

The Order of the Serpent

History

The Order of the Serpent was officially founded two decades after the Elf-Dwarf War. It started as the simple belief of a single Great Horned Dragon named Kelstaag. Kelstaag was only a young adult during the Elf-Dwarf War, but the atrocities she saw began to sicken even her. And she had been alive for a well over a millennium already. After the Elf-Dwarf War ended with the destruction of the Golden City of Baalgor, Kelstaag became disgusted with both races. She began to destroy any of them wherever they were encountered.

Fortunately, she soon realized that she was starting a journey down the same dark path the elves and the dwarves took and changed her methodology. She began to seek out any evidence of the Elf-Dwarf War, believing that if she destroyed the history and the ancient tomes, the future generations of elves, dwarves, and, now, humans, would not have the knowledge to allow history repeat itself.

During the Millennium of Purification, Kelstaag began to work with the groups of elves and dwarves who fanatically stamped out as much of the old magic as they could. She also helped to stamp out any tomes, scrolls or other written accounts of the Elf-Dwarf War and those who possessed them were murdered, mostly out of fear that they would pass this knowledge on to others who would use it for evil purposes.

Due to the purification, as it eventually became known to Kelstaag and her followers, thousands of manuscripts, scrolls, and accounts of the Great War were forever erased from face of the planet.

As Kelstaag began to acquire more and more followers, she soon found herself leading a veritable army in a holy crusade. Twenty years after the end of the Elf-Dwarf War, Kelstaag formed the Order of the Serpent. The Order of the Serpent is composed of both ancient and mortal races such as the elves and dwarves, who were devoted to erasing the Elf-Dwarf War from history.

The Order of the Serpent has existed since the Age of Purification and has continued its murderous tactics of erasure. Currently, the group is led by an aging and, seemingly, immortal Kelstaag. Kelstaag oversees her lieutenants, one for each major region (the Western Empire, Eastern Territories, Ophids Grasslands, Land of the Damned, Timiro, Land of the South Winds, Yin-Sloth Jungles, Baalgor Wastelands, and two each for the Old Kingdom and the Great Northern Wilderness). The lieutenants vary in race, age and rank. The only thing they have shown in common is that they are devoted and will remain devoted to Kelstaag without a second thought.

All members of the Order are born into it and trained from birth to be able to locate and destroy evidence of the Elf-Dwarf War. They are trained to recognize references in text that would seem obscure to anyone else. Additionally, the members of this Order are trained to fight in order to protect themselves while on a mission, and also to kill. They are trained to kill only because they are sometimes required to kill another mortal because they possess too much knowledge about the Elf-Dwarf War. Thus, many of the members of the Order are Anarchist, or evil alignments.

Members of the Order of the Serpent vary in race as much as the United States does today. Everyone, however, is treated equally. Some of the more common races include Elves, Dwarves, Titans, and Gnomes. Elves and Dwarves have joined for obvious reasons: They are still ashamed of the deeds their ancestors carried out and continue the tradition of ensuring the tragedy never happens again. Titans are a bit of a mystery, even to Kelstaag. These giants are generally good, yet a small group, about a hundred, have shunned away from their chivalric brethren and joined this order when it first began, almost ten thousand years ago. These Titans are a rare exception and are composed of mostly (about 90 percent) Aberrant alignments.

A typical member who is sent out into the field will be fourth to sixth level. Occupations are just about anything, though only a few elite members with a family history of magick users are taught

the mystic arts. Most members are the equivalent of soldiers (possessing a large number of scholarly skills) or assassins, though any OCC can be used.

Kelstaag's lieutenants, as mentioned previously, vary in rank, experience, and background. Below are a few of the most notable lieutenants.

Schiz Tunneldweller is a member of the Order of no small deeds. Stature, however, is another story. Schiz is a gnome whose family has passed down from the time of the Elf-Dwarf War. The Tunneldwellers were one of the few families to survive the holocaust. Since that time, they have become embittered toward the elves and dwarves and seek to avenge their kin, as well as keep the tragedy from striking again; something that could easily bring about the extinction of the gnomish race. Schiz is more fanatic than any member of his family before him. He will not stop until his goal has been accomplished or he is dead, whichever comes first. This has led him to a leadership position rather quickly, much to the envy of his comrades. Schiz currently oversees the Old Kingdom, reporting back to Kelstaag every three cycles of the moon, and is a fourth level scholar, sixth level Assassin.

Mercury Swift is the lieutenant overseeing the Eastern Territories. Mercury is an elf, a little short at only six feet, one inch, whose family was witness to the Big Thunder in the Baalgor Wastelands. He comes from a lineage wrought with many sorcerers and warriors. The Swift family joined Kelstaag's cause because they felt they must try to make the wrongs right. They have always believed that keeping the history of the Elf-Dwarf War away from others, in the responsible hands of the Order, is much more plausible and less likely to attract unwanted attention that could destroy the Order. Mercury continues his own, secret, operation, in addition to the Orders. Mercury reports back to Kelstaag at regular times as well, generally every two cycles of the moon. However, he lies to him. Mercury leads Kelstaag to believe that the tomes he has discovered have been destroyed. In reality, they are added to his private collection. Should Kelstaag or anyone else ever find out about this, Mercury will be dealt with quickly and without mercy, his stronghold burned to the ground, and his followers executed. Essentially, Kelstaag would be forced to start over in this region. Mercury is a fifth level air/fire warlock and an eighth level wizard.

Allesandra Helmguard is a human whose family joined the order soon after the Western Empire was recognized as a region that needed to be watched. However, she is probably one of the last members of her family that will ever be a part of the Order. Allesandra is ambitious in the extreme, and is extremely intelligent, but her power-hungry nature makes her an excellent target for a coup. Many of her underlings plot against her, both for personal reasons and out of ambition. Allesandra is overconfident and not nearly as powerful as she believes. She is disillusioned in thinking that she is Panath's chosen one and will be made immortal, so that she may rule in Panath's place until his return. A return that will probably never happen. Allesandra Helmguard is a third level Long bowman and a fourth level Priest of Darkness devoted to Panath.

Uthgard Merrymasher is a rarity among the Order of the Serpent. He is a Jotan and oversees the Baalgor Wastelands, usually from the Giant Strongholds located within the Baalgor Mountains. What makes him unique is that he is the only member of the giant race that truly believes in Kelstaag's purpose. Though he thoroughly enjoys, literally, squashing out the resistance he comes across in his task, Uthgard is quite methodic. If someone escapes Uthgard, Kelstaag can rest assured that it is only for a short time. Uthgard will hunt down and kill anyone who escapes his underlings himself, after a quickly slaying of those who failed. What Uthgard will do should the Order succeed any time in his life, he doesn't know, but he knows it will be glorious. Uthgard is a sixth level Mercenary Warrior, most often found in and around the giant strongholds in the Baalgor Mountains.

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