

The Dhrak could be considered distant cousins of the more well known Drake race. Once Drakes themselves many centuries ago, their prolonged isolation transformed them into something... else. The Ancient Drake themselves are disgusted and horrified by the Dhrak, who they believe have irrevocably tainted the Noble dragon bloodline.

So much time spent brooding and planning has made the Dhrak spiteful and arrogant, looking down on their Drake ancestors as weak as pacifistic. The Dhrak imagine a world crushed under their claw and wing, and all of the lesser races subservient to them.

Inherently magical creatures, the Dhrak are fueled by a corrupted internal flame, twisted by dark magic. This inner fire, while the source of their formidable power, also acts as their greatest weakness, rendering them particularly vulnerable to arcane attacks. When a Dhrak falls in battle, the release of their internal magical energies incinerates most of their remains, leaving behind little more than ash. Despite this vulnerability, their mastery of fire and corruptive magics surpasses even that of their Drake ancestors, striking fear into the hearts of their kin.

### Society and Hierarchy

Dhrak society is warlike and strictly caste-based. From a young age, Dhrak are assigned to one of five castes: Sky, Blood, Death, Flame, or Power. Movement between castes is unheard of, and each caste has distinct roles and functions within society. The Dhrak venerate strength, cunning and physical and magical prowess among their people and they pass around stories and myths of their hero's and legends, as curated by the Power caste as these may be.

The heart of a Dhrak tribe is governed by the Power Caste, a ruling elite headed by a leader who is either mutually respected—or more often feared. Within this strict hierarchy, every Dhrak must earn their place, obey their superiors, and command their subordinates. Promotion to the ruling elite is possible only by challenging and defeating a superior, a practice that extends even to the hierarchy within the elite. Unlike the honorable Drakes, however, the Dhrak are willing to employ deception, subterfuge, and ruthless cunning to advance within their caste. This cutthroat ambition pervades every aspect of Dhrak society.

### A Rise to Power

For centuries, the Dhrak have brooded in the shadows, honing their strength and biding their time. Now, they have stepped forward, determined to claim their place in the world of Wesnoth. Their warlike nature, a trait inherited and amplified from their Drake ancestors, drives them to conquer new territories, enslaving or destroying any who stand in their way.

The Dhrak have refined their smithing techniques, crafting weapons and armor imbued with cursed bone. This dark craftsmanship reflects their relentless pursuit of power through corruptive means.

## Origins and Reproduction

The Dhrak are created through a mysterious and corruptive process, the details of which remain largely unknown. Only high-ranking members of the Death Caste are privy to the secrets of this transformation. Drakes who undergo this process either embrace their new existence as Dhrak and are assigned to a caste, or they become mindless husks, serving as disposable frontline soldiers or slaves to the Death Caste's whims.

Rumors persist that some Dhrak have developed the ability to reproduce naturally, but such claims are swiftly silenced by the Power Caste.

## The Castes of Dhrak Society

Researchers have pieced together some understanding of the Dhrak castes and their roles:

### Sky Caste:

The Sky Caste is unique among the Dhrak, consisting exclusively of Skyseers, Skyreavers, and Skymasters. These Dhrak are the only ones permitted to fly freely beyond their territory, a privilege closely monitored by the Power Caste. The Sky Caste operates autonomously but remains tightly controlled due to their strategic importance. The members of this cast act as scouts, messengers and have developed a unique ability to navigate cavernous terrain.

### Blood Caste:

The Blood Caste forms the backbone of the Dhrak military. Its members, including the elite Bloodsworn, are ferocious warriors who attack with blinding speed and shadowed claws. Some Blood Caste warriors appear to drain the life force of their enemies, a trait that bolsters their relentless fury. Those with leadership potential often rise within this caste. Often members of this caste have been seen taking trophies from the bodies of their fallen enemies, setting them apart from their peers.

### Flame Caste:

Representing the last vestiges of the Dhrak's original connection to fire, the Flame Caste is devoted to mastering corruptive magic. Its ranks are filled with Cultists, who endlessly strive to perfect their spells and ascend the social hierarchy. The most ancient and powerful Flame Caste members possess mastery over fire that rivals their Drake ancestors. Others sacrifice their life force to unleash devastating curses upon their foes. The members of this caste carefully curate in the Dhrak people a reverence for the corruptive powers within them and are among the few Dhrak who hold a deep, if not corrupted appreciation for the inherent Drake mastery over fire.

### Power Caste:

Contrary to previous speculation, the Power Caste is not composed of natural leaders but rather of the most cunning and ruthless Dhrak. Known as Manipulators, these Dhrak oversee all aspects of society, with representatives embedded in every other caste. The highest-ranking members include Overseers, Priests, and even the infamous Dominator. Occasionally, an exceptionally shrewd Royal rises to the caste's highest echelons, ruling with an iron grip.

### Death Caste:

The most enigmatic and feared of all the castes, the Death Caste commands respect even from the Power Caste. They are the architects of the Dhrak race, wielding their corruptive magics to twist bodies and souls in pursuit of their dark goals. Those with a natural affinity for these magics are inducted into the Death Caste, while failed conversions are reduced to husks. Among their ranks are rumored Necromancers and shadowy figures known as Reapers, who are dispatched to enforce the will of the Power caste. The Death caste is known to perform profane rituals, and defile the dead trying to reach mastery over the power of death itself.

Despite the threat that the Dhrak no doubt pose to the other races of Wesnoth, they are a group plagued by infighting, corruption and deception. They have a surprising amount of coordination at the moment and raise their banners in preparation to march to war, but researchers and magi are hopeful that the Dhrak Empire can be crushed by quite literally cutting the head off the serpent.