

# WARPTSTONE

The independent magazine for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay



## Order of the Dark City by John Foody

This article briefly and loosely describes an order of knights, individuals of which can be used in any campaign. I have kept the details sparse providing information known only to the Orders members.

*Kaspen Denris stood up to address his fellow knights, his face warmed by the huge fire which burnt at the centre of the ring of his thirty three brethren.  
"I welcome you all to the tenth gathering of the Order of the Dark City and especially those that join us for the first time. I hope that some of us have found some clues that will lead us to the end of our quest."*

This article describes an Order of knights who travel the old world in a quest for a goal which none of them know for certain is truly obtainable. To all intents and purposes they are Grail knights searching for something physical but which is also a spiritual quest for personal attainment.

The Order of the Dark City is a collection of, at present, thirty nine knights who have dedicated their lives to searching for a lost set of ruins known only as the Dark City. The Order was founded twenty years ago by Kaspen Denris, two years after a reunion with his old friend Cotel Capper when they discovered they had both received the same dream.

*"The first of our new brethren is Slia von Wittenstein and she will tell of her dream, for a further clue may be contained there in."*

In the dream the dreamer stands on a ledge at the side of a vast cavern which stretches into the distant darkness. Along the cavern floor lie the ruins of a thousand buildings covered in a layer of black soot, statues lie broken in plazas and what may once have been gardens. In the streets lie the mummified bodies of men, women and children and something else humanoid but unfamiliar all caught in the throes of an early death. Each is curled into a foetal position as if trying to protect themselves in some pre-natal memory from the horror that overtook them .

Staring out into this destruction the dreamer senses a change in the dead silence, a distant rumble carried on a wind which grows slowly stronger stirring the dark soot into the air, cracks appear in the roof of the cavern and momentarily the watcher believes they can see the city as it truly stood, but only long enough to grasp the magnificence and the power that once resided there.

Rocks begin to fall further aggravating the dust, now dancing in the daylight shining through the cracks in the ceiling. For a second the collapse stops, silence reigns and in the rubble the dreamer is sure he can see shadows moving, coming closer. The dreamer is suddenly forced to cover their ears as a single crack rips open the roof echoing throughout the cavern. The rest of the ceiling falls to the ground in one huge piece and as it falls, a city is seen on top of the rock. A moment later this is recognisable as Altdorf

(others have seen Middenheim, Nuln and Talabheim) before it shatters on impact, glass and stone fragments cut painfully into the dreamer's skin and blood begins to flow down their face.

As the dust clears no sign remains of the city but at the centre of its impact can be seen the bloodied figures of a dwarf and a wolf. The shadows seen before now start to show themselves, evil, hooded figures poisoned blades held out before them. They clamber silently over the stones in three lines forming a triangle around the two figures, who know the fight can only have one ending. The dreamer awakes and one thing remains certain, the evil creatures have come home and everything is at an end.

*The last of the game was eaten and the bones blackened in the fire. Passing his hip flask to Cotal, Kaspen bought the meeting back to order. "Let us now speak of new signs and progress."*

Denris and Capper both came to the conclusion that they had been chosen to find the Dark City and protect it against the 'hooded evil.' They set out together and searched through the libraries and universities for any references to their dream but could find none even amongst the obscurest volumes and most eccentric scholars.

In an Inn outside Altdorf they dejectedly came to the conclusion they had wasted the last two years in a fruitless search and agreed to go their own ways come tomorrow. As their horses blew clouds in the morning chill they shook hands and promised to meet again when the words 'I to have seen the dark city and the corpse of the Empire upon it.' gave them the hope they have not since lost.

The speaker was Jiza Stries a notorious and feared slaver on the Tilean coast working out of Sartosa. Stories and songs of her had long circulated around the Old World used by travellers as currency for a night's bed and bowl of soup. She had received the dream of the Dark City five times over three years and had handed her three ships over to her second (who she expected to have to fight on her return) and headed to her homeland of the Empire.

They spent the day talking and it was here the Order was born although Jiza refused to join (she has only attended the second gathering). They also agreed on the rules of the order:

- There is no hierarchy, all members are equal although Kaspen Denris is seen by most as the spiritual leader.
- Anyone who has had the dream and is committed to the search for the Dark City can join.
- A meeting is to be held every two years (17th Vorgeheim) to discuss developments although it is not compulsory to attend. It is held in a forest clearing outside Altdorf.

*Dopar Joseph stood and began to speak, 'I have sad news to speak. Our brother Gergor Tours was killed two moons ago in the forest outside Bofenhagen. The Road warden I spoke to said they had no idea who the killers were but he suspected beastmen or mutants as nothing had been stolen and there were signs of torture.'*

The order's members are all warriors that have had years of experience in fighting chaos, and they include ex-witch hunters and templars in their ranks (Jiza Stries seems to be the odd one out). All have a primary loyalty to the Order and a sense of fanaticism that tends to make others uncomfortable. Each member is on their third career at least and most are over forty years of age. They have a wide range of contacts and a few enemies around the Empire.

Members of the Order travel around talking to remote scholars, listening to local tales and generally trying to discover any clue to the city. They are not adverse to travelling with others if they are going in the same direction and will happily join a party on a quest if there is a chance of finding a source of undiscovered information.

*Kaspen Denris stood to close the meeting, saddened that once more no real lead had been found. The sun had begun to rise over the trees and the fire was low when the stranger stepped from the tree line and strode forward ignoring the mass drawing of swords. He stopped a foot from the nearest blade and pulled back his hood, to reveal a handsome half-elven face.*

*"My name is Sard and I have come to speak. I knew your brother Kaspen Denris and I know he spoke of me before his death."*

*The others turned to Kaspen and then most sheathed their weapons.*

*"Speak then Sard."*

*"Two fragments of information is all I have for you and I leave it up to you what you make of them. These are garnered from my last journey into Skavenblight." Looking into their faces he could tell that even among these travelled men and women there was a mixture of disbelief and fear at the accursed name. "The Thirteen lords of Decay have a secret body of knowledge that is hidden from all, even their Grey Seers, but among them is talk of a place they call Sp'ss'darg. There is no direct translation for this but it means Sp'scar's Home, Sp'scar's Median and Sp'scars Stone. Sp'cars is a forbidden word outside the priesthood and they speak of it with a reverence close to that of the Horned Rat. It is possible your city and Sp'ss'darg are one and the same"*

*The Order was stunned, this was important news but there was more to come.*

*"There is one other thing. Your Order's name has been mentioned among the Grey Seers who have sent members of Clan Eshin to search for you. My information is that they have already killed one of your number and I can tell you from experience, he won't be the last."*