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WELCOME TO MARCHION

Harald was glad to be back in Marchion after a long trip through the mountains. It was getting late, and the dwarf was pleased he'd reached the city before the gates were shut for the night. He guided his pony through New Mages, relieved that the streets were less crowded than he had feared, and crossed the Upper Bridge into the Spires.

As he rode through the wealthy neighborhood, he noticed a number of residents giving him nasty looks. Looking around, he realized that he couldn't see anyone else riding. Blushing furiously, he dismounted and led the pony down a back street. Obviously some law about riding in the Spires district had been passed while he'd been away. The quicker he could get back to Stonewall and unload his mount, the better.

"Hello, dwarf."

The elf had stepped out of a doorway right in front of him, and Harald was distracted for a moment while he calmed his pony.

"Good evening, my friend. What can I do for you?"

"I'm no friend of yours, *dwarf*." Harald didn't like the sound of that, and particularly not the emphasis on the

last word. Glancing around, he saw that another three elves had come out of the shadows behind him. He took a deep breath, trying to stay calm.

"Well, no, we haven't met. My apologies. I am Harald Stonefist, a merchant. Pleased to meet you." The elf sneered at him.

"Hark at the dwarf. 'Pleased to meet you.' You won't be so pleased in a moment!"

The first kick came from behind, and as Harald turned he was struck again, in the shins. He lost his

balance and fell to the ground, where the pounding began in earnest. He heard his pony run off as he ineffectually tried to fend off the blows with his hands.

Suddenly, the beating stopped, and he heard the sound of running feet.

"Are you alright?"

Harald forced open his swollen eyes, and looked at a familiar face; a well-known adventurer knelt over him. He managed to nod.

"I'm not supposed to need rescuing at *home*," he croaked, as he finally lost consciousness.



OVERVIEW

Welcome to Marchion, a city on the edge of civilization whose greatest enemies lie within. This combined sourcebook and campaign for the SRD rules offers players the chance to save a city from itself.

Most roleplaying scenarios focus on overcoming an enemy, generally by violent means. *Splintered Peace* does not. There are enemies — raiding bands of orcs and their charismatic leader — but overcoming them is only a part of the campaign. The main goal is to rebuild a sense of community among the different racial groups inhabiting the city of Marchion before their dissension tears the city apart and leaves it open to destruction by the orcish horde.

It is not possible to rebuild trust by killing people, not even the people responsible for hatred. Thus the characters must oppose the hatemongers by other means, and take positive action to bring the citizens together again; a challenge as formidable as any military campaign or treasure-hunting excursion.

This campaign is about racism, and about the difficulties inherent in trying to oppose such beliefs. As such, it is only suitable for mature players. Their chronological ages are largely irrelevant, but no one prone to turning every gaming session into a slashfest will enjoy this campaign.

Some GMs may be used to running all humans as having one skin color, all gnomes another, all half-orcs a third, and so on. Because of the emotional weight attached to skin color in the real world, it's best if you make the assumption that everyone in

Marchion has approximately the same skin color. If some of the PCs happen to be a different color, this fact shouldn't be remarked upon.

Splintered Peace consists of two sections. The first part, Chapters One to Four, is a general guide to the city of Marchion. This section provides the information you need to use Marchion in your campaign, as a base for the player characters. Ideally, the characters who are to play in the campaign should be based at Marchion for some time before you run these adventures. This gives them an investment in the city, reasons not to simply abandon it, and potentially useful contacts. The description of Marchion is packed with adventure hooks, so that you should find it easy to write your own adventures set in the city.

The remainder of the book covers the events of Marchion's crisis. A brief overview may help you to integrate all the information there.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

A climatic shift has made the lands to the northwest of Marchion much colder and wetter. As a result, the orcs who lived there have begun migrating south. This has increased the number of orcs near Marchion's trade routes, prompted raids on trading caravans, and reduced the amount of trade flowing into the city.

This restriction is causing hardship, and it will get worse as time goes on. In such situations people look for someone to blame, and members of other races are a natural and common target. Marchion, like any other large community, contains a number of racists, and they capitalize on the opportunity to raise tensions further.

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