

History of the Dwarfs

Dwarvengate

King Nor't Shansor looked out from the shadows of the cave's mouth, down to the slopes below where a swarm of dread beasts spread over the rocky terrain like some dark plague of pestilence. Leaping, scrabbling, running, and charging forth were Goblins and Kobolds of all sorts, Trolls bound in the raiment of slavery, and other creatures even the long-lived king could not put a name to. Here and there, compact ranks of his Dwarven warriors stood to meet the black tide, stoically trying to slow the onslaught. The thought of trying to stop it all together had long been dismissed by the pragmatic people.

A quiet voice at his side broke the square-shouldered king from his unpleasant reverie. "The Thanes Ogresplitter and Fardelver have brought their clans within, my King. That leaves only the Clans of Erinkhor unaccounted for, and we've had no word from that stronghold in three months. Not since the loss of Hammerfall Rift..."

Nor't Shansor turned to his advisor, hearing the thought that was left unspoken. "Aye, Tharin. I know what must be done," he began in a voice heavy with weary resignation. "But the knowin' doesn't make the doin' any easier, my old friend."

The two greybeards looked at each other for a quiet moment. The screams of the dying, the shouts of the Dwarven leaders, and the guttural cries of the Goblins and their minions all faded into muted background noise. Until Tharin spoke, "It's the only way, my King. Twilia showed us the way long ago, before her corruption at the hands of sorcery. Krall has worked two years on this."

Nor't Shansor the Stonekeeper nodded slowly then turned and bellowed a command. Krall begins chanting some great spell of the earth with the aid of mages and clerics standing beside him. He holds his hand out to the King who passes him several objects including his royal signet and the hammer that has hung by his side for years. As his Dwarves moved into motion, a tremendous rumbling began to shake the earth, growing in magnitude until it drowned out the chanting priests and mages, until it threatened to deafen the Dwarves still inside the cavern.

The Dwarven king stood watching the field below the cavern entrance while the very mountain began to close upon itself. His grey eyes met those of a young Dwarf below and he winced at the horror he read on that ruddy face as the red-haired warrior realized what was happening.

As the Dwarfgate sealed in those taking refuge in the mountain's heart- and shut out both friend and foe on the slopes below- a silent tear rolled into Nor't Shansor's salt and pepper beard. "It's the only way," he whispered, both to the Dwarf being swallowed by the Horde and to himself. "It's the only way."

When the great gate of Dwarven magic and meticulously worked stone and mithril finally came to

close, the silence that followed the tremendous roar was even more powerful. Outside the gate knelt a handful of battleragers, their task to take parts of the key to the gate away to safety, including the royal signet and hammer.

The burdening silence inside was broken a few minutes later by the sound of Dwarven boots marching resolutely to their stronghold- to Narnek, heart of the mountains of crystal. Marching past the body of King Nor't, his ultimate sacrifice to his people.

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