

Siege of Darkness Study Guide

Siege of Darkness by Robert Anthony Salvatore

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Plot Summary

The Siege of Darkness is a mystical novel of warfare and victory with a cast of characters which includes humans, drow, dwarfs and gnomes. Drizzt Do'Urden, a renegade drow who has just escaped captivity in the city of Menzoberranzan, unites with his friends in the dwarf city of Mithral Hall to conquer an invading drow army. While set in the mystical world of magic and the supernatural, this novel also incorporates meaningful statements about values such as friendship, trust, loyalty and faith.

The novel opens with Drizzt practicing swordsmanship with his human friend Catti-brie. Catti-brie was a central figure in Drizzt's recent escape from Menzoberranzan. When Drizzt left that drow city, a stalactite was severed and the Baenre House chapel damaged. The drow of Menzoberranzan worry they have lost their goddess's favor because of this damage. This fear is made worse with the sudden loss of magical powers. When the powers return, Matron Baenre, with the added power and approval of her goddess Lolth, kills a rival House Matron, then organizes forces to march to Mithral Hall. She plans to capture this dwarven city and kill the renegade Drizzt.

The dwarfs have prepared for the battle, however, and have a barrage of allies fighting on their side. While they fight courageously the dwarfs and their allies are saved from defeat only by the rising sun. The drow, who live in darkness, are terrified of the brightness of the light and quickly retreat. Meanwhile Drizzt and four other warriors find Matron Baenre and her daughters in a tunnel near Mithral Hall. A glitch in magic, provided by an angered tanar'ri, helps Drizzt and his friends overcome and kill the evil Baenre and her followers.

As the self-centered and power hungry drow battle the virtuous dwarves, a lesson is taught about the importance of community, friendship and love. Although the dwarfs and their allies have their differences they bind together to overcome the forces of evil. The drow of Menzoberranzan, however, work only for their own personal glory. It is this inability of the drow to bind together and fight for a united cause that leads to their demise.



Demons!, Prologue, and Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter One, Diplomacy

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In the pre-prologue "Demons!" Errtu is angered when Matron Baenre calls a glabrezu from the Abyss. Errtu believes this action is performed only to torment him. Errtu believes Matron Baenre's calling of the glabrezu is a intentional attempt by Lolth to offend Errtu.

In the Prologue, Lolth, the Spider Queen, walks through the Abyss looking for Errtu. When she locates the creature, Lolth asks Errtu if he is aware of the problems in the pantheon. She explains there is a time of trouble on the way. These troubles will punish the gods for their foolishness but will also be beyond Lolth's ability to control. Lolth is afraid that if she becomes involved in the troubles, the prayers of those faithful to her will go unanswered. Although Errtu is unable to go to the city of Menzoberranzan, his minions will be able to visit the city through a gate kept open by Lolth's priestesses. Errtu is angry at this proposition because as a condition of his banishment, he no longer has the freedom to visit the Prime Material Plane. Although Errtu is suspicious of Lolth's trustworthiness, she promises Errtu a gift that will allow freedom from his banishment if he completes the task as she commands.

In an introductory letter prior to Chapter One Drizzt describes the preparations for battle at Mithral Hall. Even Bruenor Battlehammer, the dwarf who had lost his will when Wulfgar is killed, is eagerly helping in the battle plans. As Drizzt contemplates the eagerness with which all are preparing for battle, he realizes the importance of hope, hope that the future will be better than the past.

In Chapter One, the human Catti-brie excels at her fighting lessons with Drizzt. Drizzt is wearing magical bracers said to make the wearer's hands move faster. He believes these bracers are more of a hindrance than a help, though, as they throw him off balance. As they finish practice and Catti-brie removes her protective gear, Drizzt admires her female body. He does not hear Bruenor, Catti-brie's adoptive father, enter the room. Bruenor does not notice Drizzt's gapping because he is angry at Berkthgar the



Bold's demand for Aegis-fang. Aegis-fang is a battle hammer once carried by the now-deceased Wulfgar. Because the dwarves need to keep Berkthgar's barbarians as allies, Catti-brie and Drizzt decide to reason with Berkthgar concerning the ownership of the hammer.

Khazid'hea, Catti-brie's sword, desires to be wielded by the best fighter in the area. When Drizzt killed the sword's former owner, the sword believed Drizzt would carry it. Because he preferred the scimitar, however, Drizzt gives the sword to Catti-brie. Although she is not the best warrior, Khazid'hea sees improvement in her. It believes that if it can convince Catti-brie to kill Drizzt, it will then be held by the best warrior.

Matron Baenre oversees the work being done to repair the damage done to the chapel of Menzoberranzan's First House. The chapel was damaged when Drizzt escaped from the city. As a result of the damage to the chapel, the alliance between the leading Houses of Menzoberranzan was also destroyed. Jarlaxle walks up behind Baenre. She asks him what he has learned. Although he wants to be sarcastic, he instead answers honestly that he has uncovered no conspiracy either in the other Houses of Menzoberranzan or in Baenre's own children.

Demons!, Prologue, and Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter One, Diplomacy Analysis

The pre-prologue gives a brief personality description of Errtu and those of his kind. He is selfish and self-centered. He believes Matron Baenre and Lolth, whom he obviously dislikes, are working together to offend him. In the Prologue, more information is given about the personalities of Lolth and Errtu and their relationship with each other. Lolth is apparently a powerful goddess. All creatures seem to fear her, except perhaps Errtu. Errtu's fear of Lolth seems to be founded in distrust more than fear. Even though she offers him the ability to break free of his banishment, he does not necessarily trust that Lolth will keep her end of the bargain.

This Prologue section of the book gives both insight into what will happen in this book, as well as what happened in past books. This information is important since this book is part of a series. Events in the prior books of the series affect the relationships and circumstances included in this book. For instance, the Prologue lets the reader know Errtu has been banished because he was overcome in battle by the drow, Drizzt Do'Urden. Errtu is eager not only to end his banishment but also to even the score with Drizzt.

In this section Drizzt, the hero, and Catti-brie, the heroine, of the novel are introduced. Drizzt serves the role of sparring tutor for Catti-brie. Although Catti-brie is a human and Drizzt a drow, Drizzt is attracted physically to the young woman. Catti-brie, however, has recently begun to use a new sword, a sword that wants Drizzt dead. It is the sword's intention to influence Catti-brie in a way that she will want to kill Drizzt.



It becomes evident that one of the main themes of this novel is power. First, Lolth tells Errtu that there will be a power struggle involving the gods. Also, there is Berkthgar's desire for power as new chieftain of Settlestone. He believes the way to get the power he desires is to carry the war hammer, Aegis-fang, once carried by the now-deceased Wulfgar. It is Catti-brie's intention to show Berkthgar that power is not gained by things but by worth.

Meanwhile, in the town of Menzoberranzan there are power struggles between the various ruling houses. Matron Baenre, leader of the First House, is attempting to recover from an assault on her physical home by Drizzt. Apparently, Drizzt was held captive at some point in earlier novels by the Baenre clan. When he broke free from his imprisonment, Drizzt caused a stalactite to fall through the domed chapel roof of House Baenre. This incident causes leaders of the other Houses to believe Baenre is no longer in Lolth's favor. Fearing this will cause the members of the other Houses to turn against her, Baenre calls upon the wicked mercenary Jarlaxle to bring news of any rising conspiracy. Although Baenre calls for help from Jarlaxle, it is clear that the two do not trust one another. The two basically fake an alliance in order to use the others' abilities.



Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Two, The Gutbuster Brigade and Chapter Three, At Play

Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Two, The Gutbuster Brigade and Chapter Three, At Play Summary

In Chapter Two, Catti-brie and Drizzt travel through the heart of Mithral Hall on their way to Settlestone. The dwarves who work here are busy making necessary tools and armor in case there is a fight against the drow. They find the halfling Regis busy helping Thibbledorf Pwent train his Gutbuster Brigade. Drizzt explains their mission to Regis and asks if Regis would like to come along. Unusually dedicated to his job, Regis decides not to go but lets Drizzt borrow his enchanted ruby before Drizzt has a chance to ask for it. Drizzt promises to use the ruby only as a last resort.

Councilor Firble and Belwar Dissengulp make rounds of the tunnels located around the svirfnebli town of Blingdenstone searching for drow. Although Firble wants to go back to the city, Belwar takes the opportunity to talk to the councilor about the uneasiness he feels coming from the city of Menzoberranzan. Firble agrees to set up a meeting with his drow informant, although he feels he will gain little from the discussion.

In Chapter Three, Drizzt and Catti-brie run a race with each other as they travel to Settlestone. Drizzt decides the day is too beautiful to not let Guenhwyvar, his enchanted panther, enjoy it with them. He calls for the big cat using an onyx panther figurine. The three race each other until Drizzt and Catti-brie's exhaustion requires they stop for lunch.

Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Two, The Gutbuster Brigade and Chapter Three, At Play Analysis

Although the tone of the book is serious with the threat of approaching war with the drow, it is also dotted with comic relief. One example of this comic relief comes in the form of the antics of Thibbledorf Pwert and his Gutbuster Brigade. Pwert is trying to teach his dwarves to break a door by running at it full speed and hitting it with their heads. The dwarves don't realize there is a metal panel behind the door that would keep even the stoutest dwarf from breaking it with their heads or any other body part.



Just as the dwarves are preparing for an attack by the drow, the svirfnebli are also preparing for a drow attack. The svirfnebli's fear is that they must leave their town or be killed by the more powerful drow. Meanwhile, Catti-brie and Drizzt travel to Settlestone where they will attempt to convince Berkhgar that he cannot have Wulfgar's war hammer, yet not damage the alliance between the dwarves and the barbarians. Background information included in these chapters lets the reader know that it was Wulfgar who led the Barbarians out of Icewind Dale to Settlestone. Wulgar, who was killed protecting Catti-brie, was engaged to be married to Catti-brie. While the hammer symbolizes power to Berkhgar, to Catti-brie, it is a symbol of the memory of the man who was to be her husband.



Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Four, At the Seams and Chapter Five, Catti-brie's Champion

Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Four, At the Seams and Chapter Five, Catti-brie's Champion Summary

Jarlaxle, who believes he is talking to M'tarl, is surprised to find his companion replaced by Gromph Baenre, elderboy of Matron Baenre. Jarlaxle and Gromph are transported into an extradimensional globe where they can talk about the possibility of a conspiracy. Gromph wants to know if the other Houses are planning an attack against the Baenre House. Although Jarlaxle senses Gromph is truly scared by the possibility of a coup, he decides to be truthful and ensure him there is no conspiracy. Jarlaxle continues to talk. He tries to convince Gromph he believes Lolth alone is not responsible for the goings on in Menzoberranzan. Even after Jarlaxle's discussion with Gromph is finished, Jarlaxle continues to contemplate the troubles in Menzoberranzan. Although he doubts the existence of a second deity and also feels that neither Drizzt's escape nor the damage to Lolth's temple is the sole cause of the trouble brewing in the city, Jarlaxle does agree there is something amiss in Menzoberranzan. Jarlaxle plans to determine how best to benefit from these troubles.

In Chapter Five Catti-brie and Drizzt continue their journey to Settlestone. Once there, they join the barbarians in Hengorot. Drizzt is introducing their purpose for coming when Berkthgar slams down his mead mug interrupting Drizzt's speech. Berkthgar says there will be no alliance if he is not given the war hammer. Although Berkthgar challenges Drizzt to a duel Catti-brie recognizes the problems behind this duel. She speaks up quickly insisting that it should be she who answers the challenge. In Berkthgar's culture it is considered cowardly to fight against a woman. Catti-brie, however, insinuates there may be some other way the two could compete. Once they are outside the mead hall, Drizzt confronts Catti-brie concerning what way she plans to challenge Berkthgar. Catti-brie insists the two will compete only in sword fighting. Throughout their fight, however, Berkthgar continually makes lewd, sexually-explicit comments to Catti-brie. Although the barbarian could easily have killed her, Catti-brie outsmarts the larger barbarian and wins the right to keep Wulfgar's war hammer. When Catti-brie wins the battle against Berkthgar, Berkthgar willingly admits his defeat. He tells his people that Catti-brie has won the challenge, and he will not carry Aegis-fang. As she is leaving, though, Catti-brie warns the barbarian that she will kill him if she hears he ever lies about what when on between the two.



Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Four, At the Seams and Chapter Five, Catti-brie's Champion Analysis

Gromph, a powerful wizard abducts Jarlaxle in an attempt to withdraw information from him. The two obviously dislike each other. Jarlaxle recognizes how badly his abductor needs the information he desires and uses his abductor's fear against him. Although Jarlaxle is sarcastic and self-serving, he is intelligent enough to know that if he isn't honest with the wizard, the wizard will kill him. In the back of his mind, however, Jarlaxle feels that he and the information he can provide Gromph with is too important for Gromph to risk killing him.

Power is an important aspect of this novel. Already Gromph is searching for the problems behind the power struggle he feels is responsible for the disturbances in Menzoberranzan. While some feel their deity has the ultimate power, Gromph believes there is some other power, perhaps a second deity, whose power is conflicting with Lolth's power. Others in Menzoberranzan believe that all their problems come from the escape of Drizzt from the drow city and the ensuing damage to the Baenre House. The real power struggle, however, appears to be between the males and females. In drow community, the females are considered to be the most powerful and influential members of society. It is only the females who are allowed to lead and govern the Houses of the city. Gromph is unhappy that his power is limited by his sex. This high esteem for females is absent in the barbarian settlement of Settlestone, however. In this city females are viewed merely as slaves. This low esteem of women is one reason why Catti-brie is so highly admired after she defeats Berkthgar in their fight for the right to carry the war hammer Aegis-fang.



Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Prologue and Chapter Six, When Magic Went Awry

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In the prologue to Part Two, Drizzt describes the Time of Troubles that is about to befall the land. Drizzt explains that during this time, it was claimed many gods appeared to their people. Many others converted to some form of religion during this chaotic time. Drizzt continues his thought by asking where faith fits into this time when gods allowed themselves to be seen. Drizzt argues that a god so lacking in power that he or she must allow themselves to be seen in order to be believed weakens the idea of and the worthiness of faith. Drizzt explains that he has experienced Mielikki, his god, through his view of the world. To Drizzt, Mielikki represents the truth while other gods, such as Lolth, represent only self-indulgence. While Drizzt does not question the beliefs of others, particularly those who claim to have seen their gods; he asks others to give him the same respect.

In Chapter Six, Berg'inyon Baenre demonstrates his expertise to his fellow dark elves with his twin swords. As one of the elves parries with Berg'inyon, he bumps against the fence that surrounds House Baenre. This fence is enchanted so that any creature that touches it becomes trapped in the fence. The elf, however, is not trapped by the fence. Panic fills those watching because they believe this is a sign that the citizens of Menzoberranzan have fallen out of Lolth's favor. Berg'inyon thinks this is a sign that Lolth is allowing a conspiracy to be launched against his mother's leadership.

King Bruenor Battlehammer attempts to find a replacement for his former high priest Cobble. Each potential high priest must let Bruenor test their own recipe of Holy Water, or mead, then present some magical show. As the dwarves present recover from Jerbollah's failed attempt to turn the lights in the hall red, Stumpet Rakingclaw takes the opportunity to show off her talents. Her mead is considered a nine, but she is also unable to perform magic. At the same time in which Stumpet is attempting to cast her spell, the eyes of wizard Harkle Harpell appear in the chapel. Harpell has attempted to come in response to Bruenor's call for help, but only his eyes have made it to the chapel. Stumpet is given care of the eyes until Harkle can travel to the chapel to retrieve them.

Guenhwyvar, the panther, is tired after her jaunt with Drizzt and Catti-brie. Drizzt uses his enchanted panther figurine to send Guenhwyvar back to the Astral Plane where she can rest. Guenhwyvar lopes along the tunnel that will take her back to the Astral Plane until she reaches a burning portion of the tunnel. A breach in the tunnel pulls the panther toward the break. Back with Catti-brie and Drizzt, Drizzt realizes that the panther figurine is still warm, an unusual phenomena. Drizzt attempts to call the panther back, but the panther is unable to answer her master's call.



Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Prologue and Chapter Six, When Magic Went Awry Analysis

The prologue to each part of this novel is a letter or short essay written by Drizzt. Each of these letters discusses a different aspect of life, aspects that make life enjoyable and livable. In the prologue to Part Two, Drizzt talks about the nature of faith and religion. While he does not question those who claim to have seen their gods on earth, Drizzt asks only for the same respect. He does, however, believe that a god who must be seen in order to be believed, is not worthy of the trust of its followers.

In Chapter Six, magic suddenly no longer works. It is interesting to note the way the different groups of people react when they realize there is something wrong with the inner workings of magic. Those in House Baenre panic. They believe this magical malfunction has occurred because they have fallen out of favor with Lolth, their powerful and cruel goddess. They believe their inability to access their magical powers will lead to nothing but doom and catastrophe.

Those in Mithral Hall, however, take the glitch in the system of magic much less seriously. The writer presents the circumstances in Mithral Hall in a lighter tone and adds comic relief so the reader understands the entire well-being of those in Mithral Hall is not tied up in their ability to use magic. While they do realize something has gone wrong in the system when prospective priestess Stumpet is unable to perform her magic trick, they don't panic as those in House Baenre do. Catti-brie and Drizzt, on the other hand, realize something is wrong when the panther figurine endowed with the power to call Guenhwyvar from the Astral Plane remains warm even after the cat has disappeared. Their fear and panic is justified as they are worried something has happened to their feline friend.



Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Seven, Baenre's Fault and Chapter Eight, Magical Manifestations

Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Seven, Baenre's Fault and Chapter Eight, Magical Manifestations Summary

Uthegental Armgo, weapons master of the second House of Menzoberranzan, pays Jarlaxle a visit to discuss the issues with the system of magic. Uthegental blames the problems on Matron Baenre. Jarlaxle feels Uthegental has been sent to him to feel out the possibility of a coup being formed against House Baenre. Although Jarlaxle tries to reason with the drow, Uthegental is so brainwashed by his faith in Lolth that he can see no other reason for the disruptions in magic besides the idea that Lolth is displeased with her people.

Although Jarlaxle believes K'yorl Odran, Matron Mother of the third House, is spearheading a conspiracy against Matron Baenre, the case is actually the opposite in reality. House Oblodran's form of magic has not been affected by the Time of Troubles. K'yorl plans to use this situation in her favor. In the meanwhile, Matron Baenre contemplates the idea that some force greater than Lolth is responsible for her troubles. She is afraid the other Houses may rise against her believing she is the cause of the troubles with the magic. Matron Baenre calls Methil, her advisor, to prove to her daughters that not all magic has been lost. Methil is still able to communicate telepathically with them, which leads them to reason that K'yorl's mind forces are also still intact. Methil and his species, however, are not great supporters of Matron Baenre. She is unsure if they would be willing to help in a battle against K'yorl.

In Chapter 8 the action returns to Guenhwyvar, Drizzt and Catti-brie. The panther hears Drizzt calling and fights unsuccessfully against the suction from the breach in the tunnel. Meanwhile as Mother Baenre rants against Mithral Hall, she throws the pendant made from the tooth of Gandalug Battlehammer across a room. To her surprise the tooth explodes and leaves Gandalug Battlehammer standing where the tooth once had landed. Gandalug attacks first Matron Baenre, then Berg'inyon, her son, when he enters the room. Methil stops the dwarf from killing Matron Baenre.

In the final section of Chapter 8, Drizzt calls desperately for the panther and refuses to let go of the figurine even though it is burning his hands. Catti-brie knocks the figurine from his hands and then cuts the figurine's head off with her sword. To their surprise after a flash of fire and smoke emits from the broken figurine, Guenhwyvar appears. With the figurine broken, however, there is no way to send the panther back to the Astral Plane, the only place she can truly rest. As Drizzt is contemplating in his room how long



it will take to fix the figurine, Catti-brie bursts into his room demanding he make love to her. As Drizzt tries to make sense of what is happening, he realizes the pommel on Catti-brie's sword has transformed itself from a unicorn to Catti-brie's face. Once Drizzt takes the sword from Catti-brie, she returns to normal. Drizzt realizes Catti-brie has been possessed by her sword.

Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Seven, Baenre's Fault and Chapter Eight, Magical Manifestations Analysis

In this section problems abound for Matron Baenre. Apparently in a previous novel in this series, House Baenre had captured Drizzt. All the Houses of Menzoberranzan had conspired together to invade Mithral Hall, home of Drizzt and clan Battlehammer. Just before the planned invasion, however, Drizzt escapes and during his escape, he causes the chapel in House Baenre to be damaged. Although the damage is being repaired, Matron Baenre is afraid the leaders of the other houses will feel the disruption in magic is her fault because Drizzt was allowed to escape and because Lolth's chapel was damaged. Also in this section Matron Baenre causes the once-imprisoned dwarf Gandalug to be freed when she throws a tooth pendant across a room. This ancient dwarf tries to kill Matron Baenre and is stopped only by Methil, one of the few creatures whose magic is still working.

Another point of interest in this section is the play on words in the scene between Catti-brie and Drizzt. Although Catti-brie's sword is directing her thoughts and actions, Drizzt believes the girl is asking for sex. It is instead the sword's plea to be handled by what it considers to be the best swordsman in the area. Since it has been unable to convince Catti-brie to kill Drizzt, the sword now tries to seduce him through Catti-brie's body.



Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Nine, Implications and Chapter Ten, The Third House

Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Nine, Implications and Chapter Ten, The Third House Summary

In Chapter Nine, Matron Baenre holds a meeting with her children. In this meeting she warns them now is not the time for personal ambitions. She tells her children that if the other Houses decide to rise up against House Baenre, they will not stop with the death of the Matron herself but will dethrone the entire House. Matron Baenre insists to her children they must remain united and must not allow Methil to realize they are no longer the strongest House in the city.

Meanwhile in Mithral Hall, artisans are busy trying to repair the panther figurine. Drizzt is called to the room where the repairs are taking place. He witnesses a dwarf holding a pair of eyeballs above a mortar and pestle as Regis works a black mush in the mortar. Harkle Harpell is directing the mixture of a substance that will supposedly secure the broken figurine until it is able to heal. Drizzt has been called to apply the mixture because his fingers are so dexterous. After Drizzt finishes with his work on the figurine, he and Regis join Bruenor and Fredegar Rockcrusher as the two discuss the possible causes of the troubles with magic. Bruenor states his viewpoint that he does not believe the drow are responsible for the trouble with the magic system.

In Chapter Ten, Jarlaxle is surprised when K'yorl steals into his private office and pays him a visit. She tells him she is about to attack the other Houses of Menzoberranzan. She insists she will win and when she does, she will call for Jarlaxle. Jarlaxle contemplates what this change in power might mean to him. He concludes that he will not stay alive long if magic does not return.

Meanwhile, Matron Baenre is visited by an avatar of Lolth. The avatar tells Baenre that K'yorl has made a mistake by delaying her attack on House Baenre. She gives Baenre a lump of sulfur with which Baenre is to use to fend off K'yorl. Before leaving House Baenre the avatar advises Matron Baenre to meet with the heads of the other houses as well as her eldest daughter to stir up trouble against K'yorl. Meanwhile, Ghenni'tiroth, Matron Mother of the Fourth House of Menzoberranzan, is killed by K'yorl.



Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Nine, Implications and Chapter Ten, The Third House Analysis

Much happens in these two chapters. First, Matron Baenre is relieved to learn that the troubles with magic are indeed not her fault. Instead, it seems that Lolth's anger is centered on K'yorl, who plans to attack the other leading houses while the magic is non-functional. K'yorl angers Lolth further by killing Ghenni'tiroth, simply because she hates her.

Notice that the tone of the book differs depending on which characters are being discussed. For instance, the sections of the book that discuss the inhabitants of Mithral Hall continue to have humorous touches that make these characters seem more personable and their situations seem less dire. When discussing Jarlaxle or the Houses of Menzoberranzan, however, there is no humor. This lack of humorous touches causes these characters and their situations to seem more severe.



Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Eleven, Trump

Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Eleven, Trump Summary

In Chapter Eleven a Tanar'ri enters Jarlaxle's private cave and gives Jarlaxle the message that House Baenre will prevail. Meanwhile, the Matron Mothers of the Houses of Menzoberranzan, with the exception of K'yorl and Ghenni'tiroth, meet together. Those gathered light a fire in a brazier and throw in first a spider mask, then the lump of sulfur the avatar gave Matron Baenre. As flames shoot up, K'yorl enters the room. With the power of her mind, K'yorl begins pushing Matron Baenre toward the flames.

Meanwhile Errtu watches the combat between House mothers from his throne in The Abyss. Although he would like to see Matron Baenre killed, he knows he must follow Lolth's command in order to benefit himself. However, he decides to try to leave The Abyss through the gateway Lolth has provided. He is angered when he finds he still can't leave and decides to keep the other Tanar'ri, those intended to help Matron Baenre, from leaving also. In the absence of the Tanar'ri, it is Methil who saves Matron Baenre from K'yorl. After Methil's telepathic intrusion, two Tanar'ri appear out of the flames. As K'yorl realizes that Lolth is against her, she flees the meeting and returns to her own House. The fiends called by the other matron mothers surround K'yorl's House.

Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Eleven, Trump Analysis

In this final chapter of Part Two, Matron Baenre calls the meeting of the other matron mothers as commanded by Lolth. It is during this meeting that K'yorl realizes that Baenre is still in favor with Lolth and that she, K'yorl, is very much out of favor with Lolth. Notice at the conclusion of the chapter that it is noted that Gromph steals several items from the brazier before he leaves the meeting room.



Part Three: Resolution - Prologue, Chapter Twelve, Worth the Troubles and Chapter Thirteen, Repairing the Damage

Part Three: Resolution - Prologue, Chapter Twelve, Worth the Troubles and Chapter Thirteen, Repairing the Damage Summary

In Drizzt's prologue letter he first discusses how difficult it is for him to stand by and allow Catti-brie to fight her troubles with her sword by herself. He then discusses the sense of accomplishment; it is this sense that he considers to be the ultimate ingredient in any rational being's recipe for happiness. He concludes that he must allow Catti-brie to fight her own battles, proving not only that he believes in her, but also that he respects her.

In Chapter Twelve, Errtu voices his anger toward Lolth because he is not allowed to join the fiends attacking House Oblodra. Errtu and Lolth discuss their differing views of the action around this house. While Errtu would like to be involved in the attack, his banishment does not allow him this freedom. For Errtu's cooperation with Lolth's plan Lolth has promised to give him a gift that will allow Errtu to end his banishment. Errtu decides the promise of this gift is enough to keep him from arguing with Lolth concerning the details of her plan.

Belwar Dissengulp waits with several svirfnebli as a group of gnomish priests attempt to call forth their god, Segojan. Though past attempts to call forth this god had been unsuccessful, the priests try again. This time a creature, later identified as Entemoch, the Prince of Earth Elements, rises from the floor. As Dissengulp realizes that the magic has returned to them, he worries the drow have received their magic also and will soon attack the home of the svirfnebli.

In Chapter Thirteen, Drizzt clears the now-dried salve away from the neck of the panther figurine to see if the figurine has healed. There is no break visible but Fret tells Drizzt the only way to determine if the figurine will work its magic is to try to send Guenhwyvar to the Astral Plane, then call her back. The figurine passes the first test as the panther is successfully sent to the Astral Plane.

Meanwhile, Bruenor meets with Harkell, Regweld, Bidderdoo and Bella don DelRoy Harpell. The eccentric Harpells have been called to help defend Mithral Hall should the drow attack. During the interview Harkell is re-introduced to his eyeballs. The next day Drizzt goes in search of Catti-brie. Drizzt finds her practicing with her sword. He watches her for awhile, then announces his presence. Drizzt tries to take the sword from her but finds the sword no longer wants him. Drizzt challenges Catti-brie to a duel.



During this duel he notices the pommel of the sword has transformed itself to a sleek feminine form, a final symbol that Catti-brie has triumphed over her sword.

Part Three: Resolution - Prologue, Chapter Twelve, Worth the Troubles and Chapter Thirteen, Repairing the Damage Analysis

In this section there are signs that magic has returned. For instance, the gnomish priests are finally able to call their god forth. Drizzt is also able to use the panther figurine to send Guenhwyvar back to The Astral Plane where she can rest. With the return of magic, however, the thoughts of the dwarfs and the gnomes return to the impending attack by the drow. Despite his better judgment, Bruenor has called in the Harpells to assist in the battle he knows is coming. Again, these colorful characters provide comic relief to the tense situation. Note in particular the series of events when Harkell is reunited with his eyes.

In this section also, Catti-brie defeats her sword and makes it her own. Although details of this conquest are not included in the novel, proof of the defeat is seen when Drizzt goes looking for Catti-brie and finds her practicing with her sword. When Drizzt tries to take Catti-brie's sword from her, she instinctively nicks his hands with the sword, a sign the sword no longer wants to be carried by Drizzt. Also, the pommel of the sword has transformed itself into a sleek feminine image, a fitting representation for its new owner.



Part Three: Resolution - Chapter Fourteen, The Wrath of Lolth, Chapter Fifteen, Greed and Chapter Sixteen, Open Hearts

Part Three: Resolution - Chapter Fourteen, The Wrath of Lolth, Chapter Fifteen, Greed and Chapter Sixteen, Open Hearts Summary

Matron Baenre and her followers rejoice that the time of troubles is over. For those in House Oblodra, however, Lolth's minions continue to haunt this residence. Matron Baenre insists to the others that K'yorl will be punished for her insubordination to Lolth by Baenre herself. In the next section, Baenre leads a drow march against House Oblodra. Baenre has seen a vision of what she must do. This vision is given to her by Lolth during a prior meeting with the other drow. The power of the sulfur Lolth's avatar gave Baenre gives her the ability to levitate above the crowd of people.

Meanwhile, K'yorl is seated on a marble throne in her compound when Baenre calls her. Unfortunately for K'yorl when magic returned to the other drow the Oblodran ability to communicate telepathically was lost. Matron Baenre's movements are guided by the piece of sulfur, which she learns is being guided by Errtu. A bolt shoots from Baenre's hand that destroys the walls of the tower in which K'yorl is hiding. K'yorl is stretched from the tower toward the lump of sulfur that will act as a gate to take K'yorl to Errtu in the Abyss. After K'yorl disappears into this lump, Baenre throws the lump into Clawrifi. The lump transforms into a monster that destroys the compound.

In Chapter Fifteen, Jarlaxle questions Matron Baenre's decision to go forward with her plans to march to Mithral Hall. He reasons that the recent losses in Menzoberranzan will weaken their forces. Baenre calls Jarlaxle aside privately. She takes Jarlaxle down to the drow prison where she shows him the dwarf Gandalug Battlehammer. Matron Baenre seems to believe that her possession of Gandalug gives her a secret weapon against Mithral Hall. Jarlaxle decides at this point to let the matron go ahead with her battle plans. If she fails, the circumstances would possibly be beneficial to Jarlaxle.

In Chapter Sixteen, Drizzt one night finds Catti-brie sitting on the same plateau where she gained control of her sword. Catti-brie's tears let Drizzt know where Catti-brie's feelings lie. There is an undeniable tension between the two as a result of the scene in Drizzt's room. Drizzt lets Catti-brie know that he understands her actions were a result of the sword's power over Catti-brie. As the two consider their feelings for each other, the talk turns to Wulfgar. Then the two agree to let their feelings remain those of friends for now. As they finish their discussion, Regis and Bruenor walk up behind them. The



two have come to see if the panther figurine works. The magic does work and the panther is returned, alive and healthy, to the group of friends.

Part Three: Resolution - Chapter Fourteen, The Wrath of Lolth, Chapter Fifteen, Greed and Chapter Sixteen, Open Hearts Analysis

Just as those living at Mithral Hall are looking ahead to a possible attack on their city by the drow, the inhabitants of Menzoberranzan are thinking about planning the attack. Matron Baenre's first action after the magic returns is to follow Lolth's directions and destroy K'yorl and her house. Although this action is required by Lolth, it puts Baenre's plans to attack Mithral Hall in an awkward standing. It had been planned that the hundreds of kobolds living in Clawrft would lead the drows in their attack. In this way the kobolds would lose their lives, not the drows. Matron Baenre believes, however, that her possession of Gandalug Battlehammer will give her a secret weapon which she can use against the dwarfs.



Part Four: The Drow March - Prologue, Chapter Seventeen, Blingdenstone and Chapter Eighteen, Uneasy Gatherings

Part Four: The Drow March - Prologue, Chapter Seventeen, Blingdenstone and Chapter Eighteen, Uneasy Gatherings Summary

In Drizzt's opening letter for Part Four, he discusses the way in which the dwarfs of Mithral Hall treated him during the time they are preparing to fight against the drow. Drizzt is drow. Despite this difference in culture and background, the dwarfs treated him no differently than they did any of their own people. Drizzt is grateful for this true, pure friendship the dwarfs have offered him.

In Chapter Seventeen, the drows begin their advance on Mithral Hall. The armies, led by Uthegental Armgo, are uncomfortable with the silence they encounter as they march toward the svirfnebli town of Blingdenstone. Uthegental has not been commanded to attack the town of Blingdenstone, only to defend themselves if attacked. Because Uthegental craves battle, however, he leads his forces to the gates of this city. When the forces break the gates down, they find that the town has been abandoned.

Meanwhile, as Belwar waits for the approaching drow, he wonders if he advised the svirfnebli properly when he insisted they abandon their home town or risk being obliterated by the drow. When Matron Baenre learns that the svirfnebli city is empty, she is not pleased. The matron, as well as Berg'inyon, is not happy with Uthegental's decision to enter the gnomish city. They both recognize this as an action on Uthegental's part to gain honor for himself and his house. Since both houses want the same ending to the battle, however, that is for Drizzt to be captured, Matron Baenre chooses to feed Uthegental's desire for glory in combat as a way to motivate him. Matron finds the rivalry between her son and Uthegental amusing. In fact, she is already making plans to invite Uthegental to be weapons master for House Baenre if her son is killed.

In Chapter Eighteen, warriors from Nesme, Longsaddle and Silverymoon arrive to help the forces of Mithral Hall. They are to work with the warriors of Settlestone to help secure the outlying areas of Mithral Hall. After a few tense moments of quarreling both over who should lead the group as well as a near scuffle over Drizzt's honor, Bensell manages to call upon the pride of the group and reunite them.

Belwar is ironically relieved when he learns the city of Blingdenstone has been attacked. Soon after he learns this news Frible tells Belwar that King Schnicktick must be responsible for deciding if the gnomes will return to their home or not. Belwar is



unhappy with the idea that the gnomes may have to find a new home, an unhappiness that Firble shares.

Part Four: The Drow March - Prologue, Chapter Seventeen, Blingdenstone and Chapter Eighteen, Uneasy Gatherings Analysis

The tone in this section is tense as the drow and the dwarfs prepare for an upcoming war. Notice that while there is not attempt made to repair the rivalries that are developing between the ruling houses in Menzoberranzan, every attempt is made to keep the peace between the forces preparing to protect Mithral Hall. In this section much time is spent describing past events that have led up to this ultimate battle between the drow and the dwarfs.

Note also the way that Drizzt's opening letter ties in with the scene in Settlestone between the warriors that come from the different cities to defend Mithral Hall. One warrior from Nesme insinuates that nothing good will come from associating with Drizzt, who is drow. Almost before the words are out of the man's mouth Berkthgar threatens to kill the man if he ever speaks ill of the admired drow again. Although Bensell insists that Drizzt would not kill a man over words, Berkthgar's actions back up the words that Drizzt has written in his letter. Although he is one of the same culture as the enemy, the people with whom Drizzt now lives consider him a dear friend. This friendship is dear enough that Drizzt's friends are willing to defend the drow's honor, even when he is not present.



Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Nineteen, Improvising, Chapter Twenty, The Battle of Tunult's Cavern and Chapter Twenty-One, One For the Good Guys

Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Nineteen, Improvising, Chapter Twenty, The Battle of Tunult's Cavern and Chapter Twenty-One, One For the Good Guys Summary

As soon as Catti-brie learns the drow are on their way, she takes the news to her father, Bruenor, and Regis. As she learns the war plans, Catti-brie makes sure she is ready for battle. Pwent's Gutbusters are first to see battle. They use an interesting weapon known as the battleranger lariat to take out stalactites that would otherwise provide hiding places for the drow. The coming army makes more noise than Pwent expected. Drizzt tells him that not only drow are coming, but also goblins and kobolds. The dwarfs are in full retreat, leaving behind only those responsible for springing the traps that will slow down the drow forces. Drizzt, however, encourages these dwarfs to leave their posts and join in the retreat. His smile suggests the he has a back-up plan in mind.

In Chapter Twenty, the first ranks of the enemy begin to flood into Tunult's Cavern. Allied forces fight bravely against the coming drow. Bidderdoo Harpell, responsible for casting a spell that will cause the ceilings of the tunnels to collapse, has accidentally been seen by one of the kobolds. Although Bidderdoo instinctively show signs of anger the way he did when he was the family dog, he has no weapons with which to fight off the enemy. Instead he casts a spell, shooting jets of flames out of his hands. This spell kills many of the kobolds, but the remaining kobold charge Bidderdoo again. Meanwhile, Catti-brie and Bruenor are having trouble fighting in the cramped quarters. Catti-brie finally uses her sword to chop down a stalactite that is blocking her vision.

The action moves back to Bidderdoo who has suddenly had the Gutbuster Brigade come to his rescue. The Gutbusters take care of the kobold that are threatening Bidderdoo, but before they can leave, Bidderdoo calls for them to wait. Pwent does not act interested in helping Bidderdoo until he learns that Bidderdoo is the one responsible for dropping the tunnels and keeping the drow out. At this point, Pwent and his men take Bidderdoo straight to his desired destination, killing every enemy they meet along the way. As soon as he reaches the prescribed destination, Bidderdoo begins his chant.



Even when he is hit by a dart, Bidderdoo concentrates on finishing his spell. The spell works and the tunnel falls.

In Chapter Twenty-One, Belwar is in low spirits as he marches toward Mithral Hall. It has been rumored that his advice to the svirfnebli was motivated more by his friendship with Drizt than personal concern for the gnomes. The decision to aid the dwarfs of Mithral Hall had been made by Frible on the idea that the svirfnebli must have the dwarfs as allies if they wanted to ever return to Blingdenstone. In the next section of this chapter Bidderdoo's fireball works and the tunnel falls, but the wizard and his companions are first flashed with fire, then covered with debris. Bidderdoo gives in to the poisonous dart and passes out. He awakes to find Pwent pouring the gutbuster drink down him, a drink that revives Bidderdoo, despite the poison's effects.

Meanwhile, Matron Baenre is unhappy with her daughter, Quenthel's, reaction to the war. Quenthel becomes slightly more positive as she tells her mother the drow are using the secret tunnels about which Gandalug unwilling told them. Meanwhile, no news has been heard from Berg'inyon who is pouting because his mother has given him an unfavorable spot in the battle. Matron Baenre tells her daughter to find Berg'inyon. If he continues to be difficult, she instructs her daughter to replace him.

Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Nineteen, Improvising, Chapter Twenty, The Battle of Tunult's Cavern and Chapter Twenty-One, One For the Good Guys Analysis

Even in the tense atmosphere of battle, Harkle Harpell and the Gutbuster Brigade serve as a means for the author to interject humor into the story line. Harpell has been spotted by some kobolds, distracted from his job of destroying the tunnels and almost killed. Luckily the members of the Gutbuster Brigade come to his rescue. Unfortunately the stress of the battle has brought back Bidderdoo's canine instincts. The image of a howling, barking human surrounded by the rough, ill-mannered members of the Gutbuster Brigade definitely relieves the tension associated with the battle.

Notice the way in which Matron Baenre continues to plot against her own son and weapons master. Although it seems she should be striving for unity, at least until after the battle is over, Baenre first gives her own weapons master a job he dislikes, then threatens to have him dismissed. This seems like self-condemning behavior especially when one considers that it is the result of Matron Baenre's actions that Berg'inyon has become so upset in the first place.



Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Twenty-Two, Star Light, Star Bright

Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Twenty-Two, Star Light, Star Bright Summary

Lady Alustriel of Silvermoon watches the battle from a safe distance. She is battle wise and knows the soldiers will have little trouble against the kobolds but wonders how they will fare when they are confronted by the drow. Although Bensell begs battle hungry Berkthgar to keep his men in check, Berkthgar rides for battle ignoring the plans for ambush. This action requires that the Knights in Silver alter their plan to a more dangerous course. Even as Bensell gives the new battle plans, none of his men complain, but go straight to their duty.

Meanwhile, Lady Alustriel holds herself in check to keep from entering the battle prematurely. Even when the drow located Mithral Hall's eastern door and begin to battle with the dwarfs inside, Alustriel continues to hold herself back. One hundred of her knights, whose job it is to allow Bensell, the Longriders, the men of Nesme and the Barbarians of Settlestone an open passage into Keeper's Dale, wait for action. Unfortunately Berg'inyon and his lizard riders are headed in the same direction. Alustriel believes the drow will reach the waiting knights first. Unfortunately the riders of Nesme miss their call and the way to the west is closed to Bensell and his men.

Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Twenty-Two, Star Light, Star Bright Analysis

In this final chapter of Part Four, notice the drastic difference between Berkthgar's impetuous behavior and Lady Alustriel's self-control. Although Alustriel could, like Berkthgar, follow her instincts and enter the battle now, her common sense tells her she could be a more important asset later in the fight. Berkthgar, however, is battle hungry and enters the battle at the first opportunity even though his actions go against battle plans. These impetuous actions also put other warriors in an unnecessarily dangerous position and perhaps even cause the loss of an important pass.



Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Prologue, Chapter Twenty-Three, Pockets of Power and Chapter Twenty-Four, Fiery Fury

Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Prologue, Chapter Twenty-Three, Pockets of Power and Chapter Twenty-Four, Fiery Fury Summary

In his prologue to this final part of the novel, Drizzt discusses the lack of cohesion and compassion for their fellow soldiers among the drow armies. These forces, he explains, are interested only in their own personal advancement. They are not interested in protecting or honoring their fellow man. Drizzt indicates it is this weakness in the drow forces that the dwarfs of Mithral Hall hope to use against them.

In Chapter Twenty-Three, Bidderdoo is overwhelmed by the massacre he experiences as the Pwent's dwarfs battle the kobolds. Bidderdoo tries to assist in the battle by enacting a spell on the kobolds. One kobold rushes toward him and out of instinct Bidderdoo bites the kobold's throat. Meanwhile Drizzt, Catti-brie, Guenhwyvar, Regis and Bruenor work just as effectively as the Gutbuster Brigade but in a much quieter fashion. When Bruenor is knocked over by a minotaur, Drizzt takes charge and kills the beast.

The drow are afraid of and try to avoid Guenhwyvar. As Drizzt is battling with a minotaur, one drow tries to kill him but the drow's crossbar is hit and the deadly shot meant for Drizzt lands at the drow's feet. It is Regis who knocks this drow's crossbar, then later finishes off the drow. Catti-brie kills one minotaur and Breunor another. His sword is stuck so deeply in the creature's flesh that he cannot free it. The five agree they have been victorious in this battle.

A group of dwarfs join the five friends and update them on the battle. There is fighting in Mithral Hall's Undercity and the upper levels as well. Drizzt and Breunor discuss the situation privately for a moment, and it is decided that Breunor and his four companions will stay in the outskirts of Mithral Hall while the other dwarfs make their way to the Undercity. It is Drizzt's plan to find the priestess, a move he believes will end the current battle.

In Chapter Twenty-Four, Lady Alustriel continues to watch the battle from a safe distance. She watches Berkthgar knowing his bravery will be celebrated if the battle is won. Alustriel is willing to call in all the forces she needs to guarantee a victory for the dwarfs. As she watches, the magical barrage she dreaded begins. When Alustriel



realizes the drow are in the trees, she steps in to take an active part in the battle. She uses her magical chariot to set the trees on fire. The wizards counter by trying to put the fires out with water, an act that causes only smoke and steam since Alustriel continues to relight the fires. The smoke chokes the drows and blinds them so they cannot see. Alustriel kills one drow wizard when he levitates above the trees, but another wizard hits her with a fireball that burns her.

Bensell and his men witness the attack on Lady Alustriel. This attack angers them and causes them to fight even harder. Through this confusion the defenders of Mithral Hall manage to break through enemy lines west to Keeper's Dale as the original battle plans stated. Meanwhile, Lady Alustriel is badly wounded but is happy because she has been wounded fighting for what she knows is right.

Harkle and Bella don DelRoy encounter mind flayers. Fret joins the two and pushes them up to the ugly creatures. The mind flayers try to extract brain matter from the two, but the wizards have exchanged their brains for their colons and the mind flayers only extract waste matter. The three together kill the mind flayers.

Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Prologue, Chapter Twenty-Three, Pockets of Power and Chapter Twenty-Four, Fiery Fury Analysis

In this section, heavy battle begins. Although the dwarfs have allies from several different cities and communities, they are still badly outnumbered. Drizzt's prologue letter hints at the weakness that may be the undoing of the drow. While the dwarfs fight for each other and for the common good, the drow fight out of the desire for self advancement. Although the drow are good fighters, they have no cohesion or common goal to bind them together. Even in this section, the Harkells add comic relief to the strained battle scenes. Examples of this comic relief are found both in the scenes where Bidderdoo's fear causes him to revert to his dog-like characteristics as well as when Harkle and Bella don DelRoy's encounter with the mind flayers.



Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Five, Keeper's Dale, Chapter Twenty-Six, Snarl Against Snarl and Chapter Twenty-Seven, The Longest Night

Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Five, Keeper's Dale, Chapter Twenty-Six, Snarl Against Snarl and Chapter Twenty-Seven, The Longest Night Summary

In Chapter Twenty-Five, fighting erupts in the valley area of Keeper's Dale. Alustriel distracts the drow as the Knights in Silver join the battle. As Alustriel thinks over the difficulty she had in convincing the leaders of her city to send aid to the battle, she wonders what is happening to her city. She realizes the trouble lies not in the knights but in the politicians. Although Silverymoon was once considered one of the most generous cities, they seem to be losing this quality. Lady Alustriel believes it should be this generosity, this willingness to help in good causes, which will set Silverymoon apart from other lesser kingdoms. Meanwhile, as Berg'inyon surveys the carnage of the battle he believes his forces will easily win.

In Keeper's Dale, Stumpet orders the dwarf guards assigned to the western door of Mithral Hall to join in the battle. Although this command adds five hundred dwarfs to the fight, Berg'inyon sees the act as a foolish move since it leaves this door unguarded.

In Chapter Twenty-Six, Uthegental attempts to reach Keeper's Dale in order to keep Berg'inyon from reaching Drizzt first. Before he reaches the dale, Uthegental meets a priestess who tells him that Drizzt is in the tunnels surrounding Mithral Hall, not in the dale. In the meantime, Matron Baenre gloats that the drow are winning. The comment stings Gandalug who believes a victory the drow might earn is his fault. Baenre commands those with her to find an appropriate cavern where she can set up a throne room from which to oversee the battle. Jarlaxle asks to be excused. Methil suggests to the mercenary that if he is considering fleeing, he should beware of Baenre if he should choose such an action. Jarlaxle decides not to leave but to only watch. He commands his men to do the same.

Pwent and his battlerangers have become separated from the battle. As they search for action, the battlerangers are attacked by drow. Bidderdoo enacts a charm that surprises the drow and gives the dwarfs a fair battle. The dwarfs are winning when Uthegental enters the scene and kills one dwarf. Pwent loads himself into a catapult and hits



Uthegental with his spiked helmet. In the midst of the battle between Pwent and Uthegental, Bidderdoo returns to his canine form and attacks Uthegental. Uthegental throws off the dog's attack as well as the combined attacks of all of the dwarfs. He is close to killing Pwent when Bidderdoo again attacks, this time biting the neck and vertebrae so hard the giant is killed.

In Chapter Twenty-Seven, Belwar leads a group of three-hundred svirfneblin toward the active fighting. They find a spot closest to the fighting and the gnomish priests pull the wall of the tunnel apart. Belwar makes his way through the gap to find himself in Keeper's Dale. Meanwhile Drizzt and his four companions are trapped on a ledge waiting for drow forces to pass by their hiding spot. As he watches the drow forces pass, Drizzt begins to second guess the intelligence of his decision to lead the king to chase down the drow leaders.

Next in this chapter, Matron Baenre learns that Jarlaxle is not giving information as he should. Shortly after this news, Methil tells Baenre that Uthegental is dead. Methil then shares information with the other House Matrons that the war is going well. The knowledge that Uthegental is dead gives Baenre the idea she should search for Drizzt. In the next round of fighting, Bensell is killed by a goblin's sword. It is Berkthgar who eases the dying elf to the ground and listens to his dying words. In this same section, Regweld and his horse-frog mount are also badly injured by the drow wizards. At the conclusion of the chapter, it appears the drow will win the war.

Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Five, Keeper's Dale, Chapter Twenty-Six, Snarl Against Snarl and Chapter Twenty-Seven, The Longest Night Analysis

Although it appears the drow will win, the dwarfs continue to fight for their homes, their gods and their fellow men. Both sides have lost important leaders. Uthegental has been killed by Bidderdoo while Bensell has died at the hands of a goblin. Lady Alustriel has not been seen in active battle and the warriors, especially Bensell before his death, are concerned about the lady's well-being.



Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Eight, Divination, Chapter Twenty-Nine, King Against Queen and Epilogue

Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Eight, Divination, Chapter Twenty-Nine, King Against Queen and Epilogue Summary

In Chapter Twenty-Eight, Matron Baenre uses magic in an attempt to locate Drizzt. There is arguing between Matron Baenre, her daughters and the other House leaders. The group divides and Matron Baenre's half goes in search of Drizzt. Meanwhile, Errtu watches as Baenre goes in search of Drizzt, an action he knows will result in the drow's death. When Baenre casts a spell to call forth tanar'ri from the Abyss, Errtu leaps in front of the creature, blocking its exit. He gives the creature a black sapphire which he instructs the creature to use when he is ordered.

In the next section Matron Baenre learns through Methil that one of the competing House Matrons wishes that Baenre were dead. Matron Baenre has the matron, Auro'pol, killed. At this point, Matron Baenre has broken a rule. She has killed another matron simply for personal gain. Bruenor and his group hear Auro'pol's dying scream. They follow the sound and soon encounter Baenre and her daughters. Drizzt's first reaction is to tell his friends to run from their enemies.

In Chapter Twenty-Nine, the drow forces fall apart. This disaster is caused by the rising of the sun. This sunlight is both painful and terrifying to the drow. Meanwhile a signal of hunger from one of Drizzt's scimitars makes him realize that Matron Baenre has a tanar'ri with her. Despite Drizzt's plea to run, Bruenor faces Matron Baenre. As he charges at Matron Baenre, Bladen'Kerst magically traps Bruenor in a block of goo. The panther tries to attack, but one of the drow priestesses sends the panther back to the Astral Plane. As Catti-brie prepares to fight, she is confronted by Methil.

Although the tanar'ri wishes it could kill Drizzt, it is afraid of the wrath of Errtu. It instead opens the coffer and reveals the sapphire. As soon as the jewel is revealed, magic again disappears for a brief second before the tanar-ri is transported back to the Abyss. In this second, Gandalug is freed from his bonds and Bruenor gets free of the block of goo. Bruenor kills Matron Baenre with his axe as Gandalug kills Bladen'Kerst. Quenthel, however, escapes from the melee but Drizzt is quick on her heels. Jarlaxle is watching as Drizzt and Quenthel appear. Even though one of Jarlaxle's lieutenants has a clear shot of Drizzt, Jarlaxle does not let him shoot. Instead they only listen as Quenthel is killed. Meanwhile, Stumpet and Terrien locate the fallen Lady Alustriel. They find the



lady alive, although badly injured. The two care for her. When she wakes, Alustriel asks only if the forces held. Alustriel is happy to learn the dwarfs have recaptured Keeper's Dale.

The epilogue of the book details the celebrations of the dwarf forces and their allies. In the end, Catti-brie works up the courage to inform her adoptive father that she wishes to explore the world. In the final scene Catti-brie and Drizzt are galloping away together toward the west.

Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Eight, Divination, Chapter Twenty-Nine, King Against Queen and Epilogue Analysis

The battle between the drow and dwarfs is finally decided by the rising of the sun. The drow, who are used to the dark of the underground, are blinded by the sun. As Berg'inyon leads the drow back to Menzoberranzan, he tells them his mother was wrong, an act that could be considered blasphemous by the drow, but in this case is only ignored.

Meanwhile, the deaths of Matron Baenre and her daughters can be blamed on the disloyalty of Errtu and Jarlaxle. Errtu gives the tanar'ri the sapphire that causes the disruption in the magic, while Jarlaxle simply refuses to become involved. It is this lack of loyalty among the drow forces, combined with the natural act of the sunrise, that cause the drow to lose the war.



Characters

Drizzt Do'Urden

Drizzt Do'Urden is a dark elf, a drow. He is the hero of the novel. In the recent past, Drizzt has defeated the tanar'ri Errtu in combat, an act that has resulted in Errtu's banishment to the Abyss. Drizzt currently lives in the dwarf city of Mithral Hall where he is actively helping the dwarfs prepare for their upcoming battle with the drow. Not only Errtu, but also Matron Baenre, leader of the most prestigious house in Menzoberranzan, is plotting revenge against Drizzt and his new dwarf friends. While being held in captivity in the drow city of Menzoberranzan, Drizzt broke free from his captors. During his escape Drizzt and his rescuers caused a stalactite to fall, damaging the Baenre House chapel.

Drizzt is well-known around the area for his prowess in fighting and hand-to-hand combat. He is currently in possession of a panther figurine that allows him to call Guenhwyvar, a six hundred pound panther, from the Astral Plane. This big cat is not only Drizzt's friend, but also his fighting companion. During the siege on Mithral Hall Drizzt, the panther and a few other select friends search the tunnels around Mithral Hall looking for the priestess responsible for the drow attack. They locate this priestess along with Matron Baenre and her daughters. Drizzt is responsible for killing the evil Baenre. After the conclusion of the war Drizzt and his human friend Catti-brie ride away together to the west seeking adventure. There have been hints of a budding romance between the two since the beginning of the novel.

In addition to his role in the novel, Drizzt also writes a prologue or letter, which appears before each of the five parts of the novel. These letters are written in Drizzt's own voice. They address a moral issue, such as faith, or friendship, that is later addressed in the action of the corresponding part of the novel.

Catti-brie

Catti-brie is a human female who lives with Bruenor's clan of dwarves. She is the heroine of the novel. In the recent past, she was engaged to be married to Wulfgar, a barbarian killed by the drow. King Bruenor of Mithral Hall has adopted Catti-brie as his own daughter. She is considered to be the princess of Mithral Hall. Although she is female, Catti-brie has been schooled in the arts of fighting and weaponry and is as skilled as any of the male warriors who fight alongside her.

Catti-brie's first test of her skills comes when the new barbarian king, Berkthgar, demands to be given the hammer carried by Catti-brie's now deceased fiancé. Although Catti-brie does not want to give up this physical symbol of her fiancé, she also does not want to risk breaking the alliance between the dwarfs and barbarians. When Berkthgar demands a challenge to determine who will carry the hammer, Catti-brie insists it should



be she who fights the man. Although uncomfortable with the situation Berkthgar fights the female and is beaten. Catti-brie has won the challenge and is allowed to keep the hammer.

Catti-brie's next challenge comes when her new sword possesses her in an attempt to be carried by Drizzt. The sword wants to be carried by the best warrior in the area. The sword considers Drizzt to be this warrior. The sword first attempts to convince Catti-brie to kill Drizzt, an act that would make Catti-brie the most powerful warrior by proxy. When it is unsuccessful in this attempt, the sword possesses Catti-brie and has her approach Drizzt in a sexual manner. Drizzt realizes what has happened and instructs Catti-brie to go away with her sword and attempt to conquer it. Catti-brie does so, and after a long battle, she becomes the true owner of her sword.

Matron Baenre

Matron Baenre is the first matron mother of Menzoberranzan and leader of the most powerful house in that city. Matron Baenre is the main villain of the novel. She leads the drow of her city on a siege against the dwarf city of Mithral Hall because of the damage done the Lolth's chapel when Drizzt escaped from her city. As a result of this siege, Matron Baenre loses her life at the hands of Drizzt.

All of Matron Baenre's actions are guided by the idea that she must remain in Lolth's approval. Her most fearful moments are when she fears she has fallen out of the will of Lolth and the other houses of Menzoberranzan will rise up against her as a result of this lack of Lolth's favor. Matron Baenre has her moment of glory when Lolth allows her to destroy the house of a rival matron who has killed another matron for personal revenge. During the war against the dwarfs, however, Matron Baenre follows in the footsteps of the doomed matron, as she herself kills another matron for personal reasons.

Bruenor Battlehammer

Bruenor Battlehammer is the dearest friend of Drizzt. He is a dwarf and the eighth king of Mithral Hall. He is also Cattie-Brie's adopted father. After the death of Catti-brie's fiancé, Wulfgar, Bruenor sinks into a deep depression. This depression lifts as the dwarfs prepare for battle with the drow. During the active fighting Bruenor is spurred on by the idea that he will be able to kill the evil priestess responsible for the death Wulfgar. He joins Drizzt as Drizzt searches the tunnels around Mithral Hall for Matron Baenre and her evil companions.

Berkthgar the Bold

Berkthgar the Bold is Settlestone's new chieftain. He wants to carry the battlehammer, Aegis-fang, formerly carried by the now deceased Wulgar. For sentimental reasons Catti-brie fights the barbarian for the right to keep the hammer and wins. Catti-brie's actions save the alliance between the dwarfs and the barbarians. When the drow invade



Mithral Hall, Berkthgar is a valuable ally for the dwarfs. Despite the fact that he and Drizzt are of differing cultures, Berkthgar defends the drow when one soldier from Nesme attempts to belittle the drow and present him as an evil influence.

Jarlaxle

Jarlaxle is the swaggering mercenary leader of the Bregan D'aerthe, a group of spies, thieves and killers. Although he appears to be an ally of House Baenre, Jarlaxle commands his men not to get involved in the active battle against Mithral Hall unless it appears the drow are winning. In fact, Jarlaxle commands one of his lieutenants not to shoot Drizzt even though Drizzt is in the process of killing one of Baenre's daughters.

Lady Alustriel

Lady Alustriel is a leader of the town of Silverymoon. Although her town only agrees to send a small regimen of soldiers to aid in the battle to protect Mithral Hall, Lady Alustriel goes along with her men and helps where she can. Lady Alustriel deeply believes in the cause of the dwarfs as well as the valor of fighting for what is right. It is Lady Alustriel who gave Catti-brie her cat's eye agate, a pendant that allows Catti-brie to see in the dark. Lady Alustriel also sends help to fix the broken panther figurine so that Guenhwyvar can be sent back to the Astral Plane.

Uthegental Armgo

Uthegental Armgo is the weapons master and patron of the Second House of Menzoberranzan, the house of Barrison del'Armgo. When magic disappears at the beginning of the novel, Uthegental is sent to Jarlaxle as an embassy to determine if the other houses in Menzoberranzan should rise up against House Baenre. Uthegental is described as an unintelligent but powerful warrior. At one point in the novel Matron Baenre considers replacing her own weapons master with Uthegental. During the siege on Mithral Hall, Uthegental is killed by Bidderdoo Harpell.

Guenhwyvar

Guenhwyvar is the panther who lives in the Astral Plane. Drizzt has a panther figurine that summons the panther to the Prime Material Plane. Because the panther can only truly rejuvenate on the Astral Plane, she can stay only a half a day on the Material Plane every two days. When the magic goes awry, the panther figurine is broken and Guenhwyvar must stay on the Material Plane for an extended period of time. Although she does not die, the panther becomes extremely weak. During the battle against the drow, Guenhwyvar is a very valuable ally who fights by Drizzt's side through the entire war.



Thibbledorf Pwent

Thibbledord Pwent is the leaders of the famed Gutbuster Brigade. Although these fierce warriors seem insane in their battle lust, they are a valuable force in the war against the drow. It is Pwent's team of Gutbusters who find Bidderdoo and help him get where he needs to be to perform his magical duties. It is also this unlikely combination of the Gutbusters and Bidderdoo who kill Uthegental.

Belwar Dissengulp

Belwar Dissengulp is the Most Honored Burrow Warden of Blingdenstone. Drizzt's brother took off Belwar's hands during a battle. These hands have been replaced by tools fashioned from mithral. Belwar is responsible for convincing the svirfneblin they must leave Blingdenstone or be killed by the drow. Belwar also leads a group of svirfneblin into battle to help assist the dwarfs.

Stumpet (Strumpet) Rakingclaw

Stumpet is the would-be priestess whose holy water is declared a nine. It is while she is attempting to perform a magical charm that Harkell Harpell's eyes appear in the room. She is appointed High Cleric of Mithral Hall by Bruenor before the battle. It is Stumpet who helps find Lady Alustriel after the battle is over and then nurses her back to health.

Harkell Harpell

Harkell Harpell is the leader of an eccentric wizard clan that lives in Longsaddle. Harkell is separated from his eyes for a period of time when the magic goes bad. It is his eyes that oversee the mixture of the bonding salve for the panther figurine.

K'yori Odran

K'yori Odran is the Matron mother of House Oblodra. She is killed by Lolth through Baenre because K'yori killed the matron mother of another house in an effort to usurp power.

El-Viddenvelp/Methil

Methil, an illithid, is Matron Baenre's advisor. She is used by Matron Baenre to prove to her daughters that not all magic has gone sour during the Time of Troubles. She also prevents Gandalug from killing Matron Baenre when Gandalug is first released from imprisonment in the ring.



Gandalug Battlehammer

Gandalug Battlehammer is the dwarf who has been held captive by Matron Baenre for two thousand years. He is the patron of clan Battlehammer and founder of Mithral Hall. The dwarf victory over the drow allows Gandalug to be returned to his home.

Besnell of Silverymoon

Besnell comes from Silverymoon with Alustriel to aid in the dwarf war. He leads one hundred soldiers to help protect Mithral Hall. He soon realizes it will be his job to keep the allied forces working together and in peace. Sadly, Besnell is killed in the fighting.



Objects/Places

The Abyss

The Abyss is the portion of The Underworld to which Errtu has been banished.

The Material Plane

The plane includes the city of Menzoberranzan and Mithral Hall.

The Astral Plane

The Astral Plane is the home of the panther, Guenhwyvar.

Menzoberranzan

A drow city ruled by various political houses. The people of Menzoberranzan worship the god Lolth.

Mithral Hall

Mithral Hall is the home of clan Battlehammer. It is the home of Catti-brie and Drizzt.

Crenshinibon

Crenshinibon is the Crystal Shard, a relic of a past and greater age of sorcery. Errtu hopes to end his banishment so he can continue to search for this relic.

Bracers

Magical wrist bands that Drizzt has taken from weapons master Dantrag Baenre. While these bands are supposed to help the wearers hands move magically fast, they seem only to throw Drizzt off balance.

Settlestone

Settlestone is a Barbarian settlement located south of Mithral Hall.



Aegis-fang

Aegis-fang is a war hammer formerly belonging to Wulfgar, former chieftain of Settlestone. Bruenor, Catti-brie's father made this hammer for Wulfgar.

Khazid'hea or Cutter

Khazid'hea is Catti-brie's sword. It was formerly carried by Dantrag Baenre. In its desire to be carried by the best warrior in the area, Khazid'hea attempts to compel Catti-brie to kill Drizzt.

Ring Carved from a Tooth

Matron Baenre wears this tooth, taken from an ancient dwarven king, on a necklace. When the tooth is broken one day the dwarven king emerges from the tooth.

A Cat's Eye Agate

This agate was given to Catti-brie as a gift from Lady Alustriel. The agate allows the wearer to see in the dark.

The Gutbuster Brigade

The Gutbuster Brigade is a group of dwarves that Pwent hopes to train in the art of battleraging.

An Enchanted Ruby

This enchanted ruby belongs to Regis. Drizzt and Catti-brie borrow the ruby when they travel to Settlestone to talk to Berkthgar.

Svirfneblin

The Svirfneblin is a race of gnomes who live in the underdark.

Blingdenstone

Blingdenstone is the home city of Firble and the other Svirfneblin.



Narbondel

Narbondel is a pillar clock in the city of Menzoberranzan that keeps time using a heat source that comes from Gromph's spider brooch. The clock is appropriate because the drows have heat sensing vision.

Domed Chapel of House Baenre

This domed chapel is considered the city's most holy spot.

House Baenre Fence

A fence designed to look like a spider web, a gift to the Baenre House from Lolth. The fence is infused with magic so that any creature that touches it will become entrapped by the fence.

Hengorot

Hengorot is the Mead Hall located in Settlestone. It is a place of worship and companionship.

Icewind Dale

Icewind Dale is Catti-brie's homeplace.

Bankenfuere

Bankenfuere is Berkthgar's huge sword with which he fights Catti-brie. This sword is also called the Northern Fury.

Time of Troubles

The Time of Troubles is a time when magic does not work and the gods appear to have left their people.

Jarlaxle's Eye Patch

This enchanted eye patch protects the mercenary from mental intrusions.



Lump of Sulfur

Lolth gives Matron Baenre a lump of sulfur that allows her to destroy K'yori.

Kobold

The kobold are allies of the House of Oblodra. They live in the tunnels along the chasm walls of Clawrift.

Onyx Panther Figurine

Drizzt uses this figurine to call the panther from The Astral Plane.



Themes

Facing One's Demons

Characters in the novel, Catti-Brie in particular, are both figuratively and literally called upon to face their demons. Catti-Brie's demons include her enchanted sword as well as Berkthgar and the memory of her dead fiancé. Catti-Brie's sword wants to be carried by the best warrior alive. The sword considers this warrior to be Drizzt. When unable to convince Catti-Brie to kill Drizzt, the sword possesses Catti-Brie in an attempt to make Drizzt understand its desires. Catti-Brie spends several days alone with her sword, conquering its strong will. In the end, she is victorious over her sword.

Another battle Catti-Brie must fight is a battle to win the right to have possession of Aegis-fang, the war hammer belonging to her deceased fiancé. Berkthgar the Bold, the new leader of Settlestone, believes possession of this hammer should pass to him. In order for Catti-Brie to earn the right to the hammer, she volunteers to fight hand-to-hand combat with Berkthgar. Catti-Brie wins the battle, an action that shows she is courageous enough to carry the physical symbol of her fiancé's memory.

Those living in Mithral Hall in general must face the demons that come in the form of drows from Menzoberranzan. Although the dwarfs are outnumbered in this battle, they are able to conquer the drow. Information in the novel indicates that an attack by the drow had been a threat to the people of Mithral Hall for a long time. They had, however, prepared themselves well for the battle and had called upon many reliable allies to help them with the battle.

Cultural Differences

One aspect that is very important in this novel is the idea of the differences that exist between groups of people and their cultures. These differences are exaggerated slightly because the different groups of beings presented in this novel are actually different species. For example, there are drow, barbarians and dwarfs among the beings that appear in the novel. Each of these groups of people has its own preconceived notions about the other groups. For instance, the drow, with the exception of Drizzt, are generally hated by the dwarfs.

One of the more interesting cultural differences in this novel is the different way the sexes are represented in each community. In the barbarian community, for instance, women are thought of as slaves. It is only because she was Wulfgar's fiancée that Catti-Brie is allowed to sit at the table with the other men. In fact, Berkthgar is offended at the idea of fighting a woman for the right to carry Wulfgar's war hammer. In the drow community, however, these opinions of femininity are completely reversed. In these drow communities females are actually more powerful than males. It is the women in this community who are the political leaders and religious leaders as well as the most



powerful fighters in the armies. In the dwarf populations, as far as Catti-Brie at least, females seem to be given the same respect as males. Notice, however, that Catti-Brie is the only leading female character from Mithral Hall. She is also human, not dwarf.

Hope

Hope is a driving force in this novel. Drizzt writes about hope in his prologue letter located before the first part of this novel. In this letter Drizzt describes the feeling of anticipation as the dwarfs in Mithral Hall prepare for battle with the drow. Although the battle is expected, this anticipation and excitement might be spurred by fear, but Drizzt believes the feelings are ones incited by the hope that things will be better. In his letter Drizzt writes, "Individually or collectively, we must hope that the future will be better than the past, that our offspring, and theirs after them, will be a bit closer to an ideal society, whatever our perception of that might be." (pg. 3) Ultimately the war between the dwarfs and the drow becomes a battle between good and evil. At the end of the war, the good prevail and it is assumed that Drizzt's hope has not gone unfounded. As Lady Alustriel indicates at the end of the novel, she will be happy if she dies during the battle between the dwarfs and drow. It is indicated her happiness will be brought about by her knowledge that she has fought for what is good and positive.



Style

Point of View

The majority of this novel is written in the third person omniscient point of view. The story is told by a person not involved in the novel. This narrator does, however, have knowledge of all characters' emotions, thoughts, and feelings. This point of view is important to the novel because of the many moral issues dealt with in the novel. The uninvolved narrator allows the writer to present these moral issues in a way that the readers can draw their own conclusions about the "ideal" way of life from the outcome of the action of the novel.

The exception to the third person point of view narration is found in Drizzt's letters or prologues to each part of the novel. These letters are written in the first person point of view from Drizzt's point of view. These letters are interesting because they tell the story of a drow living in a dwarf settlement. Although the drow are generally self-serving and disinterested in community, Drizzt has come to embrace the dwarfs' outlook on life. In these letters, Drizzt describes the differences between the drow point of view on life and that held by the dwarfs.

Setting

The novel *Siege of Darkness* is set on the surface of the Earth or some earth-like planet, as well as on surfaces both below and above this planet's surface. The novel opens with Lolth visiting Errtu in The Abyss, the location to which Errtu is banished. The Abyss is a boggy area secluded from the other planes of existence. It is possible for beings to move back and forth from The Abyss to other planes. However, in most cases, Lolth must open a portal to allow creatures to move in and out of the Abyss. Another plane of existence specifically noted in the novel is the Astral Plane. The Astral Plane is the plane of existence where the panther Guenhwyvar lives and regains her strength. The name of the plane indicates it is located above the surface of the planet, in the region where the stars are. Guenhwyvar is only able to travel to and from The Astral Plane with the help of an enchanted figure that opens a portal to this plane.

Other settings included in the novel are Mithral Hall, the place where the dwarfs live, as well as Menzoberranzan, the home city of the drow. During the war with the drow, it is indicated that the area around Mithral Hall includes areas both above and below the surface of the planet. Settlestone is the home of the barbarians, most of whom came from the area of Icewind Dale. Icewind Dale is also the area from which Catti-brie came originally.



Language and Meaning

The language in this novel is very relaxed and easy to read. The only real difficulty with the book is the long and difficult names included in the text. It is easy to become distracted from the action of the book when one of these unusual names is encountered. Along these same lines, names are very important in this novel. Everything from swords, war hammers and knives are given names. These names almost make these weapons of war seem like friends instead of mere tools.

The novel deals with two main differing groups of beings, the dwarfs and the drow. Though there are no real verbal differences between these two groups, the differences can be seen instead in the tone of the writing. The sections of the novel that include the inhabitants of Mithral Hall are interspersed with humor while those concerning the drow are more anxious and tense.

Structure

This novel is divided into five different parts. Each of these parts addresses a particular topic as indicated by the name of the part. For instance, Part Two is entitled "The Onset of Chaos." It is in this part the characters in the novel realize there has been a disruption in the magic system. It is also in this section the K'yori makes her plans to revolt against House Baenre. Each part of the novel is divided into a number of chapters. These chapters are notated with both chapter numbers and chapter titles. Like the titles given to each part of the book, the titles given to the separate chapters give the reader an idea of what will happen in each chapter. Located at the beginning of each part of the book, before the first chapter of each part is a letter, or prologue, written by Drizzt. These letters differ from the rest of the novel because they are written in the first person point of view while the rest of the novel is written in the third person point of view. Take into account also that this novel is part of a series of novels. There are things that happened in prior novels that affect the actions of characters in this novel. For instance, the death of Wulfgar, though it didn't happen in this novel, affects much of what happens in this novel. Also, there is no definite ending to this novel. The novel ends with Catti-brie and Drizzt riding off to the west, looking for a new adventure. This type of ending leaves the writer open to produce a new novel about these same characters.



Quotes

"A time of great strife is approaching,' Lolth explained. 'A time when the gods will pay for their foolishness.'" Prologue, pg. 3.

"To any intelligent being, there is no emotion more important than hope." Part One -Rumbles of Discord, pg. 9

"We'll teach him that asking for something he cannot have will make him less the leader." Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter One, pg. 19.

"Half of everything Jarlaxle did was a bluff, but half of it was devious and ultimately deadly." Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter One, pg. 22

"It was no secret in Menzoberranzan that Gromph was not the most devout of Lolth's followers, no secret that the creation of the magnificent illusion had spared him his mother's unmerciful wrath." Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Four, pg. 47

"The great weakness in Menzoberranzan was not the rivalry of the various Houses, Jarlaxle knew, but the strict matriarchal system imposed by Lolth's followers." Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Four, pg. 49.

"If he did not relent on his demand to carry Aegis-fang, both Drizzt and Catti-brie knew, Bruenor would likely order the barbarian and his people off the land." Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Five, pg. 52.

"Forever would Guenhwyvar remember the renegade dark elf, whose heart was so strong and so good and whose loyalty was no less than the panther's own." Part One: Rumbles of Discord - Chapter Five, pg. 67.

"To Jarlaxle's thinking, the dark elves of Menzoberranzan continually limited themselves by their blind insistence that everything was symptomatic of a deeper meaning, that the Spider Queen had some grand design behind their every movement." Part Two: The Onset of Chaos - Chapter Seven, pg. 88.

"Her eyes were set on the conquest of Mithral Hall, on forcing Matron Baenre to extend her grasp so that the city of drow would be less secure, and more chaotic, more likely to see inter-house warfare." Part Three: Resolution - Chapter Twelve, pg. 146.

"When this business with Mithral Hall was settled, the rearrangement of the pecking order in Menzoberranzan would likely begin." Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Seventeen, loc 3227

"Rarely have four such groups converged as allies. The Longriders, the Riders of Nesme, the Knights in Silver, and the warriors of Settlestone, all joined in common cause." Part Four: The Drow March - Chapter Eighteen, pg. 191.



"Even if she died this night, the Lady of Silverymoon would die smiling, because she was following her heart. She was fighting for something bigger than her life, for values that were eternal and ultimately right." Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Four, pg. 258.

"That generosity would be the greatness of the place, would be what set Silverymoon apart from so many other petty kingdoms." Part Five: Old Kings and Old Queens - Chapter Twenty-Five, pg. 270.



Topics for Discussion

Why is it important that Gromph steal items from the brazier before he leaves the room where the matron mothers met to discuss K'yorl? What significance does this theft have on the story?

Consider K'yorl's plan to rise up against the other Houses in Menzoberranzan. Where does her plan go wrong?

Discuss the idea of feminine power in Menzoberranzan. Compare and contrast this with the picture of male dominance in Settlestone. Where on the continuum of these two opposite opinions of the dominate sex do those living in Mithral Hall fall? Why is this idea important to the novel?

Explore the letters written by Drizzt which are located at the beginning of each part of the novel. Describe how each of these letters is significant to the part of the novel that it precedes. For instance, in the letter included in Part Two Drizzt writes about the meaning of and need for faith in one's god. This idea is echoed in the following chapters as the people of Menzoberranzan try to determine what they have done to lose Lolth's favor.

Compare and contrast the ideas of morality held by those living in Mithral Hall with those held by those who live in the city of Menzoberranzan.

Consider the relationship between Catti-brie and Drizzt. Do you believe Catti-brie feels for Drizzt the same love that he feels for her? Why or why not?

Explore the idea of racism as presented in the novel. Describe the way the different groups of characters treat and think about each other.