

The Creation of the Life Stone

In order to stop the undead something was needed to hold back their seemingly unstoppable advance. The most powerful mages and priests of the day devised a ritual that could, if done correctly, create a safe-haven against the undead. After multiple defeats the armies of the living races needed somewhere to rest as they were fighting a losing battle and they never seemed to get the time to recuperate. Therefore the mages and priests set about preparing the ritual. In order to perform it they had to gather a large number of items, the most important being the large stone circle used to help contain the Life Stones power and of course the large stone obelisk that would become the Life Stone. This took several weeks to arrange as the stone had to be cut from the earth by the dwarves and taken to the site that had been chosen as a suitable spot.

The site was chosen because nature had made it a very defensible area. On three sides there were virtually impassable mountain ranges. In fact the mountains were known to the locals as the Passless Peaks because no-one knew of any way through. The fourth side was open to the world, however a second dwarven contingent, along with helpers from every race imaginable, set about building a great wall across the entrance of the area. The wall would never be finished before the undead arrived but it helped everyone to know that they were doing something positive. In fact the half-finished wall proved to be the saviour of the races.

When everything was ready the surviving armies of the living races fell back to a position close to the area that was to be protected by the Life Stone. The idea was that they would hold off the undead for as long as possible and would fall back into the protected area as soon as the ritual was complete. The army engaged the undead for the final time as the ritual was beginning. The ritual lasted several hours and vast quantities of magic were pulled in from the elemental planes and supplied by the gods. Everything seemed to be going well until the ritual came in to its final stages. The workers on the wall suddenly noticed a large force coming toward them. Initially they believed that the armies had been forced to retreat earlier than expected but it slowly became clear that it was the undead hoard that was approaching and NOT the remains of the living army. This could mean only one thing; the army of living races had been utterly destroyed. The workers scattered in panic but it was the dwarves who brought calm. Everyone knows that a dwarf loves a fight and those working on the wall were only too keen to take up their tools and try to fight off the undead. Soon the other races that had been helping got the idea. The workers consisted mostly of women, children and those too injured to fight. However they took up hammers and axes along with anything else they could find and prepared to sell their lives dearly. Thanks to the semi-complete fortifications and the knowledge that they had to hold the undead off long enough for the ritual to be completed, those workers held the wall just long enough for protection to come into effect. They watched as the undead, caught in the initial effects of the Life Stones magic, burned to ashes before their eyes. Then they howled with joy as they watched the remains of the hoard held off just outside the wall completely unable to get at the defenders.

Undead mages and priests tried to throw their magics at the defenders atop their half finished wall but the spells fizzled away to nothing. A few arrows and ranged weapons were fired at the defenders but they fell

short as the range was too long. The undead army stood outside the wall for three whole months trying everything they could think of to gain access and then they moved off. There was still an entire world to conquer, they could always return to take care of this little piece later.

The ritual had done everything that it was supposed to and more. Unfortunately its creation took the lives of most of the mages and priests who had participated in the ritual. With them went a great deal of the lore that would be needed to defeat the undead. The Life Stone protected an area of approximately 10000 square miles. It would not allow either undead, or it seemed, magic cast by undead, to enter its area of effect.

It also seemed to negate the second ritual and anyone who died whilst under its protection no longer needed last rites.