(draaven) is utilized. Despite their intimidating appearance, these large herbivorous lizards are considered to be very docile, and upper-class dwarven families often keep one as a pet, although a family van might be a better purpose. Numerous attempts to weaponize these massive beasts have failed, with the draaven either being too docile to be utilized in battles, or simply dying from the training inflicted on them.

Grotenheim's military strategy is all about defense. The Groten military presence outside the mountains consists of a vast series of interconnected tunnels with countless slots for crossbowmen to fire through. All soldiers know how to collapse a tunnel section if need be; the tunnels are close enough to the surface that a collapse does not mean a death sentence for an enemy combatant, but it does cause some injury and inconvenience. Any invading army is whittled down by guerrilla crossbowmen from under the soldiers' very feet, plaguing them all through the no man's land and the Hill Dwarf villages. The gates to the Groten cities then welcome the enemy with crossbow fire and boiling oil, as well as boulders shaken loose from far above in the mountaintops. All this, while the enemy has barely even had the chance to attack in kind.

Most of the active troops in the Groten military are trained as crossbowmen, with minimal knowledge of melee combat. Exceptionally strong Dwarves become infantry, serving to protect the crossbow units. Able-bodied male nobles make up the cavalry as knights on mountain goats, though they are fairly few in number and easily outclassed by knights on horseback. This composition of many crossbowmen and very few infantry and cavalry has worked well for Grotenheim in the past, but it remains to be seen how it will do in the future.

The religious practices of Grotenheim are less organized than those of most other nations; there is no state church, as the majority religion is far too varied to be controlled by one governing body. All practitioners of Groten religion worship certain cave spirits as well as the spirits of their ancestors, which they believe to return to the rock and the earth upon death. Each

individual village or city neighborhood also has its own spirits, meaning that the practice of Groten spirituality can vary wildly from group to group. Groten Dwarves believe that anything that comes from the Earth has a spirit residing in it, and thus seek to honor those spirits by crafting them into beautiful works of smithing and design.

There are no 'churches' in Grotenheim, as worship is done from one's home or wherever a Dwarf desires. This allows for some degree of religious tolerance, as Dwarves who have been 'converted' to another religion likely just view this new God as another spirit in the vast Groten pantheon. Foreign missionaries may therefore find acceptance while proselytizing, though perhaps not in the exact way they want.

Trade: With Grotenhiem being located in the mountains, most of their food and not-mineral items must be imported. However, as a required sacrifice to ensure their