

DOLURRH'S DAWN

BY KEITH BAKER

illustration by Ralph Horsley

A FIGURE OF DARK LEGEND, Mordain the Fleshweaver was driven from the Twelve after his attempts to create new life went horribly awry, and since then he has lingered in the shadows of Droaam. “The Forest of Flesh” describes some of the terrors that exist in Mordain’s domain. But the woods hold wonders as well as horrors. The strangest of these is the village of Dolurrh’s Dawn, a bizarre point of light deep within the Kingdom of Monsters.

Dolurrh’s Dawn is a village of 104 people. The origin of the village is a mystery even to those who live there. On Dravago 11th, 996 YK, these people awoke in their beds in the village. Each one of them remembered his or her name and the name of the village . . . and nothing else. Despite this amnesia, each villager found that he or she could draw upon talents lying beyond conscious memory—skills he or she couldn’t remember learning. This last year has been a struggle for survival in a very dangerous land. Working together, the people of Dolurrh’s Dawn have crafted weapons, learned to hunt the vicious beasts of the forest, and slowly created a life in this savage land.

A village of amnesiacs appearing from nowhere is strange enough, but the inhabitants of Dolurrh’s Dawn haven’t even realized the true extent of the mystery surrounding their little community. The people of the village know their own names, but they remember nothing about the past . . . and as such,



when they first awoke, they didn’t recognize any of the other inhabitants of the village. But the first travelers who discover this village are in for a shock. A dwarf named Kordran serves as the town blacksmith. His face might seem familiar to anyone who has been to the Mror Holds, and it shouldn’t take long to realize why: They’ve seen it carved into the side of the Ironroot Mountains, in a monument over a mile in height. He is Lord Kordran Mror, the greatest king to ever rule the realm beneath the mountains. The mud-spattered huntress is Lhazaar, the explorer who led humanity to the shores of Khorvaire. Galifar I sits at a table with Karrn the Conqueror and Jarot, the last ruler of the kingdom Galifar founded. This is a village filled with heroes and legends—yet none of them

remember their heroic deeds, nor do they possess the full skills spoken of in the stories. So what are they? Has Mordain found a way to pull these ancient spirits back from the afterlife, in violation of the laws of Dolurrh? Or are these people simulacrum created by the Fleshweaver—clones with vestiges of the heroes’ memories, but no true trace of their souls? Either way, what does Mordain have to gain from this experiment, and why has he chosen the subjects that he has?

THE PEOPLE OF DOLURRH'S DAWN

At a glance, the inhabitants of Dolurrh’s Dawn can fit into any village in the Five Nations. While mostly human, the village has a scattering of other races, including a handful of dwarves, elves, gnomes, and

even orcs, spread among the community. Most are dressed in homespun clothing, and the calluses and dirt on their skin tell the tale of their struggle to survive. They are all roughly the same age, once racial deviation is taken into account; the humans are in their mid- to late-twenties, with the other races at an age that would bring them to a similar level of maturity. But there are no village elders and no children—and so far, only one pregnancy (that of Aundair Wynarn). The people know absolutely nothing about the outside world. Those few who have set out in search of a greater civilization have never returned; presumably they fell prey to the many dangers of the Forest of Flesh or the equally hostile environs of Droaam. As a result, a number of theories are circulating around the village. Some believe that this is a form of afterlife. Those who have memories of arcane lore believe they have been transported to another plane of existence—either the madness of Xoriat or a sort of Quori dreamscape. In any case, all the villagers are surprised and thrilled to encounter travelers from the outside world. Some might treat strangers with suspicion, fearing that this is a trick of the forest, but the majority begs for tales of the world beyond the woods and anything that can fill the gaps in their memories.

Most of what the villagers know comes to them as instinct. Aside from their names, most of them have only vague memories of their former lives, glimpses seen in half-remembered dreams. Malleon is a brutal soldier, but he doesn't remember how he learned to use the greataxe; likewise, he remembers nothing about Lhazaar, but he feels a basic loyalty toward her. The dwarves in the village have rallied around Kordran Mror. The Wynarns know from their family name and broad physical resemblance that they must be related, but they don't know exactly how; lacking any evidence to the contrary, they've assumed that they are all siblings or cousins. If the PCs reveal the

true relations between these people—including the fact that Karrn is a distant ancestor of Galifar—it could improve relations, or it could make them much worse.

Here are a few of the more remarkable inhabitants of the village.

Galifar Wynarn (male human warlord). This is Galifar I, the man who united the Five Nations and created a kingdom that lasted for a thousand years. Even in this village of generals and kings, his charisma and ingenuity are truly remarkable. Galifar brought order after the villagers first awoke, and he coordinated the construction of the stockade wall. He has become the *de facto* leader of Dolurrah's Dawn, but many envy his influence, especially Karrn, Dorius, and Malleon.

Ashalyn Vol (female elf cleric). An Aereni necromancer born five thousand years ago, Ashalyn laid many of the cornerstones of the faith that has evolved into the modern Blood of Vol. While a cleric, she was once also a wizard who possessed knowledge of a vast array of rituals, especially those involving necromantic magic. Either she doesn't remember her past . . . or she's choosing to hide it from her companions.

Aundair Wynarn (good female human wizard). A daughter of Galifar Wynarn, Aundair was one of the greatest wizards in Galifar's army. Kind and gentle by nature, she is working with Ashalyn and Dorius to try to reconstruct their memories of magical rituals. She and Cael Vadallia fell in love, and Aundair is six months pregnant with Cael's child . . . which could be the first half-elf in Dolurrah's Dawn.

Cael Vadallia (good male elf ranger). A legendary Tairnadal archer from the Age of Giants, and a distant ancestor of the current high king of Valenar, Cael Vadallia is also a skilled hunter. He has used his talents as a bowyer and fletcher to craft weapons for the

village. A noble soul, he instinctively despises cruelty and tyranny and dislikes Karrn and Malleon.

Dorius Alyre Korran (evil male gnome wizard). The founder of the Library of Korranberg and a brilliant scholar, Dorius plays the part of a kindly arcane sage. However, behind this mask he is a greedy schemer who seeks personal power. He won't challenge Galifar openly, but he is quietly using Karrn and Malleon to undermine Galifar's influence.

Kaius Wynarn I (male human warlord). Kaius is the son of Jarot Wynarn, and he is the leader who rebelled against Mishann of Cyre and instituted the harsh Code of Kaius in Karrnath. Some PCs might know that Kaius I exists as a vampire in Khorvaire; this reborn Kaius is drawn from the point the current Kaius "died," and he is neither as dark nor as ruthless as his later self. He is a proud man who cares deeply about the safety of the people of the village, and he has become the "innkeeper" of the Sunrise tavern, where he tends to the daily needs of the villagers. Currently he is a strong supporter of Galifar, but he is growing closer to Ashalyn Vol. If Ashalyn recreates the rituals of the Blood of Vol, perhaps Kaius will become a vampire once more!

Karrn (evil male human warlord). The founder of Karrnath, Karrn the Conqueror is a brilliant tactical warlord. His flaws are his cruelty and his ego, and these have kept the other villagers from turning to him for leadership. He is deeply jealous of Galifar, but as a tactician he realizes that the village can't afford to lose such a skilled man. Nonetheless, he often challenges Galifar's decisions, and this tension will only grow over time.

Kordran Mror (lawful good male dwarf). Kordran is the greatest king of the dwarven nation that once lay below the Ironroot Mountains—a nation destroyed long ago by the daelkyr. Kordran is a calm, wise person and has chosen to support Galifar. He is a skilled smith and has created both weapons and tools

for the community; now they are in desperate need of ore.

Jarot Wynarn (male human fighter). The last king of the united Galifar, Jarot is the weakest of the Wynarns in all senses of the word. His greatest flaw is his paranoia, and he will be the first to accuse PCs of treachery or deception. He is a skilled siege engineer and helps to maintain the village walls.

Jhazalaen Elorrenthi (female elf ranger). An ancestor of the elves who would eventually form House Phiarlan, Jhazalaen is a battle dancer who supposedly blinded a king of the giants with her graceful motions and flashing blades. In addition to hunting the beasts of the forest, Jhazalaen entertains the villagers with her dazzling performances.

Lhazaar (evil female human rogue). Lhazaar is the explorer and pirate queen who led the first great wave of humanity to Khorvaire. The circumstances of her death remain a mystery, since her flagship disappeared in a great storm. Lhazaar is inquisitive and charismatic, with some of the talents of a warlord supporting her deadly skill with her blades. She is intrigued by Galifar and so far she has chosen not to oppose him; however, this could easily change. She is one of the most active explorers in the villager and knows much about the Forest of Flesh.

Malleon Kas (evil male human fighter). During Lhazaar's colonization of Khorvaire, Malleon earned the sobriquet "the Reaver" due to his brutal slaughter of the native goblinoids. He is a giant of a man, possessing immense strength and a fearsome glare. Though he lacks the memories of his past, he is devoted to Lhazaar; however, she is more interested in Galifar. Malleon would love to see Galifar slain and Lhazaar in his place. Malleon is a vicious bigot and despises all nonhumans.

Rasha'Torrn (good female orc). The Gatekeeper druids brought an end to the incursion of Xoriat into Eberron, and Rasha'Torrn brought the druids

together for that final ritual. She has yet to regain access to her mystical powers, and many of the villagers distrust her because of her race. Nonetheless, she is wise and a skilled healer, with great knowledge of the natural world.

Sasselassum (male halfling rogue). Born in the Talenta Plains thousands of years ago, Sasselassum is a trickster whose deeds are the stuff of hundreds of Talentan folktales. Though clever and experienced in the ways of the natural world, Sasselassum is impulsive; his curiosity and impetuous nature often get him into trouble.

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Talas Thorn (male human). Talas is a priest of the Sovereign Host, born in Sharn in the year 687 YK. He is friendly enough and a talented healer, but otherwise unremarkable—a man who left no mark on history. However, many remarkable events occurred during his lifetime . . . could it be that his role in them was never discovered? Was he one of the worst serial killers in Sharn's history? Was he a secret servant of the Traveler, or an agent of the Lords of Dust? Or is he just the kind priest he appears to be?

These are just a few possibilities. Many other historical figures could be interesting. Aeren, the prophet who led the elves away from Xen'drik. Aaren d'Cannith, creator of the warforged. Tira Miron, the founder of the modern Church of the Silver Flame. Halas Tarkanan, greatest leader of the aberrant forces in the War of the Mark. Erandis d'Vol, last scion of the Mark of Death. A lycanthrope from the time of the Silver Purge. Beyond this, many other people whose role in history is unknown, like Talas Thorn,

could be here. Another option is to have a few people whose only real significance appears to be their connection to the player characters. The wife of the PC fighter, who was slain during the Last War. The party's favorite innkeeper, who was killed during a bar brawl with the enemies of the PCs. Why would Mordain choose to resurrect a simple innkeeper? Is this entire experiment being conducted for the benefit of the PCs? Or is there an important secret about the innkeeper (he's an Inspired plant; an agent of the Chamber; last member of an exotic bloodline) the PCs never discovered?

THE SHAPE OF THE VILLAGE

Dolurrh's Dawn is a village under siege. The surrounding forest is filled with monsters and threats that stagger the imagination. Raging foulspawn, hungry gricks, and lurking skinweavers are just a few of the horrors the villagers have to deal with on a regular basis. When the PCs approach Dolurrh's Dawn, the first thing that they see is the high stockade wall surrounding it. Sharpened tree-trunks are lashed together, and deep gashes in the wood suggest the work of claws and acid. A half-dozen archers patrol the walls at all hours, ready to raise the alarm at the slightest sign of trouble. There are no gates in the wall. Ropes are used by those agile enough to climb, while a makeshift stretcher-and-pulley system allows larger objects to be brought up and over the stockade.

Inside, Dolurrh's Dawn is a study in contrasts. A number of ramshackle buildings constructed using the same limited resources as the wall are within the

village. But the heart of the village has a few structures of quarried stone, with windows of *hardened* glass and all the amenities one would expect to find in Fairhaven or Wroat. These are the buildings the villagers found themselves in when they first awoke. These include a well of magically purified water and a public latrine in the town square; a simple forge contained in the building where Kordran Mror works; and a few simple, solid cottages. The final structure is

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a large tavern, bearing a trade sign marked with the symbol of a sun rising over a black field. The locals call this Sunrise, and it is both the town hall and canteen for Dolurrah's Dawn. The Wynarns have laid claim to the living quarters in Sunrise, and Kaius has taken over the maintenance of the building. In general, however, the villagers are living a hard frontier life; whatever they need—including ore for the forge—must be found in the wilds. Many of the villagers would consider something as simple as paper and ink to be a treasure; the mages of the village have been using a variety of makeshift materials to produce a book of rituals.

The people of Dolurrah's Dawn have little to offer outsiders. However, the hunters and gatherers have become adept at finding food in the deadly forest. The crafters of the village are nonetheless masters of their respective trades, and this might be an opportunity for PCs: Kordran Mror might have limited resources, but he's still known as one of the greatest smiths in the history of Khorvaire, and an axe forged by his hands could have considerable power.

USING DOLURRAH'S DAWN

Dolurrah's Dawn can serve many different roles. To begin with, it is an unexpected sanctuary in a dangerous place. It's not easy to find a safe haven in the Forest of Flesh, and adventurers who have used their last healing surges in a battle with skinweavers might be thrilled when they see the high walls and friendly lights of this village. The DM needs to decide the

degree to which the inhabitants of the village have recovered their old skills (something which can vary by individual). If the villagers are 1st-level characters, then they might need the party's help to survive the deadly threats posed by the forest. On the other hand, if the people of the village have regained their legendary skills, they might be powerful allies in a struggle against an epic threat—or a source of unexpected treasure. While the weapon might not be pretty, an axe forged by Kordran Mror or bow carved by Cael Vadal-lia could possess tremendous magical might.

Another question is whether the villagers want to leave Dolurrah's Dawn. Getting a hundred people across Droaam would be a challenge in its own right, but the greater issue is the impact these people would have on the world. If it can be proven that Galifar truly is who he says he is and not a doppelganger or demon, how would his return affect the Five Nations? What would happen between the living Kaius and the vampire? Might Karrn the Conqueror seize Karrnath away from Kaius and start the war anew? Upon learning about the fragile state of the world,

Galifar might insist that all the villagers remain in Dolurrah's Dawn, refusing to let their return bring chaos to a fragile world.

In addition to serving as a backdrop for adventure, Dolurrah's Dawn could also serve as an origin for a character. There's no reason the villagers have to be NPCs. If he wanted, a player could choose to play the reborn Galifar, Karrn the Conqueror, or any other figure from history. Reborn in Dolurrah's Dawn, he has made his way to the Five Nations—what happens next? Does this reborn champion have an epic destiny to fulfill, or is he Mordain's idea of a cosmic joke?

If its people resemble the heroes of the past but have few of their powers or skills, Dolurrah's Dawn can be used as a strange village in a surprising location. If the villagers possess some of their old talents, it can be a source of powerful allies or deadly enemies. Either way, Dolurrah's Dawn is a remarkable place—and a disturbing sign of the power of Mordain the Fleshweaver.

NEW EPIC DESTINY: REBORN CHAMPION

Dolurrah could not hold your spirit, and you have returned to this world in its hour of need.

Prerequisite: 21st level

Some say that the souls of the greatest heroes are tied to the Prophecy, and that they cannot truly rest until their destiny is fulfilled. You are the vessel for such a spirit—a champion of the past reborn in an age that needs you. It's possible that you are truly the hero returned and that your body was somehow reconstituted or preserved. Dolurrah's Dawn is one example of how this could happen, but you could just as easily be a hero spirited away to Thelanis or bound in mystic

slumber by Sora Teraza, whose true memory has only just returned. Alternatively, you could be a modern vessel for an ancient spirit. The Valenar elves have long claimed that a great hero could become an avatar for an even greater champion of the past; whether you are an elf channeling one of the warriors of Xen'drik or a paladin drawing on the soul of Tira Miron, you are living proof of this theory.

As a reborn champion, your greatest strength is the skill that you possess. You might not have the raw might of a Demigod or the impossible luck of a Deadly Trickster, but your skills and heroism are the stuff of legend. You're not just a cutpurse, you're the greatest pickpocket history has ever known, and Thievery comes as easily to you as breathing. You might not possess the sheer spellpower of the Archmage, but you might know more about Arcana than anyone alive.

Every reborn champion has a different destiny—a quest tied to your past. This is something you need to determine with the DM, but be sure to clearly tie it to known legends. For example, if you are the reborn champion of Tira Miron (founder of the modern church of the Silver Flame), you might need to defeat a great uprising of the demon Overlords. If you are the reborn champion of Galifar I, it might be your task to reunite the Five Nations under the banner of Galifar; if you are the reborn champion of Karrn the Conqueror, you might also want to unite the nations, but under the banner of Karrnath. A Valenar champion might seek vengeance against the dragons who destroyed all the nations of Xen'drik. A kalashtar reborn champion might be the key to transforming Dal Quor from a realm of nightmares to a place of light. Sometimes, you might not even know why you've returned. You're the greatest pickpocket in the history of Galifar, and your skills are the stuff of legends, but you never planned on saving the world. But the Prophecy has a plan for you—and it will take your

nimble fingers to pluck the *Ring of Deepest Shadows* from the fingers of Erandis d'Vol when she seeks to claim the *Throne of Endless Night*. All that is certain is that this is a task that only you can accomplish—one so important that your spirit could not be allowed to pass on until it was done.

Depending on whether you are truly the hero reborn or a spirit possessing a new body, the other people of the age might recognize your true nature. Being known as a reborn champion can be a blessing and a curse. Some people are quick to offer their allegiance, either out of respect for your ancient deeds or because they hope to be part of your new legend. But others might not be so helpful. Queen Aurala won't be happy to hear about the return of Kaius the Conqueror, and Cardinal Krozen might see a reborn Tira Miron as a threat to his own ambitions. Some might call you a fraud. Beyond this, the many stories about you ensure that your enemies know about your skills and talents; a successful DC 20 History check can provide a character with a clear rundown of your abilities.

ONCE AND FUTURE IMMORTALITY

Your return is proof that death cannot hold you. It's possible that you've returned many times in the past; you might be looking forward to true death when you've completed your destiny. Or perhaps the Prophecy has further need of you. If this is the case, odds are good that you vanish into the shadows of time and the planes. No one knows exactly where you've gone—but you'll return again when you are least expected and needed the most.

REBORN CHAMPION FEATURES

All reborn champions have the following features.

Deeds of Song and Story (21st level): Your talents have inspired legends. Three times per day, as a free action, you can forgo rolling for success on a skill

check, and instead treat the check as if you rolled a 20. You must use this ability before attempting the check.

Legends Never Die (24th level): When you make a death saving throw, use the following results for the saving throw instead of the ones presented on page 195 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Lower than 8: You slip one step closer to death. If you get this result four times before you take a rest, you die.

8-17: No change.

18 or higher: Spend a healing surge. When you do so, you are considered to have 0 hit points, and then your healing surge restores hit points as normal. You are no longer dying, and you are conscious but still prone. If you roll 18 or higher but have no healing surges left, your condition doesn't change.

Legendary Action (30th level): When you score a critical hit on your turn, you take an extra standard action as a free action.

Stance of Legend Reborn Champion Utility 26

The forces of destiny provide you with an uncanny awareness of your surroundings, which affects how you hold yourself and how you react to your environment and the actions of others.

Daily ♦ **Stance**

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws. You can end this stance at any time during your turn as a free action. When you end the stance, you may either end all conditions affecting you or spend a healing surge and regain your healing surge value in hit points. 🌀

About the Author

Keith Baker has been an avid fan of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of Eberron to the Wizards of the Coast Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the *EBERRON Campaign Setting* and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.