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Runedar Story Overview

Document Introduction

So, this document will be continuing off from the previous documents we already have in the project folder. I'm hoping to, rather than picking and poking at each individual area as we come to it, give an overview of the story as a whole. After that, we can start "zooming in" on each area and fleshing out the story more and more. So, here (as with the previous documents), we'll be dealing with the "broad strokes" more than the finer details.

As we've discussed (if my notes are right), the story will be broken into a few chapters, which I'll slightly modify for the benefit of the outline, here. The entries written in green have already been drafted, elsewhere.

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Journey's Start
- Chapter 3: The Elves
- Chapter 4: The Humans
- Chapter 5: The Beastmen
- Chapter 6: The Dwarves
- Chapter 7: The Finale

So, this leaves us with four chapters to cover. Plus, I'd like to make a brief summary of the overall plot, just for ease of access. After receiving notes, we can make edits as need be. Good? Good.

Plot Summary

Argon is the former king of the Dwarves in the land of Runedar, a small continent with highly varied biomes, peopled by four distinct groups: dwarves, humans, beastmen, and elves. Societal structure in Runedar is heavily influenced by the Obelisks: massive, ancient magical structures that seem to bestow blessings upon certain groups, while harming others. As a result of this divide, the four groups are heavily segregated and split between the continent's many biomes, with little to no "crossing over."

Also notable is the presence of monsters; highly powerful creatures that seem to come from other worlds and, thus, pose an enormous threat when they rear their ugly heads.

But, back to Argon. Argon was the son of one of the dwarven lands' greatest kings and, upon succeeding him, became known for his insatiable curiosity, forward thinking... and, to some degree, his tendency to put too much trust in his allies. His uncle, the military leader Karnoss, crafted a coup and stole the throne from Argon before exiling him from the kingdom. Argon went, but took a map of the "Veins of the World," a semi-mythical cave system known by the dwarves. He traveled for some time before settling into an area far out of range of any of the Obelisks, where he could explore and build a solitary life and focus on sating his curiosity as he mourns the loss of his kingdom and his failure to keep it.

Years into his stay, Argon stumbles upon an unknown Obelisk in his newfound home and activates it. He soon discovers that this Obelisk negates the effects of other Obelisks, creating a land where all groups could live on equal footing. This discovery serves as a keystone for another; that the "Veins of the World" are less mythical than he thinks and are intrinsically connected to the Obelisks.

Argon curiosity gets the better of him and he decides to set off and investigate, leaving his home in the hands of an old friend. But, while his curiosity is what helped him take that first step, he begins to meet more and more like him--outcasts and idiosyncratic characters--who fall into line behind him. As his crew grows, so does his realization that this home of his, where people can live as equals, may provide him a second chance at being a good king, and a good leader.

But, not all is well. Unbeknownst to Argon, Karnoss has had trouble as king of the dwarves. Some of his people have become critical of him, while others are diving deeper into his camp, polarizing Argon's old home. Karnoss has tried much to secure his throne and, in his efforts, discovered a second map like that of the "Veins of the World." It's at least as old but seems more focused on the dwarven lands. He, too, investigates this discovery... and finds that the map leads him to hordes of "tamed" monsters, or golems, sleeping silently in the depths of the mountains.

Karnoss had already begun to harness them as a sideshow, a source of labor, and a potential, mindless military force; decisions that deepened the polarization within the dwarven lands... if nothing else, because it seems to take so much effort just to get these things to work.

But, the day Argon activated his hidden Obelisk, the monsters and golems began to wake up. There was fear, at first, until the dwarves realized the creatures were all standing steady, as though waiting for orders. Desperate, arrogant, and at his wits end, Karnoss gave the order to test out these new, ready troops. And, to his surprise, they seem to work, giving him an ever-growing army.

Or, so he thinks. The longer this goes on, the more the dwarves see the way these creatures look at them. Every so often the creatures glance at them, as though wondering whether to accept the order, or questioning why this small creature dares to order it around.

Almost as though the dwarves are amusing. Harmless.

Karnoss, however, has his army. His supporters view him as the man who revitalized the dwarven lands with this new army, while his opponents (growing by the day) feel trapped. Paranoia is mounting, and Karnoss realizes that he's in danger of losing what he's gathered. The more paranoid he becomes, the more fear runs through the people of his kingdom. Something must come to a head.

Argon hears of these developments along his journey and, after much deliberation and some pressure from his newfound supporters, makes his homeland the last stop in his investigations. Some of the dwarves welcome him back with open arms, seeing him as a potential source of salvation, though they're quiet about this. Meanwhile, Karnoss and his supporters realize that ousting Argon again (or, worse, killing him) would incite a revolution. Instead, Karnoss fakes a welcome and brags to Argon about what he's accomplished and the army he's created; a move that's half threat and half deluded boasting.

Putting two and two together, Argon realizes that his activation of the hidden Obelisk is what woke these creatures up. And, taking into account some of his other studies, Argon begins to suspect that, maybe, the Obelisks weren't originally *designed* to deal with the different groups in Runedar; they were to handle the monsters. Regardless of the truth of the matter, Argon *is* certain of one thing: Karnoss's control of the monsters won't last forever, and this whole thing needs to be ended sooner, rather than later.

He expresses as much to Karnoss--being sure to do it in a public place, loudly, where his words serve to muster his *own* army of supporters and get them fired up. Karnoss, of course, refuses to put the proverbial genie back in the bottle. Argon tells him that, one way or the other, he'll put a stop to Karnoss's game before he can bring his former kingdom down with him. They come to a head, but Argon leaves, swearing to return soon. "This may not be my home, anymore, but I'll be damned if I let you destroy it with your paranoia and cowardice."

But, Karnoss has his own plan. With a small army of his favorite "toys" and some supporters, and riding his personal favorite monster, Karnoss follows Argon and leads an attack on his burgeoning town.

This was a mistake in two ways: Argon's Obelisk serves to weaken and disorient the monsters, and Karnoss hadn't been expecting the support provided by the allies Argon has met over the course of the game. This will likely be the game's final battle.

Argon defeats Karnoss, then uses the Obelisk to either banish Karnoss's army back to the worlds they came from, or order them to go deep into the depths of the dwarven mountains and

sleep. As it turns out, some of the monsters were already handled by the supporters of Argon back home, who finally up and decided to take action.

In the aftermath, Argon is offered his old position as the king. But, preferring a smaller leadership position where he can engage his curiosity, Argon opts to stay in his newly built town, offering any dwarf (or anyone of any group) to come join as they see fit. He may assign one of the allies he met along his journey as the new leader of the dwarven lands.

While the monsters of the world aren't gone and the Obelisks are still active, Argon has gained some closure on his exile and saved his homeland, while building a town that suits his interests.

An alternative: Instead of Karnoss's attack on Argon's home, we *could* also have Karnoss be a smaller player. A cunning despot who bit off a bit more than he could chew. Instead of him attacking Argon, the monsters go berserk. This still allows for the broader strokes shown, here.

With that said, let's get to the outlines of each chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction

(Discussed in Runedar Opening Premise, originally hyperlinked in project folder)

Chapter 2: Journey's Start

(Discussed in Write-Up 3, originally hyperlinked in project folder)

Chapter 3: The Elves

(Discussed in Write-Up 2, originally hyperlinked in project folder)

Chapter 4: The Humans

One note about this chapter, assuming you're on-board with the broader strokes, here: I'm thinking that Argon will meet a dwarf in the human capital who the other humans send him to because it's so strange to see two dwarves there at the same time. Argon is hesitant, because he doesn't want to be spotted, and his emotional challenge will be meeting with the dwarf. However, the dwarf turns out to be on the run because of the stuff going on with Karnoss. He fills Argon in and may join him as a new ally, along with a human. In fact, I was thinking that the human ally you meet here is a friend of that dwarf, and that they've been "penpals" for some time.

And, one last note: what do you think about the idea that Zaid will be one of Argon's main confidants through the story? Maybe in each chapter, Zaid sends Argon a letter and Argon sends one back. The player will be given a choice as to Argon's message. This is one of the ways Zaid convinces Argon to go to the dwarflands--he may come to meet Argon personally during the end of the Beastmen chapter, convincing him to confront his issues.