

# GAZETTEER

DUNGEON Master's Guide

An Official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game Supplement

## The Shadow Elves

by Carl Sargent and Gary Thomas

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# Introduction

Many folk think that the Shadow Elves are but a legend. They know better in Alfheim. The elves of that forested land were forced to ally with Darokin to put down shadow elf infiltration and a planned invasion just over three centuries in the past. To an elf, that's not even half a lifetime. Humans ignore the whispered stories and rumors, but the elves know better. Now their subterranean cousins are preparing for another invasion — and this time they may well be successful.

## The Gazetteer

This Gazetteer describes the land of the Shadow Elves in the D&D® game's Known World; its geography, peoples, and history. In this package you'll find the following:

- \* this 64-page *DM's Guide* to the shadow elf lands, including adventure outlines;

- \* a 32-page *Players' Guide* to the shadow elves, including many new skills and rules for shadow elf shamans and full guidance on creating shadow elf player characters;

- \* a full-color, fold-out map sheet showing the shadow elf lands in full detail and in relation to the major landmarks of the surface lands above them;

- \* a three-panel inside cover showing details of the City of the Stars, the major settlement of the shadow elves, and the Temple of Rafiel within it.

## Using This Gazetteer

If you haven't used a Gazetteer before, you're going to enjoy this one. If you have, you're going to enjoy it too, but you're going to find GAZ 13 significantly different from its predecessors in some important ways.

In the *Players' Guide* there are several major sections. The history of the shadow elves is followed by a brief resume of their lands and cities. After reading about a day in the life of the shadow elves, the core of their beliefs and being — the Way of Rafiel — is laid out for players to digest and understand. This ethos is the heart and soul of a shadow elf. If you have al-

ready read the *Players' Guide* first as we suggested, you know this, of course.

Players who have read other Gazetteers, and/or adventured in other lands of the Known World, will be surprised by what they read here. They may well have been told that shadow elves are Chaotic, and this alignment is given for them in the "monster" entry of GAZ 5, *The Elves of Alfheim*. That just shows that even elves will promulgate untruths on occasion.

This is not to say that the *Players' Guide* tells the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That is the purpose of this book, the *DM's Guide*.

## Using This Booklet

This *DM's Guide* has many of the features you will expect from a gazetteer if you have used one before. It has profiles for major non-player characters, maps for cities and important locations, some new monsters and spells and rules and much else. But there is something else you should be aware of from the outset.

Much of the history and background given in the *Players' Guide* is not entirely accurate. Quite a bit of it is in fact fundamentally wrong in very important ways. This is one thing that makes this an unusual Gazetteer. Don't be worried about this. After all, other cultures have totally erroneous views about shadow elves (as a 4-page pullout section "What Everyone Knows About Shadow Elves" in the middle of this booklet shows). Why should it be surprising that shadow elves — including PC shadow elves — have some important misconceptions about themselves?

The important point here is that you have all the correct information within this book. It is revealed piece by piece until you see the whole picture. The fate of the shadow elves is one of major importance to all races of the Known World. They have infiltrated far, far wider than almost anyone imagines. Who can say where their webs of intrigue begin and end? You will be a lot better placed to know when you have finished reading this book.

Within this Guide, a first section covers Time and History — the calendar of

the shadow elves, their festivals and special days, and the correct version of their history. A lengthy section follows on Shamans and their Soul Crystals, which gives more details of the truth of the religious path which is so important to these people. Following chapters lay out the geography of the shadow elf lands, including their spectacular and eerie City of the Stars. "Travel and Vigilance" explains how to get around these extensive lands and gives a rundown of the powerful shadow elf army and military patrols which so jealously guard the secrets of shadow elf life. "Flora and Fauna" describes some monsters, the skinwings which are such important riding beasts for the elves, and rounds up some of the more harmless — but important and sometimes bizarre — creatures which share the domain of the shadow elves.

Two lengthy chapters, "Among the Shadows" and "Shadow Elves in Other Lands," give profiles for many important personalities among the shadow elves. There are also some detailed rules here for handling the extreme auditory acuity and light-sensitivity of shadow elves which you may need for game play. These chapters also suggest important revisions which can be introduced into previous Gazetteers without disturbing game play. The ways of shadow elves are rarely what they seem. Shadow elves are to be found in all kinds of places where they are unsuspected, often without the need for disguise or active pretense.

Of course, given that you will know so many secrets by the end of reading all this, you will need adventures and adventure outlines to put your players to work and get as much fun as possible out of this rich gaming setting. You want them out in the ever-dark tunnels and warrens, dodging skitterlings and darksnaps, watching the elf-artisans moving tunnels or soul mining; or maybe you want to send them out spider hunting or pursuing the horrific Boneless, or head them into a web of intrigue they do not even begin to suspect. . . Well, we wouldn't want to disappoint you. There are adventure outlines aplenty. We told you, you're going to enjoy this stuff.

# The 14 Verses of the Refuge of Stone

## Verse of the Gathering

Before the holocaust, I was Rafiel, and I watched over my people. I gathered them into the palm of my hand, and I guided them to this refuge of stone. I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the Name of the Shadow Elves

I am Rafiel, and you are all my shadow. As I move, so you move. As I stand, so you stand. As I live, so you live. Thus shall you be shadow elves, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the Refuge of Stone

Let all my children learn these words, the words that guide you and give you life. Daily honor these fourteen verses and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the Shaman

I, Rafiel, mark with my own hand those whom I empower. Let all respect be accorded these, my chosen servants. They it is who will have the power of life and death over you. Follow their teachings, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the Crystals

In the fullness of time I, Rafiel, will show my shamans the secrets of the crystals that have the power of life and death and life everlasting. Guard these crystals carefully, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of Birth

If any child be born among you that is not whole, let them be brought before me, and I, Rafiel, will guide their path.

## Verse of the Wanderers

Keep the strength of the shadow elves, and let none who is weak remain among you or follow after you. Turn these to me, and I, Rafiel, will guide their path.

## Verse of the Temple

Here build before me a city, and a great temple, and within it offer up to me all good things, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of Food and Cleanliness

Let your food be pure and clean. Keep also yourselves pure and white before me, and let not your souls be spotted with wrongdoing against me, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of Days

I will teach my shamans the goodness and badness of each day. Keep the good days *fasti*, and the bad days *ne fasti*, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the Army

I will send fire against you, to strengthen you in my own forge. Let every man and woman among you see battle and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the King

I will guide my shamans to choose from among you a king, who will serve as long as I wish him to serve. Let all my people obey this king and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Verse of the Other Peoples

If any other peoples desire to live among you, let a clan adopt them, and keep them separate from you lest they offend me, and I, Rafiel, will guide you.

## Last Verse, The Verse of Promised Bounty

I am Rafiel. If all my children follow my way and the Way of the Shamans, then all good things will come to them, for I, Rafiel, will guide you.



# Time and History of the Shadow Elves

## The Calendar

The calendar of the shadow elves, like so much of their life, is closely bound up with their religion. The year is divided into 14 months each of 24 days. Naturally, each month corresponds to one of the verses of the Refuge of Stone. The names of the months, then, are Gathering, Name, Refuge, Stone, Shaman, Crystals, Birth, Wanderers, Temple, Food, Days, Army, King, Others, and Bounty. A shadow elf might say that he was born on the third of the Month of Gathering, for example, or on the last day of the Month of the King.

## Years and Days

The shadow elves count years from the time of their discovery of the Refuge of Stone itself (1104 BC). As the beginning of their new life this is taken as year 1. Their 14 months of 24 days gives a year equal to the Common Year (12 months of 28 days), so CY 1000 is the year 2105 in the shadow elf calendar.

There are no weeks within a month, and likewise days are not given names, only numbers. Converting from a surface date to a shadow elf date is not difficult given that the first day of Gathering falls, by fortunate coincidence, on the same day as the first of Nuwmont (first day of the surface calendar). As an example, take the 17th of Swiftmont (the fourth surface month). Three preceding surface months each have 28 days, so this is the 101st day of the year ( $3 \times 28 + 17$ ). Four complete shadow elf months will have passed by this time ( $4 \times 24 = 96$ , less than 101) and it will be the fifth day of the fifth month in the shadow elf calendar — the Month of Crystals. Converting shadow elf dates to surface calendar dates is likewise straightforward if dates (month and day) are converted into a simple number for the purposes of translation.

## Fasti and Ne Fasti

Throughout the turbulent history of the shadow elves, certain events have been very favorable and others have been disastrous! Any happening that seems extraordinary is carefully recorded by the shamans of Rafiel. The anniversaries of these occasions become special days: *fasti* and *ne fasti*.

A *fasti* day is considered good; it commemorates some special success or good for-

tune of the shadow elves. A *ne fasti* day recalls some inauspicious moment in history. Both types of days have special rules concerning the types of activities that may be conducted on them.

For example, a *fasti* day is a good day for conducting official business, getting married, or being born (many adults do their best to conceive children to be born in the month of Birth, *fasti* for births; see below). A *ne fasti* day is a bad day for any of these things, and a shadow elf will go out of his way to avoid this coming to pass. The shamans and the very devout will not conduct such business on *ne fasti* days except in direct emergency. A *fasti* day is considered especially lucky for something that relates to what it commemorates. For example, the date of the first groundbreaking for the Temple of Rafiel in the City of Stars is a *fasti* day. Further, that date is thought to be the very best for beginning new buildings.

Besides the *fasti* and *ne fasti* days, certain days are important in the worship of Rafiel. On many of these dates, grand feasts are held; others are marked by fasting. On yet others, worshippers fast most of the day, and then hold a large celebration, with plenty of food and drink, at the end of the day.

## Specific Dates

Here is a list for each month of the major *fasti* and *ne fasti* dates, together with any special feasts, celebrations or events held on those dates.

**Gathering 1:** The first day of the shadow elf year is actually both *fasti* and *ne fasti*, commemorating the date of the Blackmoor holocaust which destroyed the surface. Shadow elves fast all day; no official business is transacted, but births on this day are considered well aspected and a sign of good fortune.

**Name 2:** This day is *ne fasti*, marking a disastrous attack of orcs against the City of Stars. The onslaught was so great that hobgoblin troops reached the very steps of the Temple of Rafiel before being repulsed. Tens of thousands of shadow elves were slain. At eight in the "evening," virtually the whole population of the City (save those on guard duty and the like) walks out to stand around the Temple of Rafiel. This huge gathering stands in eerie, total silence for a few minutes before the Radiant Shaman emerges from

the Temple to wave a blessing upon them. The shadow elves break into quiet weeping before slowly dispersing to their homes. Many bring a single flower from the memory gourd plant (see p. 38) to cast upon the steps of the temple, so that by the time the crowd has gone the steps can be shin-deep in these exotic white flowers. This simple ceremony has a powerful emotional effect on any outsiders watching it!

**Refuge 9:** This day is *fasti*, celebrating the discovery of the Refuge of Stone in the vast cavern that holds the City of the Stars. The day is one of joyous celebration, feasting and singing, tempered with dignified devotions to Rafiel.

**Shaman 2:** This day is *ne fasti*, marking the date of the destruction of Aengmor, which sank into a sea of lava.

**Crystals:** This entire month is *fasti* for beginning new excavations of soul crystals. No matter when a vein is first discovered, work will not begin on excavating them until this month.

**Birth:** This entire month is considered *fasti* for births. The percentage born with deformities is very low indeed during this month, although the percentage born with the mark of the shaman is normal. Since the gestation period for shadow elves is 12 months, the month is one which arouses deep and complex emotions in shadow elves. While being anxious and fretful about birthing itself, shadow elves fondly recall the determination of their efforts to conceive at this time. Many young elves will pair at this time, beginning relationships or marriages.

**Wanderers:** The entire Month of Wanderers is *ne fasti*. The whole race of shadow elves, in all of their cities, rests from any non-essential activity. No new buildings are started or finished, crops are not planted or harvested (although they will be tended), and travel is kept to a bare minimum. During this month, shamans hold round-the-clock vigils in the Temple of Rafiel, with hourly sacrifices to ensure the strength of the shadow elf race. Being born during this month prevents one from ever becoming an officer in the army, or building a stronghold. Shamanic births are also extremely rare during this month, although if they do take place this is regarded as great good fortune, the child destined for pre-eminence in the shamanic hierarchy.

**Wanderers 8:** This day is *ne fasti* and is marked by total abstinence from food or water all day. What event could be so dire as to warrant such commemoration by the shadow elves? The day of their rejection by the elves of Alfheim. The bad luck on this day is not due to any supposed loss on the part of the shadow elves — Rafiel will guide and protect them, after all — but rather the disgrace laid upon the entire race by the surface elves' inhospitality and bad manners toward their clan brothers.

**Temple 14:** This day is *fasti*, marking the laying of the cornerstone of the Temple of Rafiel. Remodelling of the Temple always begins on this day. Construction of other temples in other cities is also begun on the fourteenth day of the Month of the Temple.

**Food 16:** This day is *ne fasti*, marking the return of the shadow elves' second surface party, which reached the Sun's Anvil in the Broken Lands and concluded that the surface was still uninhabitable.

**Days 19:** This day is *ne fasti*, marking the return of the elves' first surface party. This party found only the red sun, and no livable conditions for shadow elves.

**Army 1:** The first day of the month is *fasti*, and is known as Mustering Day among the shadow elves. Every adult shadow elf is considered a member of the shadow elf army. On this day each year, a census is taken of all available soldiers.

**King 1:** This day is *fasti*, for it is the birthday of Tarasfir, the first King of the shadow elves selected by the shamans under the guidance of Rafiel.

**King 12:** This day is *fasti*, for it is the birthday of Telemon, the current King of the shadow elves.

**Others 15:** This day is *ne fasti*, marking the outbreak of a plague in Alfmyr which killed over 10,000 elves in a matter of weeks. The plague was brought by a shadow elf who had been in Glantri when it appeared there first, and since dwarves were blamed for the plague in Glantri the shadow elves in turn blame the dwarves for this terrible misfortune.

**Others 22:** This day is *ne fasti*, commemorating a shameful day in shadow elf history when members of the Felestyr and Celebryl clans quarrelled and fought over ownership of certain prestigious areas in the City of Stars. Tempers were lost, blood ran hot in veins, and some thousand elves were killed

before shame, shock, and the exhortations of shamans stopped the insane slaughter. All combat is prohibited by the way of Rafiel on this day. Community leaders and shamans of the two clans exchange gifts and greetings and take a late evening meal together to break the fasting of the daytime. They wear but the simplest and humblest of robes to this repast, disrobing before shamans to show that they carry no weapons, and given the humble white garments by the shamans after a ritual blessing and washing their hands and feet in a little holy water.

**Bounty 24:** This day is *fasti* and is celebrated with great feasts, to look forward to the promises of Rafiel yet to be fulfilled. The feasts are so ample that they make the process of fasting on the following day much less onerous!

### Keeping Track of Time

It would seem that the shadow elves would have no special reason to keep track of time underground and, in fact, many other underground denizens do not keep track. Humanoids such as orcs sleep when they feel like sleeping, eat when they are hungry, and in general live in a disorganized fashion. Rafiel does not allow this for the shadow elves, and they are careful to obey him.

The temple shamans are in charge of keeping track of time, in order to properly observe *fasti* and *ne fasti* dates. Timekeeping is also important for conducting various ceremonies throughout the day at each temple. The principal method of timekeeping is the waterclock. A large soapstone bowl is filled with water, which drips out over the course of the day, through 14 tiny holes drilled around the bottom of the bowl.

The bowl is further decorated with various religious icons and inscriptions related to the blessings granted by Rafiel. These drawings are inscribed in such a way that the level of the water on the drawings shows the time of day.

The accuracy of these bowls is unbelievably high, and the shadow elves have no need (or desire) to travel to the surface to know the time of day. About once every two months, the chief shaman of a temple will synchronize its clock, adjusting the bowl's water level according to instructions she receives from Rafiel.

### HISTORY AS THE IMMORTALS SEE IT

The history of the shadow elves is a history of hardship, a tale of tribulations which might have destroyed any lesser race. The shadow elves revel in these hardships, believing that their trials are a test of their mettle. Weakness is a grave sin.

### THE BEGINNING

The shadow elves once lived on the surface, just as all other elves still do today. This was 6,000 years ago ("now" is 1000 AC). Over the next several thousand years, some elves (from the southern continent, now under an icecap) travelled north and colonized what is now Glantri. They lived peacefully, developing their culture and magic, until their lives were suddenly shattered by the Great Rain of Fire (3000 BC). The planetary axis shifted, causing incredible climatic upheavals. Blackmoor was forever covered in ice. The elves in Glantri fled to what is today the Broken Lands. They were then driven underground, for the first time in their history, to escape the fiery holocaust that ravaged the surface. Glantri, only a little later, underwent its own temporary ice age.

Eight hundred years later (2200 BC), surface elves fleeing the southern continent arrived in Glantri, hoping to find the earlier elven colonists. Instead, they found humanoids and hostile humans who blamed the elves for the Rain of Fire. These elves did not find their cousins, most of them finding only death at the hands of the savages of the Broken Lands. A few were able to settle, however, and defend some land of their own.

The elves underground made the best of a bad situation in the meantime. They were sylvan folk, so they cultivated the fungus that grew so abundantly in the nether regions and created new forms to suit their needs. They had brought seeds and a few plants with them, and the elvish wizards among them worked hard to produce new plants which could survive in the radically changed environment the elves found themselves in. They feared approaching the surface and so withstood this way of living for as long as they could.

Then the small band travelled back to the

## Time and History of the Shadow Elves

surface, cautiously and with great apprehension. The holocaust seemed to be over, and they settled in Glantri again, in 1950 BC. It seems that they did not meet any of the elves from the second migration, since they were separated by many hostile humanoids and human tribes.

This situation did not last. Around 1700 BC the other, earlier elven settlers in Glantri found a strange artifact from the Blackmoor civilization, in the Broken Lands. They tinkered with it, and it exploded cataclysmically. Great, impenetrable clouds of smoke and ash rose into the sky and did not disperse for years. A dreadful rotting plague affected many creatures in the area, with the ancestors of the shadow elves partly affected. When they first felt the explosion and saw the clouds, these elves fled for the caves below out of instinct and racial memory. This instant flight possibly saved them from extinction.

The elves resumed their subterranean life, while on the surface other developments took place. Humanoids were migrating to and fro across the land and the Broken Lands themselves were slowly being settled. But below, the elves were resigning

themselves to a life of eternal darkness. Their fear of the surface was great.

Yet even in this darkness, there seemed to be hope. In a very deep cavern below the Broken Lands they found a temple, built in a strange and unfamiliar style and the center of a community of barbaric humans, the Azcan (somewhat akin to the Aztecs of our world). The elves drove the humans out after prolonged battling, occupied the area, and adopted the central religion of the humans. Such a fearful and unfortunate people were very ready to worship the Immortal to whom this temple was raised, taking their discovery of it as a sign that he might favor them. Atzanteotl was the Immortal's name, and around his temple they built a great city, which they named Aengmor. Construction of the city, which lasted nearly 50 years, was ended in 1352 BC.

For a short time the elves seemed favored, but another cataclysm was on the way. The Broken Lands were not fully settled from earlier events, and periodic earthquakes and volcanic eruptions ravaged this region. In 1290 BC, a sudden eruption spewed forth a vast lava stream which surrounded Aengmor and trapped the elves.

Many died from toxic fumes or the overwhelming heat, but a fair number escaped through the use of magic. The survivors moved on to even deeper places, abandoning the city of Aengmor forever. They drove down deep, deep below the surface, on a restless decades-long search for a new homeland.

This was a fortunate decision by the elves. Atzanteotl was evil, beginning to demand hideous sacrifices in his unspeakable temple ceremonies. Indeed, the apparent destruction of Aengmor was part of his plan. Dissatisfied with the low birth rate of the elves, he drove them out of Aengmor without actually fully destroying the city. Later, more fecund humanoids would discover the ruins of Aengmor and recolonize it under the bastardized name of Oenmar. In this way, the Immortal of Entropy gained more followers — and more vicious ones — than he would have had with the elves.

### Further Into the Deep —

So the exiled elves travelled further underground, while on the surface life became better.

