

# DUNGEONS DRAGONS<sup>®</sup>

## NEVERWINTER™ CAMPAIGN SETTING



ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

Matt Sernett ♦ Erik Scott de Bie ♦ Ari Marmell





## CREDITS

**Design**  
Matt Sernett (lead), Erik Scott de Bie, Ari Marmell

**Development**  
Jeremy Crawford, Stephen Schubert

**Editing**  
Tanis O'Connor (lead),  
Dawn J. Geluso, Scott Fitzgerald Gray, Ray Vallese

**Editorial Assistance**  
Brian Cortijo

**Managing Editor**  
Kim Mohan

**D&D R&D Senior Producer**  
Christopher Perkins

**D&D R&D Group Manager**  
Mike Mearls

**R&D Director, D&D Games and Novels**  
Bill Slavicsek

**D&D Senior Creative Director**  
Jon Schindler

**Art Director**  
Steven Smith

**Front Cover Illustration**  
Ralph Horsley

**Back Cover Illustration**  
Adam Paquette

**Graphic Designer**  
Emi Tanji

**Interior Illustrations**  
Dave Allsop, Scott Altman, Steve Argyle, Zoltan Boros and Gabor Szikszai, Sam Burley, Chippy, Alberto Dal Lago, Thomas Denmark, Jesper Ejsing, Steve Ellis, Emrah Elmasli, Wayne England, Mike Franchina, Lars Grant-West, Ralph Horsley, Tyler Jacobson, Mazin Kassis, Howard Lyon, Slawomir Maniak, William O'Connor, Adam Paquette, David Rapoza, Marc Sasso, Mike Schley, Matias Tapia, Franz Vohwinkel, Tyler Walpole, Mark Winters, Sam Wood

**Cartography**  
Mike Schley

**Publishing Production Specialist**  
Erin Dorries

**Prepress Manager**  
Jeffrey Dunlap

**Printing Technician**  
Carmen Cheung

**Production Manager**  
Cynda Callaway

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U.S., CANADA, ASIA, PACIFIC,  
& LATIN AMERICA  
Wizards of the Coast LLC  
P.O. Box 707  
Renton WA 98057-0707  
+1-800-324-6496

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS  
Hasbro UK Ltd  
Caswell Way  
Newport, Gwent NP9 0YH  
GREAT BRITAIN  
Please keep this address for your records

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, BELGIUM  
Industrialaan 1  
1702 Groot-Bijgaarden  
Belgium  
+32.070.233.277

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# INTRODUCTION

Since that day of cataclysm, a decade ago, when the volcano roared forth and painted a line of devastation from the mountain all the way to the sea, burying Neverwinter in its devastating run, the tone of the region has changed. It is almost as if that one event had sent forth a call for conflict, a clarion call for sinister beings.

In a sense, it did just that. The loss of Neverwinter in essence severed the North from the more civilized regions along the Sword Coast, where Waterdeep has now become the vanguard against the wilderness. Traders no longer travel through the region, except by sea, and the lure of Neverwinter's former treasures has pulled adventurers—often unsavory, often unprincipled—in great numbers to the devastated city.

Some are trying to rebuild, desperate to restore the busy port and the order it once imposed upon these inhospitable lands. But they battle as much as they build. They carry a carpenter's hammer in one hand, a warhammer in the other.

Enemies abound: Shadovar, those strange cultists sworn to a devil god, opportunistic highwaymen, goblinkin, giants, and monsters alive and undead. And other things, darker things from deeper holes.

In the years since the cataclysm, the northern Sword Coast has grown darker by far.

And it pleases me.

—Drizzt Do'Urden

from *Gauntlgrym* by R. A. Salvatore

Left a desolate ruin after a supernatural cataclysm, Neverwinter now rises from the ashes to reclaim its title as the Jewel of the North. Yet even as its citizens return and rebuild, hidden forces pursue their own goals and vendettas—any one of which could tear the city apart. Adventurers in this campaign must plunge into the politics, skulduggery, and peril of a city on the brink of destruction—or greatness.

## NINE HALLMARKS OF A NEVERWINTER CAMPAIGN

Instead of presenting the details of a setting in stasis, the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* assumes that the DM will customize the setting and create new plots. The campaign is designed for the players to become deeply involved and for their choices to drive the story at every turn. What the player characters decide to do—from 1st level until the final moments of the campaign—matters for themselves, for the people of the North, and perhaps for people far beyond.

The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* accomplishes this in a number of ways. The following nine characteristics encapsulate the means used to make this a fantastic campaign to play as DM or player.

### 1. Low Level

While the vast majority of the campaign material can be used regardless of level, the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* focuses on providing challenges the adventurers can face and overcome during the heroic tier. Having the threats they face all be within reach of characters from level 1 to 10 means that the campaign can center on events in the area for all those levels, and it allows the characters to follow many different plots and still meet villains appropriate to their level.

### 2. Character Themes

Players can bring existing characters to Neverwinter, but the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* presents a great opportunity to start a new campaign. Newly created characters should make use of the character themes presented in Chapter 2. Designed specifically for this campaign, the character themes embroil the heroes in the plot lines of the setting from 1st level, giving each player background information and motivation to engage in the campaign's events.

### 3. Characters Make a Difference

The heroes in a Neverwinter campaign can make a difference and change things, for good or ill. This is not a setting where the adventurers are stuck facing flunkies of the villain because their enemy is an epic-level threat. The legendary villains of the setting are designed to be within the reach of heroic tier play, and the famous heroic nonplayer characters who might otherwise interfere are offstage. Whether they like it or not, the adventurers are on their own, and what they decide to do matters.

### 4. Frontier Feel

The destruction of Neverwinter made the North into more of a wilderness than it has been in centuries. People rebuild the city, but law's reach is not long and order's grasp remains weak. Things as simple as the shipments of food to the city can become sources of desperate conflict and dire events. In such a place, individuals such as the player characters can be the linchpin that holds everything together or the factor that forces the wheels to come off the cart.

### 5. Intrigue Abounds

Everyone wants something: the characters, normal folk, secret cults, rebels, mercenaries, invaders, assassins, conquerors, looters, would-be kings. The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* presents many organizations and nonplayer characters with a multitude of plans. The heroes can interact with all these groups, discovering secret ploys, allying with some, making enemies of others, and playing them against one

another or taking them all on. Allies can become enemies and enemies can become friends; it's up to the players to decide.

## 6. Myriad Possibilities

The setting doesn't put you in a straitjacket of interwoven plots. It's designed to encourage improvisation and for the campaign to move in whatever direction the characters push it. To this end, sidebars throughout the book provide ideas for how events might play out. They frequently offer adventure hooks. And they might provide different interpretations of events or alternative goals for factions in the game. In all cases, don't take the suggestions in these sidebars as facts. Instead, use them as you will. You might find ideas in them perfect for your campaign, or they might provide inspiration for your own ideas.

## 7. The Story Goes On

Many settings describe the world as it is and make it seem like it will always be that way. The important individuals are necessary to the setting and forever out of reach of the player characters. The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* turns this situation on its head by presenting a world in flux where things are changing every day. If the characters do nothing, something will still happen. If they go after and kill the big names in the setting, the story doesn't end—it gets more interesting.

## 8. Adventure Is Everywhere

No matter which direction the characters turn or what clues they follow, another adventure or intrigue lies just around the corner. The characters' allies and enemies in the setting have agendas that entwine, and events the heroes don't keep their eye on might suddenly interrupt their lives. Characters in this setting shouldn't be twiddling their thumbs wondering if an adventure will come their way. Instead the heroes will need to make tough decisions about what quest to accomplish, and while trying to end one adventure, they'll encounter many others.

## 9. Neverwinter and Beyond

The adventure doesn't stop at Neverwinter's crumbling walls. The tangled plots of the campaign might draw the heroes to explore the wilds of the North, to plunge into the gloom of the Shadowfell, to discover the lost dwarven kingdom of Gauntlgrym, and even travel to far-flung and magic-steeped Thay.

## How to Use This Book

**For the Dungeon Master:** To run a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game in the Neverwinter setting, you'll need the *Rules Compendium* and the *Dungeon Master's*

*Kit*, or the *Player's Handbook*<sup>®</sup> and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*<sup>®</sup>. In addition, you'll find most of the creatures mentioned here in *Monster Vault* and the *Monster Manual*<sup>®</sup> books. Supplements such as *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*<sup>™</sup> and *Draconomicon*<sup>™</sup>: *Chromatic Dragons* will enhance your experience, as will the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*.

Chapter 1 of this book addresses the Dungeon Master and provides specific strategies for running a Neverwinter game. Chapters 3 and 4 provide information about the plots, locations, and creatures of the campaign.

**For Players:** To play in a Neverwinter campaign, you need the *Rules Compendium* and *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*, *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms*, or the *Player's Handbook*. The *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* should also prove to be a useful resource.

Chapter 2 provides details on creating characters suitable to the complex intrigues and twisting plots of the setting. In addition, Chapter 2 offers a new wizard subclass called the bladesinger and racial backgrounds. The racial backgrounds offer options for players who want their characters' rules to represent the unique subraces of elves, eladrin, and gnomes in the setting. The bladesinger offers a full play experience from level 1 to 30 for a classic sword-wielding spellcaster with roots in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting.

## NEVERWINTER CONNECTIONS

The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* takes some inspiration from the Neverwinter Nights computer game series. A new computer game, *Neverwinter*, explores the setting described in this book. In *Neverwinter* you can see the city for yourself and interact with characters and plots that will be both familiar and new to you after reading this book.

To get even more from your Neverwinter experience, check out *Gauntlgrym* and *Neverwinter*, both by R.A. Salvatore, and *Brimstone Angels* by Erin Evans. All of these novels and others that follow them have Neverwinter and its environs as their setting.

The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* is set after the events of both the novels mentioned above, and it shares its starting point with the computer game. The plots, major characters, and the events described in this book share much with those in that product, but just as one DM's Neverwinter campaign will differ from another's, so too will you see differences between what is presented here and in other sources. Use the novels and the online game as reference and inspiration for your game, or enjoy them as separate experiences.

# Jewel of the North

*People of Neverwinter! I am here not as a conqueror but as a protector. The soldiers I bring come to bolster the defenses you have struggled to maintain, and to stop the lawlessness that threatens all you've already accomplished. Together, we will do more than rebuild. We will make a New Neverwinter!*

—Dagult Neverember, Lord Protector

**AMID THE** wilderness and savagery of the cold North, Neverwinter once stood as a beacon of civility and warmth. Even after the Spellplague wracked the world, the Jewel of the North lost little of its luster. The city's destruction thus shocked many when it occurred, despite the portents that warned of coming peril. Vague prophecies and strange events seemed like shadows of the Spellplague, nothing more. Even the earth tremors that began to disturb the area could not shake its citizens' belief in a bright future.

Then Mount Hotenow, deep in Neverwinter Wood, awoke with the power of an angry god. The city could do nothing against such a foe. The earth yawned open and broke apart. Whole districts shuddered and sank while other areas shot up, forming sudden cliffs. The river, running warm throughout winter, exploded into hissing steam and lava as scalding clouds of ash roared through the streets like an advancing army. Thousands lost their lives as Neverwinter died that day.

Slowly, life has returned to this ruined landscape. Many hope to rebuild what has been lost, but an equal number see the tragedy as an opportunity to seize all they can. Yet those who scratch out lives in the scarred city fail to see the infection below the scab. Under their noses, beneath their feet, and even within their earshot, dark forces battle one another for control of the city.

This chapter provides a primer on the city of Neverwinter and the environs in which a Neverwinter campaign is set. It includes the following sections.

- ◆ **Neverwinter and the North:** A brief discussion of the city and its surrounding lands.
- ◆ **A History of Struggle:** An overview of the history of the North, illustrating how the events of the past continue to shape the present.
- ◆ **Running a Neverwinter Campaign:** Advice to make your campaign exciting and unique.



# NEVERWINTER AND THE NORTH

Even in safer times, the North's reputation as the Savage North was well earned. Now, times are worse and the land more savage by far. Its great cities, once bastions of light and civilization, lie crippled. The small towns that served to shelter travelers stand empty—or have been claimed by murderous tribes and hungry monsters. Roads etched into the earth with thousands of years of use are increasingly obscured by forest, bramble, and marsh. Communities now struggle alone amid the wilderness, fortunate if they see an outsider once in a generation.

Neverwinter labors to breathe in the suffocating harshness of this new North, the sea its only lifeline. With few traders braving the increasingly long treks between settlements, the city's docks now provide the area's main means of import and precious little export. Gone are the days of plenty, beauty, and luxury. Today, Neverwinter struggles to break free of the forces that brought it low, still weak and surrounded by danger.

**Neverwinter:** The City of Skilled Hands, the Jewel of the North—many were the accolades once heaped upon Neverwinter. Then, almost thirty years ago, the city died. Minor earth tremors that had plagued the region for months were the precursors of the eruption of Mount Hotenow. A portion of that volcano's peak exploded with such force that lava and superheated ash poured across the city in an avalanche. Half of Neverwinter's population died in a heartbeat, the city's buildings razed. A great rift now known as the Chasm rent the surface where the shifting earth had pulled apart. Strange zombies roamed the land in the aftermath, their dead flesh turned to ash by the fires that consumed the city.

Yet the people of the North have always been resilient. After the destruction, many who had fled at the first tremors returned. Opportunists and looters arrived. People began to rebuild. Lord Dagult Neverember, the Open Lord of Waterdeep, eventually

arrived as well, along with an army of Mintarn mercenaries. Today, the city struggles back to life under the watchful rule of the self-styled Lord Protector.

**Neverwinter River:** The bright water of the Neverwinter River runs warm throughout the year, a feature that helps to keep the city from being frozen in the winter months. When the cataclysm struck, dark ash choked the river for months before it began to flow from Neverwinter Wood through the city once more. Three bridges once spanned the river in Neverwinter—the Sleeping Dragon, the Winged Wyvern, and the Dolphin, each sculpted in the form of its name. Of the three, only the Winged Wyvern remains largely intact. Mintarn mercenaries in the hire of Lord Neverember patrol it day and night, watching traffic to and from the northern portion of the city and guarding against threats from Castle Never.

**Helm's Hold:** Once a small monastery and adjacent village dedicated to the deity Helm, the cathedral of Helm's Hold now towers above the town and surrounding lands that bear its name. The death of Helm saw the monastery fall into disuse, but the fortified town became a refuge when the Spellplague hit during the year following Helm's demise. Lord Neverember now exiles victims of the Spellplague to Helm's Hold for treatment, and his mercenaries guard the town.

**Port Llast:** This town was a great city in ancient times—the most northerly safe harbor on the Sword Coast whenever Luskan would fall to orcs or other evil forces. However, the rise of a relatively stable Luskan and ports farther north began to diminish its prominence. Then came the Spellplague, and with it the return of Abeir. The appearance of the new continent in the ocean to the west changed the tides around Port Llast, filling the harbor with silt and making Neverwinter an easier port to reach. With the docks of Port Llast failing and trade dying off, most of its citizens have long since abandoned their homes or died at the hands of marauders. Now a ghost town, Port Llast is known as the realm of the evil sea goddess Umberlee and as a home to sea monsters. However, some say that this reputation is simply rumor spread by those who want to keep the secrets of the town to themselves.

**Neverwinter Wood:** For generations, this dark forest has been shunned by most people of the North. That magic exists in Neverwinter Wood cannot be doubted, but its nature—and whether it exists as a force of good or ill—remains unknown. The forest holds many secrets, and even on its fringes, one feels a sense of unease. Humans have never logged in this area, and the orcs of the North have traditionally avoided it during their rampages. Only druids and Uthgardt barbarians dare to pass into the deep forest.

The scars left by Mount Hotenow's eruption have healed with startling speed, and many new forces move within Neverwinter Wood today. The Netherese seek out the treasures of lost empires within its

## THE WIDER WORLD

If this book is your first experience with the world that also encompasses the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, you'll come across some names and terms in it that might not be familiar to you.

If that's the case, don't worry. The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* doesn't require you to know a lot about the world beyond, except for what's explained in these pages. To expand your knowledge, check out the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide* or any of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS* novels from *Wizards of the Coast*.

shadows, hunted by undead forces spawned in the Dread Ring. Eladrin from the Feywild also stalk the wood, returned to the world after more than a millennium of separation.

**Thundertree:** This small town once stood at the edge of the wood. Its inhabitants made a living by harvesting windfall timber to ship downriver to the Neverwinter and beyond. Now the forest has overgrown Thundertree's abandoned and decaying buildings. Although the town survived the Spellplague largely intact, the ash zombies that arose after the destruction of Neverwinter overran it. As the dangers of Neverwinter Wood increase, the abandoned town and its unknown horrors are shunned.

**Mount Hotenow:** For untold generations, this volcanic peak quietly fumed in the depths of Neverwinter Wood. Rumored to be the source of the warmth of the Neverwinter River, Mount Hotenow once featured in the bedtime stories of Neverwinter's citizens as the home of fire giants, red dragons, and other blazing beasts. People looked upon the fantastic peak as a thing of beauty—until its wrath was unleashed against Neverwinter in the cataclysm. Now jutting like a broken tooth from the forest, Mount Hotenow still fumes, the land occasionally quaking with the echoes of its fury.

**The Craggs:** This long wrinkle of hills and ridges runs northeast from Neverwinter Wood. Goblins, gnolls, ogres, hill giants, and other creatures have dwelled within this rocky landscape for centuries. So too has the Sky Pony tribe of the Uthgardt barbarians. Rumors have long persisted that an entrance to Gauntlgrym lies somewhere in the Craggs. However, the hundreds of ancient and now-dead mines that long ago brought humans to the area make for numerous false leads.

**Sharandar:** Long ago, the elven empire of Illefarn fractured into three kingdoms, one of which was Iliyanbrien. Sharandar was the capital of this kingdom, and when Iliyanbrien eventually met its end, many of Sharandar's elves traveled to Evermeet. However, a number of others managed to slip between worlds, passing instead to the Feywild where a new Sharandar has thrived for centuries. Now that Faerie once again touches the world, the eladrin of New Sharandar venture forth to see what time has wrought upon the lands of their ancestors.

**Dread Ring:** Hidden deep in Neverwinter Wood, this fortress of undeath was built by the magic of Thay and powered by the deaths of innocents. The devastation heaped upon Neverwinter prevented the Thayans from completing this site, the power from which would have allowed Szass Tam to control the region. Now, the incomplete fortress serves as a base of operations for the wizard Valindra Shadowmantle in her quest to raise dracoliches and her long-term goal to slay enough people to empower the site.

**Xinlental:** The first of Netheril's flying cities, Xinlental was built by the archmage Ioulaum and floated above the ancient empire until its end. When magical chaos consumed Netheril, Xinlental drifted beyond that land's borders, never to be seen again—until now.

Netherese under the command of Prince Clariburnus Tanthul recently discovered Xinlental in Neverwinter Wood. Although the city lies in overgrown ruins, Clariburnus believes that he can repair Xinlental's *mythallars*—the enormous crystal globes that powered the most potent magic of ancient Netheril. With its enchantments restored, Xinlental might take to the air once more, becoming a political symbol for the Princes of Shade and a powerful weapon for dominating the region.

**Tower of Twilight:** This enchanted tower long stood on an island in a small lake east of Neverwinter Wood. Home to a student of the great wizard Khelben Blackstaff, the tower stood invisible by day but would appear as the light failed. During the Spellplague, the tower vanished without a trace, though it now reappears infrequently and unpredictably at twilight. Who lives there now, where the tower disappears to, and why it returns remain a mystery.

**Conyberry:** During the Spellplague, a portion of Abeir imposed itself upon the village of Conyberry. The terrain-altering effect of this transition forced the inhabitants of the village to come together with people dwelling in the regions of Abeir to which they were joined. However, in the intervening decades, the Gray Wolf Uthgardt tribe has sacked the settlement in retribution for this "invasion" of their lands, slaughtering Conyberry's citizens or forcing them to join the tribe. The village now lies largely vacant, though Gray Wolf tribes use it to store goods and as an occasional shelter.

**Old Owl Well:** Known in ancient texts as Old Owlbear Well and in even older histories as Quesseer, this site marks the location of a Netherese outpost established millennia ago. The Netherese built a means of drawing water from the earth, using the site as a place of trade. For centuries, this water supply on a key trade route served as a source of conflict. Until the chaos of the Spellplague, orcs and humans from Neverwinter and Waterdeep still struggled to control the outpost. Now, it lies forgotten and abandoned. Until trade returns to these lands, the fate of the well and whatever ruins lie hidden in the surrounding hills remain unknown.

**Morgur's Mound:** Atop this foothill of the Craggs, Uthgar—deity and founder of the Uthgardt barbarians—died after saving the North from Gurt, Lord of the Pale Giants. The mound is named for Uthgar's brother Morgur (called Morgred by some), who is said to be buried there. Once, the bones of a great thunderbeast were spread atop the hill, marking it as the holy shrine of the Uthgardt. Now, the bones are gone and whatever treasures lay buried there have

been stolen. Outsiders who are discovered by Uthgardt barbarians near the mound are typically slain on sight.

**Luskan:** An urban cesspool, the once-great City of Sails squats on the coastline like an open sore on the face of the continent of Faerûn. It lies about four days hard travel north of Neverwinter (about three days by sea, due to prevailing currents). Until some hundred years ago, Luskan choked in the grasp of the Arcane Brotherhood and its leader, Arklem Greeth. When a force of pirate-killers from Waterdeep along with Drizzt and his allies precipitated the destruction of the Hosttower of the Arcane, the city was destabilized and never fully recovered. Street gangs and pirates rule Luskan now, making the city a stomping ground for criminals, exiles from other lands, and hideous beasts.

**Gauntlgrym:** This famous subterranean dwarven city has been the stuff of legend for centuries. Aside from the dwarves, most people of the North doubted Gauntlgrym's existence—until the Summons, as it has come to be known. At that time, ghostly dwarves in ancient dress appeared before certain dwarves throughout the North and beyond, silently pleading for heroes to seek out Gauntlgrym. Some did set out in search of the lost city, though most counted themselves lucky when the ghosts troubled them no more.

Many of those who sought Gauntlgrym did so in the Crag, for ancient legends mentioned an entrance there. Others plunged into Neverwinter Wood or scaled the Sword Mountains. Few returned from their quests, and those who survived almost never found any trace of their goal. Some dwarves seek the city still, but for the rest, Gauntlgrym remains a tantalizing legend.

**The Sword Mountains:** The sharp peaks and hilly terrain of the Sword Mountains extend down the coast of the Sea of Swords for nearly two hundred miles. Long home to belligerent dwarf clans, orc tribes, trolls, dragons, and other fearsome creatures, this range is rarely traveled in these dangerous times. Those foolish enough to brave the mountains often do so in search of old mines and the ruins of civilizations past. However, most find only death in the end.

**Leilon:** This sleepy mining town once served as a convenient resting place for travelers on the High Road. Now, the few travelers who still take this route shun Leilon, going miles out of their way to avoid even laying eyes on the town.

The High Tower of Thalivar long stood as a landmark here, abandoned by a forgotten mage. For generations, the tower proved a tempting target for plunderers—and, too often, a grave for them as well. The people of Leilon knew that the tower held guardian monsters, and they were content to leave it alone. However, the Spellplague's twisted magic unleashed the creatures trapped in the tower, which quickly ravaged the helpless village. Now, the tower is a place of terror, its magic freezing in place all creatures whose eyes rest upon it, even for a moment.

**Mere of Dead Men:** This vast salt marsh contains the ruins of the numerous castles, manors, and farms it swallowed as it expanded. It takes its name from the great armies that were drowned here when a powerful lich flooded their battlefield. Whereas once the High Road skirted the swamp, what now remains of that highway plunges through its expanded borders. Those seeking to go south to Waterdeep from points north must often contend with the lizardfolk that claim the territory around the road. Alternative routes wind deeper into the mere or off into the Sword Mountains at the cost of extra days of travel and peril.

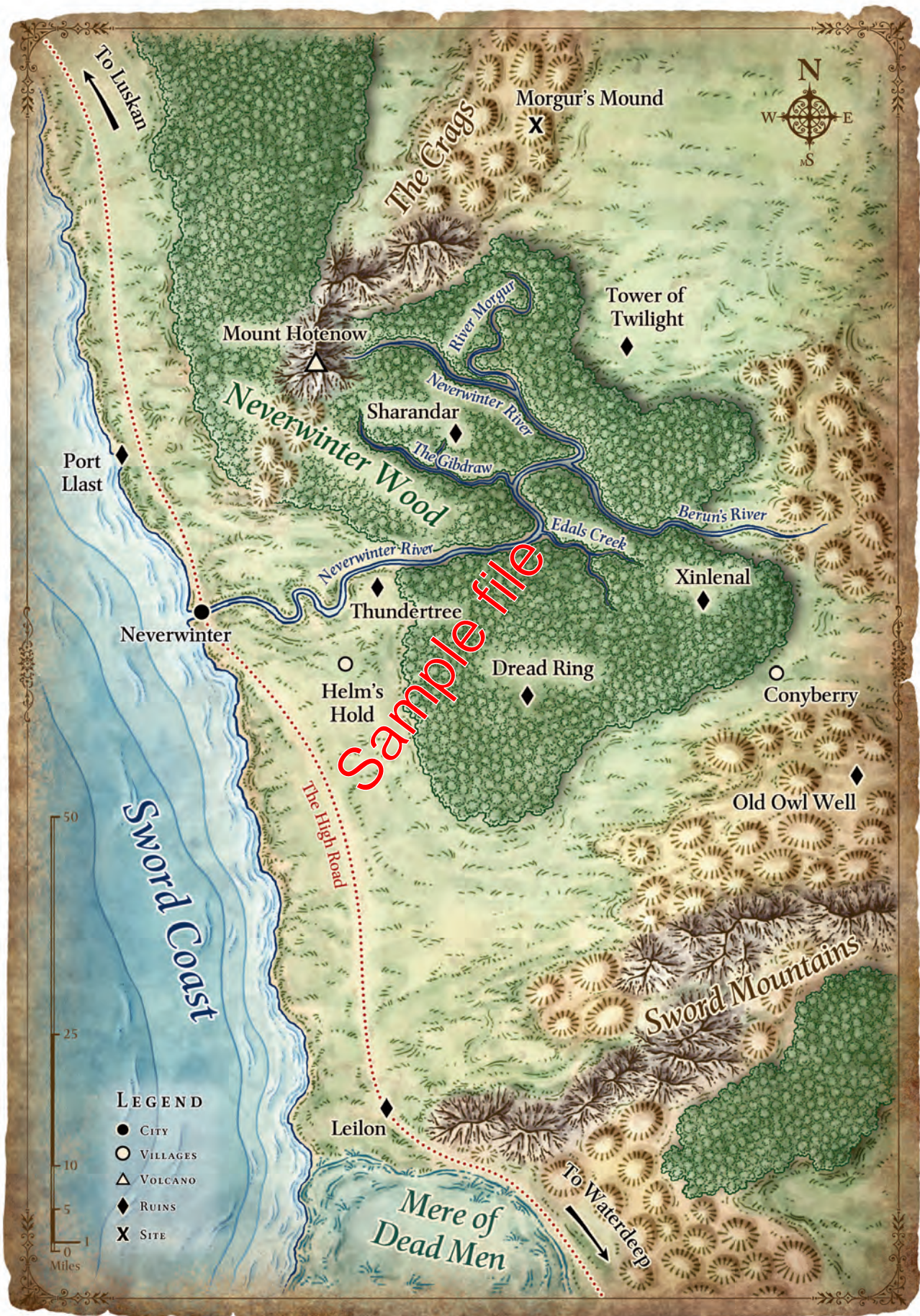
**Waterdeep:** Once the greatest and grandest city in the Realms, Waterdeep's star has dimmed slightly in the last century as the world has progressively darkened. The great port—about a week south of Neverwinter, or three days by sea—no longer sustains its own navy, relying instead on mercenaries from the island of Mintarn and the city of Baldur's Gate to the south. The city has long existed as a relatively fair and just center of civilization.

Waterdeep is ruled by a council of twenty Masked Lords (nobles hidden behind powerful illusions to obscure their identities) and one Open Lord. The current Open Lord is the boisterous and dangerous Lord Neverember, the so-called Lord Protector of Neverwinter. Unlike most of the other Open Lords in Waterdeep's history, Lord Neverember has demonstrated an expansionist and imperialistic bent. In recent years, he has set his sights on Neverwinter as the next territory in his growing empire.

## ROOM TO GROW

Some of the locations discussed in this section are covered in detail in other source material. For instance, you can find more information about Luskan and Waterdeep in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*. Other locations have been given minimal development to enable you to make the Neverwinter setting your own.

Use the information presented here to spur your own ideas for adventures in a Neverwinter campaign. Lord Neverember might decide that the health of Neverwinter depends on reestablishing land trade routes, and could ask adventurers to clear out whatever hazards dwell near the Old Owl Well or Leilon. Some group opposed to the Lord Protector might have special information that proves the illegitimacy of Lord Neverember's rule, but that proof must be delivered by land up the High Road and through the Mere of Dead Men to keep it out of Neverember's hands. Perhaps the Dead Rats gang has been using Port Llast as a smuggling route and stronghold, braving its dangers and using shallow barges to transfer goods to land from ships at sea.



- LEGEND**
- CITY
  - VILLAGES
  - △ VOLCANO
  - ◆ RUINS
  - ✕ SITE

50  
25  
10  
5  
0  
1  
Miles

# HISTORY OF CONFLICT

Long has the North been a dangerous frontier. For centuries, its people carved their settlements out of the wilderness through adversity and toil, eventually turning hard-won homes and villages into kingdoms. Though the dangers of the North have always pressed upon the minds of those who lived there, the mostly peaceful years preceding the Spellplague seemed to bring the promise of permanent civilization to the region. Yet the North has been civilized many times before, and often have those same civilizations eventually fallen.

The dates referred to in this section are in the Dalereckoning (DR) calendar used throughout much of the world. The current year is 1479 DR.

## An Age of Elves

(-22900 DR to -1100 DR)

The elven settlement of Illefarn first took that name when it claimed the lands of the North over 20,000 years ago. By the time the first Crown Wars began among the elves, Illefarn had become a great nation whose history could fill any library. When the last of the Crown Wars had ended, those elves who fell from Corellon's grace had been turned into the drow.

The empire of Illefarn lasted long enough in one form or another to witness the migration of dwarves from the south and the founding of Delzoun, followed quickly by the rise of ancient Netheril in the west. A few short centuries later, the human ancestors of Uthgar settled the island of Ruathym to the west before founding Illusk on the site of today's Luskan.

During this time, dwarves from Delzoun mined deep beneath the earth, secretly extending their realm under the territories of other nations. The dwarves discovered an ore of peculiar magic and followed its veins. The resulting tunnels and chambers became the mines of Gauntlgrym. The greedy dwarves of Gauntlgrym then encountered a trapped primordial of magma and stone called Maegera the Inferno. In the aftermath of that encounter, Delzoun sealed the deep tunnels and focused its efforts on establishing its empire closer to the surface. Gauntlgrym was lost, but not forgotten.

## A Time of Dwarves and Humans

(-1100 DR to 180 DR)

By the time Illefarn divided into three independent realms, including Iliyanbruen (where Neverwinter Wood now stands), Illusk lay in ruins and Delzoun had become a great nation. Illusk would rise and fall many times over the centuries to come—often resurrected by the Netherese and their ancestors, and frequently at war with Iliyanbruen.

Although Netheril rose slowly to its greatest status in the previous age, its fall came with surprising speed. The masters of the flying city of Xinlenal tried to flee that destruction and fell in what is now known as Neverwinter Wood. Initial attempts by the folk of Iliyanbruen to explore the fallen city provoked blasts of wild magic from its malfunctioning *mythallars*, resulting in devastation to the surrounding woodlands. The elves deemed Xinlenal taboo, lest word of its existence draw treasure hunters and more destruction, with mention of its location punishable by death. At the same time, the Netherese enclave of Thultanthar escaped to the Shadowfell, not to return to the world for over a thousand years.

With the fall of Netheril, a Netherese hero arose known as the Bey of Runlatha. He helped to lead refugees from Netheril, escaping through subterranean Delzoun by a series of tunnels known as the Lowroad. Those refugees became the ancestors of the Uthgardt when their descendants' tribes merged with those led by Uthgar.

Also during this period, a magic wielder of Illusk known as Maerin discovered the trapped primordial Maegera. Through bribery and negotiation, he convinced the dwarves of Delzoun to build a city around the mines of Gauntlgrym, from which the power of the primordial could be controlled. With the help of the elf wizards of Iliyanbruen, Maerin extended the reach of the treelike Hosttower of the Arcane in Illusk through "roots" that carried the power of the sea to Gauntlgrym, keeping the fiery primordial in slumber. The plan worked, and the dwarves welcomed their human allies into Gauntlgrym to aid them in crafting items of great power.

Two centuries later, the invasion known as the Orc Marches plunged the North into chaos. The combined effort of Iliyanbruen and other elven nations halted the tide, but not before both Illusk and Gauntlgrym were lost. Though weakened by battle, Delzoun would survive for two centuries more before the dwarven presence in the North finally collapsed.

Humans from the island of Ruathym inhabited areas of the northern Sword Coast during this period, which also saw the first settlement of the area now known as Neverwinter. First called Eigersstor, its population swelled as orcs attacked settlements farther north. However, the settlement would not be known as Neverwinter for another century, as word spread to distant lands of its ice-free winter harbor.

Uthgar, a renowned Ruathym warrior, rose to prominence toward the end of this period. He gained great fame for his sacking of Illusk, which by that time had arisen as a great power again. After Uthgar's heroic death, his followers divided into tribes based upon beast spirits he was said to have mastered.

Humans from Illusk retook and settled Gauntlgrym not long after Uthgar's death. However, the effort

weakened the defenses of Illusk, and it fell to orcs yet again. Those humans who had remained in Gauntlgrym then lost their hold on that realm when mind flayers and their lycanthrope thralls assaulted the city from the Underdark. The Gray Wolf Uthgardt accepted the refugee survivors of these battles, and thus was their blood mingled with that of werewolves.

Long a bulwark against orc hordes from the North and other dangers, the elves of Iliyanbruen mustered an army to oust the orcs from Illusk. The effort cost them greatly, however, and though they succeeded, their own kingdom collapsed. Like other elven realms before it, Iliyanbruen dissolved as elves left for Evermeet or fled to the Feywild.

## The Era of Orcs and Wizards

(180 DR to 1302 DR)

After the end of Iliyanbruen, predominately human communities began to spread across the north, forging numerous kingdoms. Again and again, orc hordes laid waste to human settlements, only to see conquered lands retaken by humankind and its allies.

In response to this ever-present threat, the elves, dwarves, halfling, gnomes and humans of the North allied to form the kingdom of Phalorm. This united front battled the orcs for nearly a hundred years, until the armies of both sides were slaughtered in the magical flood that created the Mere of Dead Men. The elves abandoned the alliance to head for Evermeet shortly thereafter, and Phalorm was no more.

The next great union of the North arose roughly three hundred years later at the behest of a group of mages known as the Covenant. The armies of many human nations gathered to vanquish yet another orc horde. However, victory in the great battle that could have ended the threat once and for all was stolen from the human host when the Red Wizards of Thay transported the horde to lands farther south.

That event triggered a long feud between the Covenant and Thay that erupted in Neverwinter over a century later. Red Wizards slew Aganazzar of the Covenant in Neverwinter's School of Wizardry, touching off a titanic wizardwar. For twenty years, the Red Wizards and the mages of the Covenant

battled each other throughout the North and Thay. The conflict ended when the leaders of the Covenant left Faerûn and its other members went underground.

The loss of the Covenant's leadership proved deadly when the largest orc horde in history swept down from northern lands to attack settlements as far south as Waterdeep. These orcs conquered Illusk, which humanity did not reclaim until Waterdeep, Neverwinter, and forces from Port Llast retook it almost sixty years later. After driving the orcs beyond the Spine of the World, the victors renamed the fallen city Luskan to disassociate it from its tragic past.

## The Modern Age

(1302 DR to Present)

Early in this period, the mage Arklem Greeth came to Luskan, claimed the Hosttower of the Arcane, and formed the Arcane Brotherhood. After assuming control of Luskan, the Brotherhood then unleashed a campaign of magic-fueled conquest and piracy against the North. When the people of the North eventually rose up against the Arcane Brotherhood, the Hosttower of the Arcane fell, and Luskan was left leaderless. The lich Valindra bore witness to these events, for she was Arklem Greeth's lover.

In lost Gauntlgrym, the mind flayers had long experimented with turning derros and duergar into mind flayers under their control. The derros eventually succeeded in ousting the mind flayers and enslaving the duergar in turn, but the events of the Spellplague freed the duergar by giving them a new master. Their god, whom they called Laduguer, was revealed to be Asmodeus, though some suspect that Asmodeus simply assumed that role after Laduguer was imprisoned or slain. Swearing oaths to the devils, the duergar gained the power they needed to overthrow their derro masters.

During this time, Neverwinter became a great power in the North, earning its shining reputation. The city went to war with Luskan on numerous occasions, both by land and sea. A magical malady called the wailing death struck its citizens in 1372 DR, the city not recovering for a decade. Then the Spellplague struck.

The century that followed saw the rise in power of Netheril and its masters in the returned City of Shade. Netherese loyalists infiltrated the power structure of weakened Neverwinter, but their efforts were sidetracked by the eruption of Mount Hotenow. Unknown to all but a few, the Red Wizards were responsible for the volcano stirring from its slumber, in an attempt to use the deaths caused by the mountain's eruption to power their Dread Ring. Their plan was foiled, however, and the mountain sleeps again—at least for now.

In the last decades, life in the North has gotten worse. Its cities teeter on the brink of dissolution, its roads have not been as perilous in generations, and the wilderness is as wild as ever it was.

### THE HISTORY IN DETAIL

The history of the North is longer and more detailed than can be presented here. However, this section presents some of the details most important to a Neverwinter campaign. For a more comprehensive timeline of events in the North, see *The Grand History of the Realms*. To explore the more recent events occurring in the North, check out the FORGOTTEN REALMS novels—particularly *Brimstone Angels* by Erin Evans and the books by R. A. Salvatore.

# RUNNING A NEVERWINTER CAMPAIGN

Your Neverwinter campaign experience might be unlike any game you've run before. All the same rules apply as in any DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game (whether in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting or some other world), but this book does things a little differently than you might expect.

## A Campaign Designed for You

The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* is not a simple gazetteer of the region with supporting rules options for players. Nor is it merely a resource for the *Neverwinter* game. Instead, this book provides a deep and compelling campaign experience that will inspire you as a DM and thrill the players in your game.

To accomplish this, the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* adopts the following precepts.

**Tight Focus:** This book devotes the most attention to Neverwinter and to locations in the surrounding area closely linked to events in the city. Although the book does mention other locations, it does so only when they are intrinsically linked to important factions and events in the setting.

**Inspiration, not Information:** Even within the tight focus of this book, the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* avoids presenting detail unless that detail is likely to inspire ideas, adventures, encounters, or roleplaying. Rather than tell you what every shop in Neverwinter sells or how often supplies arrive in the port, this book presents campaign materials designed to draw the heroes into the action.

**Active Characters:** The residents of Neverwinter—whether villains, foils, or potential allies for the characters in your campaign—don't just wait around for the heroes to run into them. They actively pursue goals in the area whether or not the adventurers are involved, giving each Neverwinter campaign a life of its own. No matter which way the adventurers turn, they should run into people, creatures, and plots that draw them ever deeper into the setting.

**Character Themes:** The character themes presented in Chapter 2 allow a player to connect a newly created character to the Neverwinter setting. A character theme can be thought of as similar to a paragon path for the heroic tier. Although a theme is not as mechanically complex as a paragon path, it provides important elements of character identity and story, telling a player how his or her character relates to the setting. In addition, each theme links a character to plots, locations, and factions in the

setting—even if such links might not be immediately obvious to the players.

Throughout the book, “Theme Tie-in” sections discuss how certain character themes could interact with the places and people of the setting. Use this information to supplement your own ideas.

**Open-Ended Campaign:** This book does not assume an end state that the characters must attain, or a specific way that they “win” a Neverwinter campaign. The campaign can go in whatever direction you and the players take it, with the heroes' actions—or inaction—deciding the fate of the region.

## KILLABLE VILLAINS

Many settings describe their greatest villains as epic threats. Although this might be an adequate representation of these characters' power, the effect can often be to make players feel as though their efforts to defeat such villains will never bear fruit until they attain epic level themselves. Until then, the heroes remain trapped in conflict with a seemingly limitless supply of underlings.

For this reason, the villains presented in the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* can be defeated by characters of the heroic tier. Some will make tough opponents at 10th level, but the heroes always have a chance to win.

If you see your Neverwinter campaign as continuing into the paragon and epic tiers—or if you prefer that the villains be more true to your vision of them as great powers—feel free to increase the villains' levels, devise new game statistics for them, or utilize existing high-level statistics that fit the concept.

Similarly, some villains don't have a full statistics block to represent them, instead advising that you use an existing statistics block. When this is the case, feel free to substitute any other statistics more in keeping with your sense of the campaign.

## Starting a New Campaign

The *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* presents an awesome opportunity to start a new campaign. The key to getting off to a great start is to have each player choose a character theme from Chapter 2. Whether the heroes each have a different theme or some share the same themes, starting from 1st level with character themes provides the players with knowledge that can sharpen their roleplaying. In addition, themes provide the adventurers with personal goals and motivations for working together, and tie the characters into events that will engage the players and make it easier for you to devise adventures.