

Daughter of the Dirge

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/16944984) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/16944984>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandoms:	Eberron , Dungeons & Dragons (Roleplaying Game)
Character:	Original Goblin Character(s)
Additional Tags:	Songfic , In-Universe Work , Musicals , fun with metaphors for a nocturnal species , homages to Phoenix: Dawn Command , Villain Song
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2018-12-11 Words: 949 Chapters: 1/1

Daughter of the Dirge

by [deprecatedIdentity_\(poodlepaws\)](#)

Summary

One of my friends was talking about standalone villain songs and this kind of snowballed from there. And also includes a lot of metafictional horseshit because that's the kind of person I am. I made myself cry a little writing it so I think it was a good idea.

Here's a song from a goblin musical for you to enjoy.

Notes

The following song is from a recent Brelish musical called "The Chant", written in Common by a goblin named Keel Ruukesh, and set in the days of the human conquest among the post-Dhakaani goblinoids of Shaarat (a precursor to Sharn).

"The Chant" opened in Sharn and has been played throughout Khorvaire; the play is a tragedy focused on a dirge singer named Ruuva who engineers a magical contagion to drive away the human invaders, and unlike in reality, no humans conquer Shaarat -- although it is soon inhospitable to goblinoids as well. Critical response to the play has been sharply divided; Ruuva is unambiguously a villain, but so was Malleon the Reaver (in life and in the play), and she's not entirely wrong in her actions.

The song is called "Daughter of the Dirge", and innovates on typical character-establishment songs in musicals by having two reprises with great significance later in the play. The Bright Reprise (humans would say dark) details her creation of the magical contagion and her descent into villainy; the Finale Reprise sees her look out over the destruction she's caused. (Niima and Palaan, her friends and the most heroic characters in the play, both succumb to the Chant.)

Different companies, and artists who've had success with the song as a single, have performed the finale reprise of "Daughter of the Dirge" in different moods -- some have her as an angry doomsayer, other as a quiet, somber singer clearly going through spell-shock. Ruukesh's version, however, called for it to be done as a wailing lament. The song supports all interpretations.

Doubled vowels are pronounced separately.

DAUGHTER OF THE DIRGE:

A large ceremonial hall of antique goblin design. HAASKA, the elderly dirge-singer: Dar [1]
of Shaarat, we are gathered here tonight to witness the confirmation of these three young
persons, as they accept the mantle of duur'kala, dirge-singer.

RUUVA, a young dirge-singer:

I have longed to help my people, I have not for atcha [2] sought;
Only to attain muut [3], that I have helped them as I ought.
All my life have I been singing -- as a pup I felt the urge --
And I'll turn that into muut, as a Daughter of the Dirge!

ALL:

Since great Jhazaal Dhakaan first took up her dragon's horn,
We have had the songs to guide us from the night that we are born
With the lessons of past heroes, and until our deaths emerge,
We are grateful for the guidance of the Daughters of the Dirge!

NIIMA, a young dirge-singer:

My mother sang these dirges; may she live in mem'ry long:
As they killed her she still sang aloud to keep our soldiers strong.
And my grandma always sang that I should be myself with cour'ge,
So I'll follow in their footsteps as a Child of the Dirge!

ALL:

When in battle we must venture, foes descend to rout and fear --
They are frightened, we are strengthened, by the music that we hear!
And the daylight folk we face tonight, though visaged like the scourge
Of old Dhakaan [4], won't withstand the Children of the Dirge!

PALAAAN, a young dirge-singer:

I have no exalted notions like my fellow students do;
But I long to sing of heroes brave and glorious and true,
And sing songs of love and loyalty, and until our paths diverge
I'll be loyal with Niima, and a Daughter of the Dirge!

ALL:

In the brightest day we can yet find a pleasant patch of shade:
And we hope we can provide it with the progress we have made,
And we'll lead you in the singing, as the harmonies converge!
And we'll get through this storm, for we're the Children of the --
We're the Children of the --

We're the Children of the --
We're the Children of the --
We're the Children of the Dirge!

BRIGHT REPRISE:

A desk in a library, covered in reports and plans. RUUVA:

I have longed to help my people, but their lives are on the line:
When I read through all the songs I know, no answers do I find.
Now there must be something I can do, some way to stop this scourge,
Or I'll be derelict in duty as a Daughter of the Dirge.

Now they say the lords of madness brought us low in nights gone by --
They dissolved as if in acid bonds on which we all rely.
Leaders gave out foolish orders, soldiers from their path diverged,
And we taught no Sons of Adamant [5], no Daughters of the Dirge.

Workers swelled with greed and vanity; recorders lost their heads;
Sibling turned against their sibling, children added to the dead:
Pups tore caretakers to pieces, all in shrieking waves converged,
And I've sung their lamentations as a Daughter of the Dirge.

Such calamity befell us, ending old Dhakaan's reign;
Oh, I wish it could be levied on tomorrow's battle plain!
Is my atcha worse for wishing so? Should I repress this urge?
Yet I might fulfill my muut if I, Daughter of the Dirge,

Took up the horn that slew us, and I sounded it aloud,
And I turned that ancient madness on defilers high and proud,
If I searched through every lore-book that survived that ancient purge
And applied my arcane knowledge as a Daughter of the Dirge ...

I've worked deep into the daytime in the archives that remain,
Even with a fox's cunning, answers still elude my brain.
But see on this basalt tablet, a lament of old emerge
And I think that I can sing it as a Daughter of the Dirge ...

Find the fiddles of the pixies! Find the madd'ning iron crown!
Find a necromancer's jar and make a song to bring them down!
Let the vengeful dead of Shaarat be in one mind submerged,
And let all our foes sing for me, for the *Mother* of the Dirge --

For the mother of a weapon that will bring our foes to heel!
To Dolurh with costs and consequences! Bring me no appeal!
We are dying by the hundreds! I shall set my sword and scourge
On the ones who seek to kill us; I, the Mother of the Dirge!

Sing our pain and loss, defilers! May you eat yourselves alive!
You will find us wretched insects quite protective of our hive!
This brought low our mighty empire -- you aren't even on the verge
Of surviving that which killed the Great-grandmothers of the Dirge!

Are our lives still not enough for you who've taken hope and home?
Well, we take all this from you now as ghosts tear you to the bone,
And our painful lamentations will instill in you the urge
To kill and to sing killing for the Mother of the Dirge!

FINALE REPRISE:

The crumbling towers of Shaarat, filled with Chanters. RUUVA:

I have longed to help my people; now they sing my songs aloud,
Bleeding bodies, grieving spirits, in a mindless chanting crowd.
Look at dar walk with defilers! Look, at last, our peoples merge!
And I set this into motion as the Mother of the Dirge!

All the city towers crumble, shaken by the pounding feet.
They fall down upon my conscience, my victorious defeat.
But no daelkyr-faced defilers will now dare to reemerge
Lest they have to face the children of the Mother ... of ... the Dirge!

End Notes

[1]: Dar is Goblin for "the people", referring specifically to those who claim Dhakaani identity.

[2]: Muut is "essentially about the honor of the Empire, and can be roughly translated as duty." (<http://keith-baker.com/dragonmarks-goblins/>)

[3]: Atcha is personal honor. "Honor comes from following the orders of your commander, from standing your ground against any odds, from displaying both skill and discipline. Do what you have pledged to do, and do it well." (ibid.)

[4]: There is a prevalent urban myth that states that the daelkyr, the creatures of madness that reputedly destroyed Dhakaan, looked exactly like humans.

[5]: Daashor, the traditional wizard-smiths or artificers of Dhakaan, and the first to smelt adamantine.

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