

The Lore of Wesnoth's Races & Factions According to DiD (1.7.2)

An analysis of all world-building text specifically from DiD by Deusite

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1. Overview and Introduction

This is a collection of all the lore that can be gleaned from SoF. In its present form, this is a raw collection of facts with a reference to where the supporting text can be found, either by going through the scenario files in data/campaigns/Descent_into_Darkness/scenarios or on the Wesnoth wiki at <http://www.wesnoth.org/wiki/CampaignDialogue:DiD>. There are occasional comments from me after the reference that either criticise the lore (it is contradictory in some places) or fulfil some other function. Lack of comment doesn't mean I find the lore flawless.

Lore is defined for the purpose of this project as all world-building statements that are not directly related to the actual plot of the story. The plot of the story is defined as what you basically remember having happened once you've finished the campaign. Lore is also defined as being general, not specific. Combining these two points, for example, Malin changing from a Dark Mage into a Lich is not lore; however, the way in which Malin changes into a Lich, *is*.

There may be some things that I have forgotten. Some bits of lore I have missed. PM me, or post a message in the appropriate thread if you think you found something I didn't. I want this to be complete.

Ideally, a project like this would proceed in the following way; first, there would be a collection of *all mainline lore*, at which point all lore would be rewritten to be consistent. After the rewrite of the lore itself was complete, there would be a rewrite of all campaign dialogue to be consistent with the new lore. Concurrent with this rewrite would be an attempt to develop a Wesnothian writing style and Wesnothian dialects and to remove anachronism and dialect inconsistency.

This project would require more writers than at present. I do not have the patience to write a document like this for every mainline campaign before I start anything. However, luckily, lore and plot are mostly separate. Lore can be rewritten and the plot can remain untouched.

Thanks to Dave and the maintainers of Wesnoth for a great game, thanks to the original writers of the mainline campaigns for being the pioneers they were in Wesnoth world building, thanks specifically to Turuk of the Writer's Forum, and thank you for reading this.

2. General Wesverse Lore

Religion/Afterlife: There are ‘Gods of Darkness’, or it is just a saying when everything goes wrong. (S6)

A Ghost curses Malin for ‘keeping me from my final rest’ (S3). This suggests a belief and/or existence in the afterlife. The ghost is the soul of either a goblin, an orc or a dwarf.

There is also a belief in a hell and demons, or it is just a saying. The saying is ‘what in the name of all demons of hell’. (S7)

The Abyss: Near a frontier town on the northern border of Wesnoth there is an abyss, represented by a lava chasm, anything that doesn’t fly dies (S11).

This would be insignificant if it wasn’t for a comment in the scenario file (and the disabling of death animations), which says ‘Have a nice trip, see you in the fall. . .’. This would suggest that it is a portal to some kind of netherworld and it is opened or has some part to play in ‘the fall’ before Under the Burning Suns begins (it might even be Hell for all we know). There is also a massive chasm nearby, which is next to Mal(in)’s castle.

Northlands: Up until an unknown period after the campaign, Mal Keshar terrorises the orcs and attacks any humans, elves or dwarves who get in the way. After he is defeated he may die. (S12)

It is possible that he retreats into the dubious abyss to return at a later point, but this is also very dubious.

Rats: Rats can grow to ‘truly impressive sizes’ if they eat enough and can be quite aggressive. (Giant Rat description)

3. Dwarf Lore

Names:

- Dap Horner (Dwarvish Steelclad)
- Watchman (Dwarvish Guardsman)
- Foolish Hero (Dwarvish Lord)

Relationships: Dwarves will often ally with humans against the ‘orc hordes’, but they hate necromancers and the undead (S4).

4. Elf Lore

Names:

- Foolish Hero (Elvish Marshal)

Northlands: The Arkan-thoria is the elvish name for this place. Humans call it 'Longlier' (S5). They hate the undead. (S12)

5. Orc Lore

Orcish names:

- Kreg'a'shar Trr (Orcish Warrior)
- Gron'r Hronk (Orcish Warlord)
- K'rrlar Oban (Orcish Warlord)
- Borth (Orcish Warlord)
- P'Gareth (Orcish Slurbow)
- K'Vark (Orcish Warlord)
- Foolish Hero (Orcish Warlord)

Goblin names:

- T'shar Lggi (Goblin Knight)
- Villager (Goblin Spearman)
- Shaun (Goblin Spearman)
- Ed (Goblin Spearman)

Society: Orcs have a council of some kind (S5).

Combat: Every summer northern orcs attack the eastern borders of Wesnoth around Parthyn to 'prove themselves in battle'. Parthyn's guards almost always repelled them and raiding parties were sent to drive the orcs northwards again. Sometimes they attack earlier in the year with more ferocity (S1). They have attacked since the very founding of Wesnoth. (S5)

Orcs trample fields, kill livestock, raid towns and homes, kill in cold blood and despoil beautiful things. (S1,5)

Goblins: 'Goblins are a bastard race born of the orcs, and help them in their wars against humans and dwarves'. They live in villages separate from orcs (S2). This probably means they're looked down on by orcs.

They call walking corpses zombies, the 'zed' word (S2). This may suggest that villagers know the alphabet or are even literate.

Relationships: They hate the undead. (S12)

6. Wesnoth Lore

Names:

- Malin Keshar (Apprentice Mage/Dark Mage)
- Drogan (Sergeant/Lieutenant)
- Gorak Cole (Bandit)
- Dela Keshar (Frontier Baroness)
- River fort guard (Spearman/Bowman)
- Zephrin (?)
- Lord Karres (Arch Mage/Great Mage)
- Taylor (General)
- Night Watchmen (Spearman/Mage/Red Mage/Silver Mage)
- Gate Guard (Pikeman/Heavy Infantryman)
- Head Trainer (Sergeant/Lieutenant)
- Townperson (Spearman)
- Guard (Halberdier)
- Guardian (Mage/Silver Mage/Red Mage/White Mage)
- Sir Caddaeus (Paladin)
- Foolish Hero (Royal Guard/Assassin)

Combat: The area around Parthyn in the east was regularly attacked by orcs each year. The city guards repelled them and raiding parties to drive them back north. Sometimes they are attacked earlier in the ear and more fiercely (S1). They have been attacked since Wesnoth was founded (S5). Parthyn is overrun with orcs by the end of the campaign. (S11)

Dwarves will often ally with Wesnoth against the ‘orc hordes’ (S3).

In the area surrounding Parthyn women are trained to fight against the orcs with a staff and a sling and the most proficient they can defeat a foolish orcs easily (Frontier Baroness description). This unit is statistically and graphically identical to a level 2 version of Lady Jessene in TRoW.

Magic: Potential students for Alduin can be chosen at random by another mage if they sense ‘strong magical abilities’. Students can start from at least the ages of 10. Training lasts more than eight years, although we can’t tell how long because Malin gets expelled. (S1)

‘Poor judgement’ can get a student expelled from Alduin. Cursing someone with boils for the rest of his life constitutes this. (S6)

Tath is ruled by a ‘mage Lord’. The lord of this campaign was trained as a mage and supports a large number of them in their studies. This lord owns a library in his manor, which contains the book that shows Malin how to become a Lich (S7,8). Paladins revere Tath. (S10)

Why would they ever consider keeping the book? Why not burn it or generally destroy it? Is this book possibly the ‘Book of Crelanu’ or related to it?

A few priests can brew holy water in a complicated and mysterious procedure. It is often used to fight the undead, and ‘it burrrnnns...’ (S7)

Mages can cast ‘illusion spells’. This spell breaks when the mage who cast it dies (S8). This may apply to all spells when the mage who cast them dies.

Society: A baron who also acts as the commander runs Parthyn (S1). It is impossible to tell how many towns are run by a barony.

‘The penalty for necromancy is death’, usually this is done on the spot if they are caught. Being banished ‘on pain of death’ can make a compromise, which can be from the city or the whole of Wesnoth (S1). People who defy banishment must be killed (S6).

Preventing allies from protecting a city constitutes treason (S6).

Towns have signposts (duh). (S1)

Relationships: People from around Parthyn have ‘up-country accents’. Wesnothians from other areas sometimes mock it (S6). Humans hate the undead. (S12)

7. Wose Lore

Names:

- Dumdumbadoom (Ancient Wose)

Woses hate the undead. They engage in 'slumber' (S11). The word 'slumber' is vague. It could be sleep, suspended animation, being a tree, anything.

8. Undead Lore

Names:

- Darken Volk (Dark Sorcerer)
- Mal Keshar (Lich)
- Tortured Soul (Ghost)

Necromancy: Necromancers wear clothes that make them recognisable as such. This is odd considering that necromancy is punishable by immediate death in Wesnoth; a lenient punishment is banishment from the town or all of Wesnoth (S1). If they defy this they can be killed. (S6)

Sometimes necromancers teach dark magic to other people (S2). This was only done in the campaign so Malin would retrieve the book from That.

Necromancers hate orcs (S2). Darken Volk may just say he hates orcs so Malin will become his 'apprentice'.

Dead people's souls are needed to raise certain undead (S2); this includes Ghosts. Imprisoned souls (Ghosts) may break free and try to destroy their master if they are not controlled properly. The longer they are left free, the more souls it can turn against the necromancer. Many young necromancers die when their 'servants' turn on them. (S3)

Ghouls will gravitate towards swamps if they outlive their masters because they are drawn by the natural decay. They were murderers and outlaws in life; magic transforms them so their outsides match the spirits within (S2). The origins of ghouls may be a lie to make Malin feel better about using them.

Necromancers can collapse tunnels with 'a word and a gesture'. (S10)

Torches affect the undead very little (S5).

Oh, to become a Lich: In order to become a Lich (this might not be the only way) 'one must first die. The spells of necromancy bind the spirit, but only once it has been unbound from the body. To become a lich, the mage must make the necessary incantations with his dying breaths. He thus binds his own spirit in much the same way necromancers bind the spirits of others. Because he retains his own will, however, the lich can call upon the awesome powers of the spirit world.' The book says that an altar is needed for the transformation. The Lich needs to drain energy after the process is complete because he will be weak (cold burns, you know). (S11)

Contradiction: *After this procedure Malin Keshar's name changes to Mal Keshar. The 'secret undead lore' on the wiki states that the 'Mal' prefix derives from Mal Ravanal. However, this campaign predates Mal Ravanal's time so that cannot be wholly true. I suggest that the 'Mal' prefix is related to malice or being malicious.*

Relationships: Humans, dwarves, elves, orcs all hate the undead. (S12)