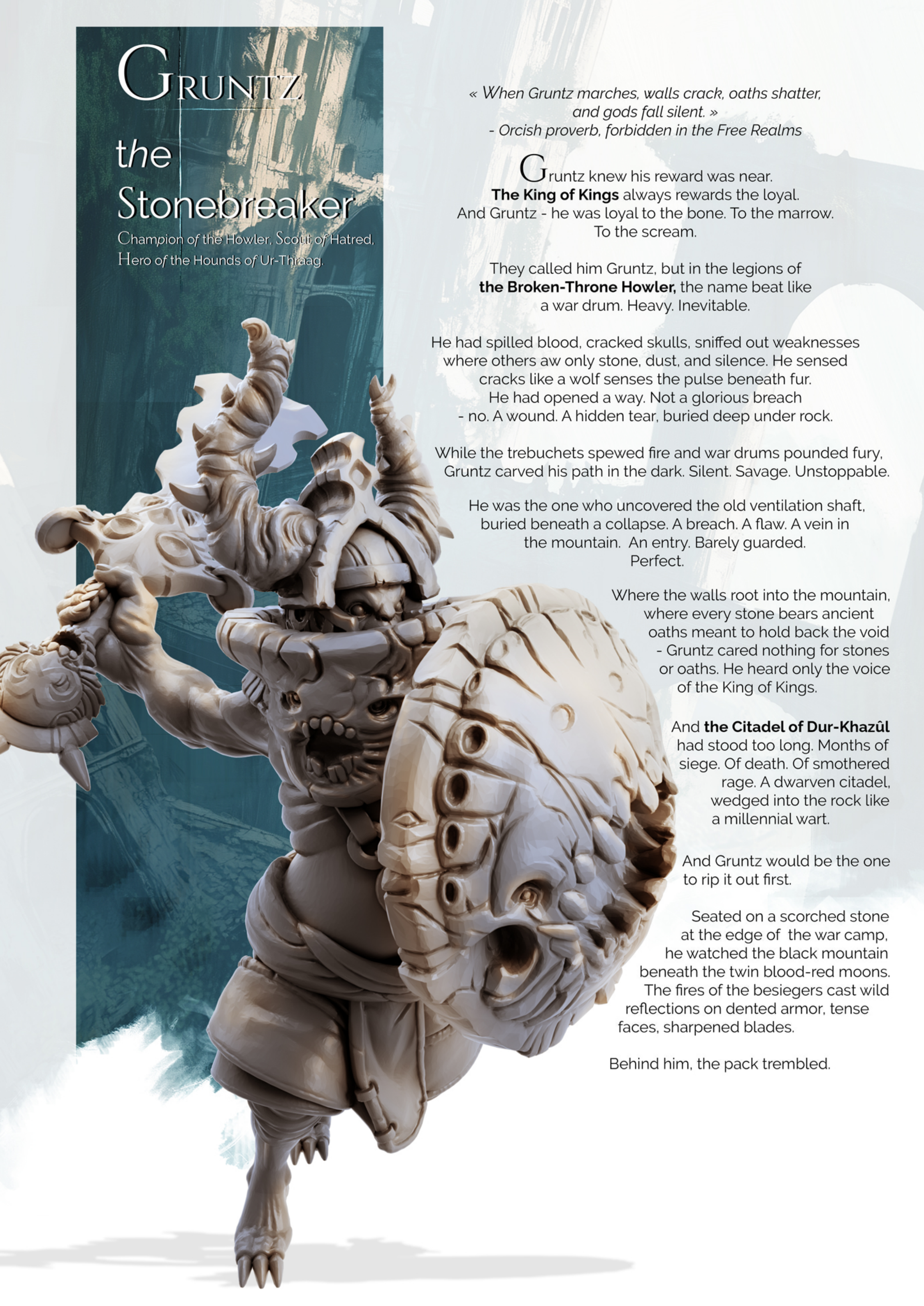




GRUNTZ

the Stonebreaker

Champion of the Howler, Scout of Hatred,
Hero of the Hounds of Ur-Thraag.

« *When Gruntz marches, walls crack, oaths shatter,
and gods fall silent.* »

- *Orcish proverb, forbidden in the Free Realms*

Gruntz knew his reward was near.
The King of Kings always rewards the loyal.
And Gruntz - he was loyal to the bone. To the marrow.
To the scream.

They called him Gruntz, but in the legions of
the Broken-Throne Howler, the name beat like
a war drum. Heavy. Inevitable.

He had spilled blood, cracked skulls, sniffed out weaknesses
where others saw only stone, dust, and silence. He sensed
cracks like a wolf senses the pulse beneath fur.

He had opened a way. Not a glorious breach
- no. A wound. A hidden tear, buried deep under rock.

While the trebuchets spewed fire and war drums pounded fury,
Gruntz carved his path in the dark. Silent. Savage. Unstoppable.

He was the one who uncovered the old ventilation shaft,
buried beneath a collapse. A breach. A flaw. A vein in
the mountain. An entry. Barely guarded.
Perfect.

Where the walls root into the mountain,
where every stone bears ancient
oaths meant to hold back the void
- Gruntz cared nothing for stones
or oaths. He heard only the voice
of the King of Kings.

And **the Citadel of Dur-Khazûl**
had stood too long. Months of
siege. Of death. Of smothered
rage. A dwarven citadel,
wedged into the rock like
a millennial wart.

And Gruntz would be the one
to rip it out first.

Seated on a scorched stone
at the edge of the war camp,
he watched the black mountain
beneath the twin blood-red moons.
The fires of the besiegers cast wild
reflections on dented armor, tense
faces, sharpened blades.

Behind him, the pack trembled.



THE HOUNDS OF UR-THRAAG

Not a cohort. Not an army. A horde.

They were larger, heavier, and more fiercer than the other warpacks. Like distinctive signs, their chests and arms, smeared with ochre and blue, bore the war paint of the Howler's warriors. Some wore animal jaws as masks, others had monstrous maws carved into their shields. Their eyes burned with nameless fury.

They lived only to snatch victory, to bite, to obey.

They were ready.

They were waiting for their leash to be loosed.

And Gruntz - Gruntz held that leash.

Perhaps tomorrow, he would lead them.

It wasn't a hope.

It was a certainty.

He had carved his place with fangs, with axe, with iron will.

Tomorrow, they would pour through the tunnels like venom.

They would strike from within. And Dur-Khazûl would fall.

But that name would not survive.

For when Pistil the Howler rose above the blackened ruins, he would rename the fortress: **KaarGul, « the Black Maw ».**

A new name. A new age.

A scar carved into the mountain with hate.

Already, elves and men whispered its name with a lump in their throat: **the Stone Scar.**

A red, smoking gash torn through **the Free Realms.**

A wound that would never heal.

Gruntz smiled.

He didn't crave gold or land. He wanted a roar.

A scream in the throat of the world.

He wanted Pistil, the King of Kings, to etch his name in fire.

He wanted the glory of a true hero - the kind who breaks kingdoms.

He wanted the gaze of a crowned god.

He wanted to be remembered as the Breaker.

The one who made stone scream.

The one who turned a citadel of stones into a throne for his king.

The one who opened the Black Maw.

And any who dared stand between him and his destiny...

...he would crush. Slowly.

