

ORDER OF DAWN SETTING GUIDE

1. INTRODUCTION + A SHORT HISTORY:

The purpose of this player's guide is to describe the Order of Dawn homebrew setting in detail, so that players and GMs alike can add to, modify, or use these guidelines to create their own adventures together. None of the details within this guide are permanent and are subject to change. Many of the changes to the various D&D races are based on personal preference and can easily be changed or retrofitted to your own campaigns.

A CONTINENT STAINED BY DARKNESS

The Order of Dawn setting takes place on the homebrewed continent of Auregal. This continent is home to many different nations and cultures, but years ago, a tragic event would reshape the destinies of those peoples and places forever.

Hundreds of years ago, a Great Evil arrived in Auregal, with the sole purpose of dominating all nations and races to its will. No one knows where this Great Evil came from, and only a small number have ever seen it, but this Being was incredibly powerful, even more powerful than the Gods.

The Great Evil, as the races of Auregal referred to it, was successful in its conquest of the world, and began to reshape the lands and cultures of Auregal to suit its twisted whims. For 300 years, the Great Evil ruled with an iron fist, its armies of darkness dominating the land and wiping out swathes of civilization from the continent completely.

200 years ago, however, a group of incredibly powerful adventurers rose up to destroy the Great Evil, rallying the most powerful races of Auregal behind them and seemingly destroying the source of its power, banishing it from this plane of existence entirely. These 5 legendary heroes are known as The Figures of Dawn, and they are known throughout Auregal as the heroes who saved the world.

Even after the Great Evil was banished from the lands of Auregal, the civilizations that remained could scarcely breathe a sigh of relief. Most nations and cultures were still in complete shambles, and only a few of the most resilient cities remained habitable. Although the Great Evil was gone, its influence remained, tainting the land with powerful residual curses and magics, and many of its most powerful minions still roamed the Wilds, waiting for foolish pioneers to attempt to reclaim what was once theirs.

To establish order in the various nations of Auregal as well as begin efforts to expand back to their former glory, the various nations sent representatives to Damascus, a central nation and the previous home to the Great Evil's throne of power. There, they met with the Figures of Dawn, and signed the Dawn Pact into existence.

The Dawn Pact was a treaty between all nations to establish a singular Guild, and grant it the authority to maintain order and peace throughout the various nations of Auregal. The Guild would have headquarters and representatives from every race, background, and creed, and would serve no singular government in its goals. The Guild would be built up and lead by the Figures of Dawn themselves, and its traditions and codes would be built in their image.

This was the forging of what is now known as The Order of Dawn.

200 years have passed since that day, and many of the nations of Auregal have rebuilt their major cities and homes into a semblance of what once existed before the Great Evil's rule. Now, they look towards the Untamed Wilds, the places beyond their own walls, and they dream of reclaiming the towns and villages that lay in the frontiers of their nations, but it is a dangerous task. The Order of Dawn is stretched more thinly than ever, and although the original Figures of Dawn have long since passed away or disappeared from Auregal, their legacy lives on.



2. THE ORDER OF DAWN

THE BASICS

The Order of Dawn is an organization founded in the wake of the fall of the Great Evil.. The Great Evil was defeated by a band of powerful adventurers, now known as the Figures of Dawn.

In the aftermath of The Fall, the various races and nations of Auregal decided that they should never let themselves be so vulnerable to attack and domination again, so they agreed to enter into a mutual pact, a pact that superseded government obligations and authority, in order to have a vigilant force of peacekeepers ready at a moments notice to destroy evil before it had a chance to rise up again.

Each nation runs their chapter of the Order separately, some of them drastically so (Aldhurst and Alasahir for example), but most chapters follow a similar structure: a team of 4-5 adventurers, each with a different specialty within the group, so that each Team is equipped with the tools they need to respond to a variety of threats.

RECRUITMENT

The Order of Dawn is a large organization, and because of that they tend to have a very inclusive method of recruitment.

Any fully fledged member of the Order of Dawn (including Players, if they so choose), can invoke the authority of the Order to recruit a potential member. That individual can be a criminal, a farmhand, a slave, or a noble's son, but if the Order chooses them, they will all equally have the choice to join the ranks of the organization.

Less experienced, new members to the Order undergo a lengthy and difficult training process, and not all who attempt it are chosen. Only a small percentage of initiates that undergo the multiple year training process emerge as fully fledged members in and of themselves, while those who fail are returned back to their homes (or cells) that they occupied before their recruitment.

This inclusive, but selective, process ensures that the Order of Dawn remains a powerful and skilled organization.

THE PATHS OF DAWN

Below are more detailed descriptions of the 5 specialties common to each Order of Dawn Team, commonly referred to as Paths: Champions, Breakers, Scholars, Cloaks, and Pioneers.

CHAMPIONS

"The door was locked and we could hear the man screaming inside. He was threatening his wife, his child. We knew he had his knife drawn. Grok was furious, and reared back to break the door down, but Aelius put a hand on his chest, calming him. He stepped up to the door, and called out gently to the man inside. They spoke for several minutes, and finally, the man opened the door and stepped out into the street.

Grok severed his head. It was rather messy."

-An excerpt taken from Stormfeather's report on Team 16's activities in the town of Dimswallow.

The Champion is often the diplomat of the party. They err on the side of caution when interacting with strangers, and will often seek to find compromise when possible. However, even the most optimistic Champion understands when they have reached the point where diplomacy is unwise. In these situations, they often turn to their Breaker, Cloak, Pioneer, or Scholar for the answers.

Officially, a Champion is selected to be the highest ranking officer of an Order of Dawn team, alongside the Breaker. Although it is not always the case, many Champions are natural born leaders, charismatic fighters who inspire their allies in the heat of battle.

The relationship between a Champion and a Breaker can be a balancing act. On the one hand, a good Champion understands that a Breaker is necessary in situations where expediency is a priority and there is no chance for diplomacy, but on the other, they need to be ready to step in and hold back their Breaker when they become too aggressive or hard headed.

A Champion has **+1 to Persuasion and general Charisma checks outside of combat**, and inside of combat, the Champion can use a bonus action to *inspire* an ally, giving them an extra d6 that they can use towards any attack roll or ability check, so long as they choose to apply it before the results are shared. This inspiration can only occur once between short/long rests, and a maximum of twice per day, refreshing at dawn.

Sunscales, a Dragonborn Paladin, was the original Champion, and is one of the Figures of Dawn.

BREAKERS

“Please,” the demon begged, its face a bruised mess of broken teeth and bones, ‘please just kill me. Send me back to the abyss. I won’t return....’

Sawtooth grinned, digging a runed dagger deeper into the horned beast’s skull, twisting the blade further into the mashed pulp that used to be its right eye.

‘Tell me where your master hides,’ the Breaker spat, ‘and I will end it.’

The demon whimpered, then uttered one last whisper, followed by a sharp cry as Sawtooth drove the blade deep into the base of the fiend’s skull, runes sizzling as they soaked in the demon’s blood.

Sawtooth wrenched his knife free, wiped it clean, and slid it back into its belt clip.

He turned back to his party, who were still staring warily at the twitching corpse on the ground.

‘Well,’ he grunted,, ‘he says the head honcho is at the local cemetery. Let’s go, time’s wasting’”

-Report filed verbatim from a scrying session on Sawtooth, notorious Breaker and Demon Hunter.

When a grieving widow is seeking comfort in the wake of her husband’s death, and has valuable information to share about the evil necromantic beast that killed him, the subtle touch of a Champion is required.

But when a stubborn cultist refuses to confess an important secret that would allow the party to stop a ritual that threatens to destroy the fabric of reality, a Breaker’s more ‘practical’ hand is usually right for the job.

Whether they specialize in magic, ranged weaponry, or their bare hands, a Breaker values power and combat prowess and seeks to push themselves to the pinnacle of fighting potential. A Breaker is taught through training to focus their wrath on the enemy, and to stop at nothing until an evil threat is eliminated. Ultimately, a Breaker believes that if another Dark One arises, Auregal will only survive if they are strong enough and skilled enough to smite him down.

It’s up to the rest of the party, particularly the Champion, to keep a Breaker in check, but even the wisest Scholar knows that sometimes an unchained Breaker is worth one thousand words.

A breaker has **+1 bonus to attack rolls**, and once per day, can reroll damage on an attack roll, keeping the second roll.

Honor, a Tiefling Warlock, was the original Breaker, and is one of the Figures of Dawn.

SCHOLARS

“Research Notes - Trial 87

The Swarming Fire Bats spell that I concocted based off of the glyphs we discovered in the Tombs of Anarrak has yet to perform to expectations.

I deployed the spell on an unruly bandit during our last deployment, and although the bats appeared to be of sufficient temperature (they managed to sear through the man's skin quite thoroughly), they failed once again to utilize their acid breath as per my original design. Instead, puzzlingly, they opted to swarm down the man's throat, bursting out of his chest like a living firework.

Ah yes, and we did save the child I suppose, the bats ignored her for the most part, although she may be wary around campfires from now on.”

-Log of Unknown Order of Dawn Scholar, found amongst the ashes of a burned down mansion.

Scholars, for all intents and purposes, are the brains of the Order, intrepid minds who spend much of their life in the pursuit of knowledge and the mastery of the unknown.

A Scholar is well versed in History, the Arcane, and a variety of other subjects, unique to each Scholar's interest. Within the party, a Scholar is often an invaluable encyclopedia of knowledge, able to discern the true nature of a beast or enemy by referencing an obscure text that they alone have read.

Scholars also serve another important role within the group: documenting the Party's adventures and sending those reports back to the Order of Dawn's headquarters for review.

A Scholar's judgement and integrity ultimately decides which version of a story is told. Will they include a passage that details how their Breaker relentlessly tortured a man for information, only to discover that the man wasn't involved at all? Will they discuss the way their Cloak stole a valuable artifact from the town mayor in order to gain access to an ancient temple?

A Scholar has a **+1 to all Knowledge rolls, and any ability roll where the Scholar can make a convincing argument that they have read a text that would assist them with the task (DM's discretion)**. For instance, a Scholar may be put in a position where they have to disarm a bomb, if they can make a convincing argument that they've read a bomb defusal manual, they can get a bonus to the ability check.

Aberford Delurion, a Human Wizard, was the original Scholar, and is one of the Figures of Dawn.

CLOAKS

“You just need to jiggle it a bit, see?”

The lock snapped apart with a satisfying click, and Arx looked back at me with a toothy grin. The effect was less than comforting, as he was missing several teeth.

I watched the Halfling deftly maneuver the lockpicks out of the door, after which they disappeared into his billowing cloak again. I often wondered how someone so small could fit so many tools in those pockets.

My musings were cut short as the door swung open silently on its hinges, which Arx had greased moments ago, revealing a guard, absentmindedly examining a painting on the far wall.

Arx slipped behind him quickly, his diminutive form flowing through the room like a ghost. He clasped a rag to the man's nose from behind, and after a short struggle, the man fell to floor, unconscious.

I raised an eyebrow. Arx flashed me another smile.

'No need to worry, chum. He'll wake up soon. Might not remember his name for a bit though.'

The Order of Dawn is a diverse group of adventurers, and many Order of Dawn teams will end up travelling to a host of different communities, countries, and interact with a number of different cultures. During their travels, they will inevitably encounter communities where secrets are locked behind closed doors that not even a Champion or Breaker can pass through, and in those situations, it is up to the Cloaks of the Order to take a more subtle approach to solving a problem.

Cloaks come in all shapes and sizes, from wry spellcasters to boisterous bards, but they all have one thing in common: they know how to find an unconventional solution to a conventional problem. Cloaks are crafty, secretive, and engage in all kinds of illicit activity - in the name of the Order, of course.

Some Cloaks are experts at deception, while others specialize in gathering information, assassination, theft, or a host of other talents unique to their Path. As the saying goes, a good Champion or Breaker can solve any problem, but a good Cloak can prevent problems from ever happening.

The Path of the Cloak is a controversial one, because of the high percentage of ex-criminals that are recruited and well suited for the role. Can the Order of Dawn be considered a just Order if they employ the use of dangerous and thieving criminals?

Cloaks gain a **+1 to Stealth, Deception, and Sleight of Hand rolls.**

Armaldo Softbeard, a Dwarven Ranger, was the original Cloak, and is one of the Figures of Dawn.

PIONEERS

“We were lost, if not for Sophom. It was his hand that guided us through the quagmire, and were it not for his keen eyes and ears, we would have had no hope of ever leaving that awful swamp behind. I fear we would have fallen prey to some other foul creature from the muck.

But Sophom was there, and Sophom knew the way.”

Guides, caretakers, and trailblazers, Pioneers live on the outskirts of society not because they have to, but because they *can*.

In Auregal, no place is as feared and dangerous as the Untamed Wilds. After the Great Evil's defeat, the Wilds serve as a sanctuary for his remaining minions and forces, who still prey upon those who travel between towns and cities. To a Pioneer, this is the greatest affront - against Nature, Civilization, Progress, or whatever cause that a particular Pioneer has taken up in their quest to tame the wilds.

The Pioneer plays a critical role on any Order of Dawn team, providing necessary guidance and expertise when travelling through unfamiliar territory. Pioneers are always able to find their way to a destination, often having abilities that make them far more suited to the task.

Many Pioneers find themselves lost in the large crowds of a city, and much more at home outside its walls. They relish the freedom of the Wilds, and it is this perspective that truly sets them apart from other members of an Order of Dawn team.

Of course, not all Pioneers are nature lovers, per se, and some see it as more of a constant challenge - the front lines of a war that never truly ended, and a grim battlefield where Order of Dawn members fight for a noble cause.

The 'outsider' mentality that many Pioneers possess make them a great source of wisdom for the team. A good Champion knows to always check the perspective of his Pioneer if he needs a fresh set of eyes on a problem, as a Pioneer's separation from civilization as a whole often leads them to unconventional answers to common problems.

Pioneers receive **+1 to Survival, Nature, and Anatomy skill checks.**

Aredhel, a powerful Elven Druid, was the original Pioneer, and is one of the Figures of Dawn.

3. RACES IN AUREGAL

This section of the Setting guide will provide additional insight into the various Races of Auregal and how they differ in perception from the traditional D&D setting.

The purpose of these changes to the reputation and history of the various races is to allow them to fit more seamlessly into the Auregal setting, and give player's ideas on how to incorporate their characters into the world.

The Races listed here include the most common races found in Auregal, but not all.

HUMANS

Humans, as expected, make up the vast majority of the population in Auregal, across most (not all), nations.

The shorter lifespans of humans cause them to be incredibly productive, if short sighted, when compared to the other races and cultures of Auregal, a trait which is often the source of great frustration and conflict to some of the longer-lived and developed races like Elves, Dwarves, and even Halflings.

Humans are an adaptable race, able to make their homes in the most uninviting locations, and so the cultures and appearances of humans vary wildly. Because of this, other races that are more stable and culturally predictable, like Dwarves, sometimes approach the seemingly mysterious and unpredictable humans warily.

Humans, despite their own racial diversity, can occasionally be bewilderingly intolerant towards other races, and even to other subsets of Humans. These pockets of Humans are often contained in insulated areas where they rarely encounter other races, but it can make travel through these areas difficult for parties of adventurers who stand out.

During the Great Evil's Reign, Humans were as likely to have sided with the Great Evil as fight against him. The sheer variety of Humans as a race meant there were many who resisted the Great Evil's reign, and many who were seduced by its power or subjugated to its will.

In the modern day, Humans remain the dominant race of Auregal, their sheer numbers allowing them to populate the greatest number of cities across the continent. Due to their short lifespans, Humans lost the most in terms of cultural and historical knowledge, and many of the Human Kingdoms and Nations that exist today are pale reflections of their former selves.

Humans are, as a whole, a lost race, attempting to rediscover the secrets of their past and rebuild the homes they once knew. For this reason, most human settlements are strong advocates of the Order of Dawn, which gives the Order much more authority across Auregal.

Aberford Delurion, one of the Figures of Dawn and an incredibly powerful Wizard and Scholar, is a Human.

DWARVES

The Dwarves of Auregal are a proud and ancient race, and the architects of a vast network of underground tunnels connecting cities all across the continent of Auregal.

Beings especially connected to hearth and flame, Dwarves make incredible artisans and blacksmiths, and their eye for coin and incredible network of cities shaped them into a powerful mercantile race who thrived on prosperous trade with all of the varied nations of Auregal before the Great Evil ascended.

When the Great Evil began its rise to power, the Dwarves were the first to sense signs of its awakening. From deep within the Dwarven tunnel highroads, creatures of darkness began to emerge, ransacking Dwarven trade caravans and travelers and forcing an increase in patrols. Soon, the highroads became so infested and dangerous that all travel and nonmagical communication between Dwarven cities was cut off completely, forcing Dwarves into isolation within their grand, mountainous fortresses.

The Dwarves tried to reach out to Humans and Dragonborn alike, but there were few among them who believed the Dwarven tales of monsters in the dark, and those that did believe were in no position to send their armies marching into those tunnels. And so it was that the Dwarves, stalwart and strong, were left to fend off the Great Evils forces alone.

And alone they did defend their cities, but they suffered many casualties. The Great Evils' monsters besieged the stone cities of Dwarfkind, and though many cities withstood the onslaught through sheer grit and determination, other cities fell and its people were forced to flee or be slaughtered. In those places, the Great Evils wrath surged out of the Underground, swarming to the surface and razing and pillaging the land above. Where the Cities held, however, the Dwarves held back the swell of evil at their doors, and prevented it from ever reaching the light of day. Even throughout the long rule of the Great Evil, and much to his frustration, those fortresses did not fall, and it was the Dwarves who sheltered thousands of refugees and assisted those who sought to overthrow the cruel and powerful overlord.

In the modern day, the other races of Auregal view the Dwarves as a race of honorable warriors and stalwart allies for their sacrifice. The cities that refused to fall prevented the death of thousands if not millions of surface dwelling creatures, and so the continent of Auregal owes the Dwarves a great debt.

Dwarves have maintained more of their culture than other races due to their ability to cling to their ancient cities and lore in certain areas of Auregal, and so they operate in society largely as they did in the

past. They are avid blacksmiths and traders, and due to the destruction of many of their cities in the Great Evils assault, there are many more surface dwelling Dwarves than there once were.

Despite still occupying a few of their grand underground metropolises, many Dwarves still wish to reclaim the lost cities of old, many of which are still infested with monsters from the deep. To that end, many Dwarves join the Order of Dawn in order to develop combat experience and delve deep into the forgotten mines and tunnels that they once called home.

Armaldo Softbeard, a Figure of Dawn and incredibly powerful Ranger and Cloak, is a Dwarf.

TIEFLINGS

Tieflings are a scarred and hated race in Auregal, due largely to their heritage. They make up a small percentage of the population, but many would argue not small enough.

When the Great Evil invaded Auregal, it brought with it a host of evil, demonic entities. Those entities terrorized the Human race, enslaving them, torturing them, and in some cases, forcing themselves upon them. Tieflings are the bastard product of such a union between a demon and man, and they carry the burden of their heritage everywhere they go in the form of their demonic horns and occasionally their strangely colored, hide-like skin.

In reality, Tieflings often carry as much hate towards the Great Evil and his kin as Humans and the other races do. While some Tieflings, brainwashed from a young age, became a part of the Great Evil's army in order to serve their Demonic heritage, many more Tieflings actually abdicated their responsibility to their hellish parents, instead siding with the Resistance and fighting to destroy the Great Evil's empire. These Tieflings generally threw off their names and took on names that heralded ideals that they wished to represent, like Faith, Compassion, and Truth.

Many years later, despite their contributions to the cause, Tieflings are still widely hated and persecuted by the other races of Auregal, which in many Tieflings sparks a bitterness for their situation. Why should they be punished for aspects of their lives that are out of their control, when Humans, whose ancestors also served the Great Evil, should be able to walk freely? Unfortunately, Tieflings represent such a small percentage of the population, that it is difficult for them to speak up or organize against their oppressors, so all that they can do is bear the indignity with as much grace as they can muster.

Honor, one of the Figures of Dawn, and an incredibly powerful Warlock and Breaker, is a Tiefling.

DRAGONBORN

Dragonborn have always existed in Auregal, despite what many Humans might believe. Before the Great Evil's rise to power, the Dragonborn lived in an advanced society named Draconia that centered itself in an Arid Wasteland, a biome that was inhospitable to less reptilian races. They shared these lands

primarily with the Lizardfolk, who could tolerate the unending heat, but also with the Dwarves, whose underground network connected beneath some of Draconia's mountains.

Within Draconia, the Dragonborn flourished, and they made great strides in art, the sciences, and magic. Most Dragonborn served a greater Patron Dragon, who they shared a special bond and connection with. This bond was powerful, and greatly influenced how each Dragonborn thought and acted. If their Dragon Patron felt passionately about medicine, a Dragonborn would dedicate themselves to the pursuit of medical research, or seek the education required to become a doctor. If their Patron enjoyed art, they would become a painter, and so on.

When the Great Evil rose to power, however, it caused a Great Schism within the kingdom of Draconia. Some Dragon Patrons sided with the Great Evil, believing that the Draconic races of Auregal were superior, and once they had helped the Great Evil conquer Auregal, it would be a simple act to seize control from him and rule, while other Patrons stood against the Great Evil and the hatred it represented. It became apparent that the Chromatic Dragons (Red, White, Blue, Green, and Black), lead by the much more populous Red Dragonborn, would turn against their own people, sparking a Draconic Civil War.

The resulting civil war between Dragons and Dragonborn alike all but destroyed Draconia. The incredibly powerful feats of magic summoned by Dragon and Dragonborn ripped apart the Wasteland itself, transforming it into what is now called The Shattered Wastes, a land where residual magics and power has twisted the environment into unrecognizable shapes. Cities were torn asunder and cast across multiple dimensions, while vast stretches of land were uprooted and now float overhead, some of them host to otherworldly creatures that have traveled to Auregal from other planes of existence to feed on the raw magical energy. Most creatures cannot even enter the Shattered Plains, for fear of the raw magical waves corrupting their very essence, inflicting them with a deadly Magical Poisoning.

Unfortunately for Auregal, the Chromatic Alliance arose as the victor of this great conflict, due largely to the sheer number of Red Dragonborn, who made up a majority of the Draconian population before the Civil War occurred. However, their victory came at a great price. With their Ancestral Home in ruins, and now weakened by their drawn out war against their kin, the Chromatic Dragons were forced to swear fealty to the Great Evil and serve as glorified foot soldiers in his larger campaign.

The surviving Dragons of other lineages, and their Dragonborn kinsman, fled the Shattered Wastes and went into hiding. They used what was left of their magical power to assist in the Resistance against the Great Evil, and fought against him until he was overthrown many years later.

In the modern day, Dragonborns, like Humans, have a mixed reputation among other races. However, unlike Humans, it is much easier to tell which Dragonborn have evil heritage, and which Dragonborn are descended from the Dragons that resisted the Great Evil's rule. This has caused a mixed perception of the Dragonborn race, with those who have Chromatic scales being shunned disdainfully from Human society, and those of Metallic or Gem-like colored being welcomed with open arms. To complicate

matters, Dragonborn are one of the most populous races of Auregal, behind humans only in terms of representation.

Sunscales, the leader and founder of the Figures of Dawn, and a powerful Paladin and Champion, is a Dragonborn.

ELVES

The Fey. They are the restless spirits of the world, attuned to magic and nature in equal measure. Some are whimsical, like pixies and fairies, possessing a mischievous playfulness, while others are enigmatic and cruel, like the Hag. At the center of this Strangeness are Elves, a humanoid race that is as much a part of the world of the Fey as they are a part of Auregal.

Elves, since times long forgotten, are isolationists at heart. They live out in their own settlements in the wild, rarely gracing the halls of men, dwarves, or other races. They are not only concerned with nature, but they are a part of it, never fully civilized, and always carrying a spark of the wild in their hearts.

Elves are an enigmatic and detached people, seemingly unfazed by the plots and schemes of the other races that surround their natural homes. It is only when those homes are encroached upon that they interfere - their lithe, inhumanly graceful forms appearing from the mists like spirits on the wind. Even in combat, they seem aloof, as if they are answering to a higher calling, acting in accordance with changes in the intricate web of magic that they alone have a connection to.

Undoubtedly, the Elves could feel the coming darkness of the Great Evil in Auregal. They would have felt its power, corrupting the core of magic in the world long before it appeared even to the Dwarves. But the Elves said nothing. Instead, most of their settlements slowly disappeared as the Great Evil rose to power. Their cities slipped away into the mists, hidden in pocket dimensions weaved by Elvish spellsong, protected in a womb of magic until the Great Evil fell. The Elvish settlements that stayed behind in Auregal were largely overrun, forcing the Elves there to flee to Human settlements. The Elvish refugees assimilated, somewhat, but in the same way you can never truly tame a cat, so too were Elves never truly a part of Human society, and when their kin returned after the Fall, they left their refuges, all at once, as if answering a summons only they could hear.

In the modern day, Elves hold a mixed reputation among the other races of Auregal. On the one hand, the Elves are a powerful people, capable of incredible feats of magic that can warp reality itself. On the other, they are completely unpredictable and seemingly uncaring to the plight of others, instead opting to retreat into hiding when the Great Evil rose to power. There are many who consider Elves cowards for this act, but many more view Elves as completely alien. Why should they have saved the world, when they were hardly a part of it anyway?

Aredhel, a Figure of Dawn and an incredibly powerful Druid and Pioneer, is an Elf.

HALFLINGS + GNOMES

Halflings and Gnomes were similar in some respects before the Great Evil arose. They often lived in settlements removed from other societies, quiet and quaint villages that sprawled lazily across the countryside.

While their cultures differ greatly, their races were affected very similarly by the Great Evil's rise to power: their homes, once idyllic and warm, became vicious slaveyards for the Great Evil, who used the hardy and cheerful hillfolk as a near inexhaustible source of free labor.

Forced into slavery, Halflings and Gnomes were valued by their owners for their deft hands, light feet, and in the case of Gnomes, their natural inclination towards magic and tinkering. Many of the slaves were torn away from their communities and forced into ghettos within Human cities under the control of the Great Evil, and generations of poverty afflicted these malnourished and unsanitary communities until the fall of the Great Evil at the hand of the Figures of Dawn.

The Halflings and Gnomes were freed from their slavery, but their racial dispositions were forever affected. Many Halflings and Gnomes now view Humankind differently, and see the potential that Humans possess for great evil and cruelty. This is only strengthened by the fact that many Halfling and Gnomes, after being freed, had nowhere to return to from the Human Cities they had been held captive in, and continue providing cheap labor to the Human rulers of those cities to this day, treated as little more than second-class citizens so many years later.

As for the other races of Auregal, most view the history of Gnomes and Halflings with pity. They understand the tragedy of the small folks' loss of innocence and their continued struggle within certain communities, and see within that struggle a continual injustice. But Humans, as they know, are surprisingly stubborn despite the rapid changes that they themselves experience over a lifetime, and it will take a long time to convince the Humans to treat their small folk neighbors and servants with the same respect afforded to their own people.

OTHER RACES

The other races of Auregal that are not included within this section may also have unique traits and lore due to the history of the continent, at DM's discretion, while other races have a more traditional D&D lore. If you have any questions, feel free to ask!

4. RULE CHANGES

In the Order of Dawn setting, there are a few changes to the traditional D&D ruleset that alter how certain aspects of the game are played. Those changes are listed here.

DARKVISION

In traditional D&D, many different races have darkvision by default. In the Order of Dawn setting, Darkvision is much more limited and not as widely available.

The following races **do** have darkvision: Any Underdark Playable Race, Dwarves, Tieflings, and Tabaxi. All other races **do not** have darkvision, even if it is listed as a Racial Feature.

Other races may have darkvision, at DM's discretion.

ANATOMY SKILL

The Medicine Skill is an oft underused skill in traditional D&D outside of its use to stabilize allies or diagnose a disease occasionally, making it a less than ideal choice to gain proficiency in.

To make the skill more desirable and useful, Medicine in the Order of Dawn setting has additional purposes.

For the purposes of the game, the "Medicine" skill is now referred to as the "Anatomy" skill.

Characters can use a bonus action in combat to make an "Anatomy" check against an enemy in order to determine potential weaknesses that the enemy has. Even if they do not succeed in revealing any vulnerabilities (i.e. if the creature has none), the character will still gain advantage on the next attack (or spell attack) against the target.

Additionally, the Anatomy skill has uses outside of combat. Whereas in traditional D&D, examining a corpse for details might require an Investigation check, in the Order of Dawn setting, those details would be revealed by making an Anatomy check on the body. The Anatomy check can reveal details like the time of death, cause of death, and other important details with a good enough roll.

ENEMY AGGRESSION AND PLAYER DEATH

Player death and enemy aggression are intimately linked in the regular version of DND 5e.

When a player character is suddenly downed in combat by an enemy creature, it can be difficult for both the DM and the player to follow through on what may be the death of a player character.

For example, if a goblin suddenly crits a level 4 Paladin, downing him at that turn, should the goblin continue to attack the easy, unconscious target? If they do, that means an instant failed death saving throw. If they have allies in a multiple-goblin encounter - those allies might also choose to attack the disabled hero. That could mean that the player character dies after being downed before they can ever roll a single death saving throw.

On the other hand, it can be difficult to maintain player immersion in a world or setting when enemies seemingly change the target of their aggression for no discernible reason when a player's character is low on health, or incapacitated. There are plenty of monsters in the DND universe that are little more than mindless beasts, and they wouldn't just leave weak, immobile prey alone to go aggressive towards another target nearby.

To address both of these problems, the Order of Dawn Setting seeks to implement a consistent set of expectations between players and the DM when it comes to enemy aggression, and also attempts to add some slight changes to the player death mechanics laid out in the PHB to make dying a more interactive experience for players.

A. Enemy Aggression

Enemies in the OOD setting, at DM's discretion, will generally adhere to the following expectations in combat, when it comes to aggression (particularly in the case of a downed target). When it comes to target **selection**, it is assumed that enemies will choose their targets based on a variety of factors unique to that creature.

Beast / Mindless Creatures / Cruel Creatures

These types of enemy creatures operate either through instinct, a lack of reasoning, or through sheer cruelty. These types of creatures include wolves, zombies, extra-dimensional predators, demons, orcs, and more. A creature included in this general category will almost always continue attacking the same target after they are downed, because their target is easy prey.

However, in the case of a mindless creature or beast, they may be distracted by other actions (being attacked by another player, being targeted by a spell, etc).

Purely cruel enemies (vampires, demons, etc) are much harder to deter from a target, and may require more extreme methods to handle (killing them outright, forcing them away from their target, etc).

Intelligent / Honorable Creatures

Creatures within this category possess an ability to be thoughtful and use reason to primarily guide their actions. This category of enemies might include soldiers, guards, certain dragons, fiends, fey, and more.

For these creatures, they either feel honorbound to fight fairly, or otherwise find it too cruel to execute an incapacitated foe, and so once a player character has been downed, they will likely find another worthy foe nearby.

Neutral / Strategic / Lawless Creatures

Creatures within this category are neither good nor evil by default, neither kind nor cruel by nature, and may feel less beholden to traditional rules of combat.

This category might include a barbarian horde, a band of outlaws, the fey, druids, and more.

In the case of these creatures, their unpredictable nature makes it difficult to interpret how they value the lives of their enemies. Some Bandits might hold themselves to a personal code, for example, while others might believe that leaving any witnesses to a crime is worse than a death sentence.

These types of enemies can be particularly dangerous to player parties, because they never know quite what to expect.

B. Death and Dying

To create a better, more tension fueled experience for DM and player alike, the following rules seek to improve the general rules for death and dying as defined in the PHB.

Cling To Life Save

In addition to the standard death saving throw, when players are downed and are attacked successfully by an enemy, they will be required to roll a **Cling To Life** saving throw.

This saving throw is a **DC 15** flat d20 roll. If the player is successful, they **do not** lose a death saving throw from the attack that hits them, and instead, they gain **negative health** equal to the damage that they would have incurred from the attack.

If they **fail the save**, they still gain negative health equal to the attack damage, but they also automatically fail one of their death saving throws.

In either case, the player will make a normal death saving throw on their turn if they are still in the dying state.

Negative Health

As described above, players will take **negative health** damage when they are attacked while downed (at 0 HP).

Players can accumulate up to **half their total max hp** in negative health damage. If they reach that threshold, and take additional damage, they will instantly die.

Negative health damage accumulates as long as the player character is downed, but **all Negative health damage is reset to 0** once the character is healed.