Nerevar at Red Mountain

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The following is from the Apographa, the hidden writings of the Tribunal Temple. It is a scholarly retelling of a tradition transmitted through the Ashlanders concerning the battle at Red Mountain and subsequent events. The Ashlanders associate this tale with the telling of Alandro Sul, a shield-companion of Nerevar who came to live among the Ashlanders after the death of Nerevar and during the ascension of the Tribunal. There are many variant treatments of this story, but the primary elements are consistent throughout the tradition. The murder of Nerevar, the tragic fate of Dagoth Ur, and the profane source of the Tribunal's divine power are denied by Temple doctrine as ignorant Ashlander superstition, and not widely known among civilized Dunmer.

Resdayn, present day Morrowind, was contested ground between two very different types of mer: the Chimer, who worshipped Daedra, and the Dwemer, who worshipped a profane and secret power. These two people warred with each other constantly until their lands were invaded by a young, vibrant, and violent alien culture, the Nords.

Two heroes, one from the Chimer and one from the Dwemer, Indoril Nerevar and Dumac Dwarf-Orc, made peace between their people and together ousted the alien invaders. Then these two heroes worked long and hard to maintain that peace thereafter, though their counselors thought it could not last or, worse, that it shouldn't. Nerevar's queen and his generals-- Almalexia, Sotha Sil, Vivec-- told him to claim all Resdayn for his own. But Nerevar would not listen, for he remembered his friendship with Dumac. There would be only peace.

Until Dagoth-Ur arrived. House Dagoth had discovered the source of the profane and secret power of the Dwemer: the legendary Heart of Lorkhan, which Dumac's people had used to make themselves immortal and beyond the measure of the gods. In fact, one of the their high priests, Kagrenac, was building a New God so that the Dwemer could claim Resdayn for their own.

The Tribunal urged Nerevar again to make war on the Dwarves. Nerevar was troubled. He went to Dumac, his friend of old, and asked if what Dagoth-Ur said was true. But Ragrenac and the high priests of the Dwemer had kept their New God secret from their King, and Dumac said the Dwemer were innocent of any wrongdoing. Nerevar was troubled again and made pilgrimage to Holamayan, the sacred temple of Azura, who confirmed that all that Dagoth-Ur said was indeed true and that the New God of the Dwemer should be destroyed for the safety of not only Resdayn, but for the whole world. When Nerevar went back and told his Tribunal what the goddess had said, his queen and generals felt themselves proved aright and again counseled him to war. There were reasons that the Dwemer and Chimer had hated each other forever.

Finally, Nerevar, angered that his friend Dumac would lie to him, went back to Vvardenfell. This time the Chimer King was arrayed in arms and armor and had his hosts around him, and he spoke harshly to Dumac Dwarf-Orc, King of Red Mountain. "You must give up your worship of the Heart of Lorkhan or I shall forget our friendship and the deeds that were accomplished in its name!" And Dumac, who still knew nothing of Ragrenac's New God, but proud and protective as ever of his people, said, "We shall not relinquish that which has been our way for years beyond reckoning, just as the Chimer will not relinquish their ties to the Lords and Ladies of Oblivion. And to come at my door in this way, arrayed in arms and armor and with your hosts around you, tells me you have already forgotten our friendship. Stand down, my sweet Nerevar, or I swear by the fifteen-and-one golden tones I shall kill you and all your people."

And so the Chimer and Dwemer went to war. The Dwemer were well-defended by their fortress at Red Mountain, but the bravery and cleverness of Nerevar's queen and generals drew most of Dumac's armies out into the field and kept them there, so that Nerevar and Dagoth-Ur could make their way into the Heart Chamber by secret means. There, Nerevar met Dumac and the Dwarf King and they both fell from grievous wounds. Dagoth-Ur slew Ragrenac and took the tools the Dwemer used to tap the power of the Heart. He went to his dying lord Nerevar and asked him what to do with these tools. And Nerevar summoned Azura again, and she showed them how to use the tools to separate the power of the Heart from the Dwemer people.

And on the fields, the Tribunal and their armies watched as the Dwemer turned into dust all around them as their stolen immortality was taken away.

Back in Red Mountain, Nerevar told Dagoth-Ur to protect the tools and the Heart Chamber until he returned. Dagoth-Ur said, "But shouldn't we destroy these tools at once, so that they might never be used for evil again?" But Nerevar was confused by his wounds and his sorrow (for he still loved Dumac and the Dwemer people) and so went to the fields outside of Red Mountain to confer with his queen and his generals, who had foreseen that this war would come and whose counsel he would not ignore again. "I will ask the Tribunal what we shall do with them, for they have had wisdom in the past that I had not. Stay here, loyal Dagoth-Ur, until I return."

Then Nerevar told his queen and generals all that had transpired under Red Mountain and how the Dwemer had used special tools to turn their people into immortals and of the wondrous power of the Heart of Lorkhan. The Tribunal decided that the Chimer should learn how to use this power so that Nerevar might claim Resdayn and the world for their people. Nerevar did not expect or want this, so he asked his queen and generals to help him summon Azura yet again for her guidance. But the Tribunal had become as greedy as Ragrenac upon hearing of the power of the Heart and they coveted it. They made ritual as if to summon Azura as Nerevar wanted but Almalexia used poisoned candles and Sotha Sil used poisoned robes and Vivec used poisoned invocations. Nerevar was murdered.

Then Azura came forth anyway and cursed the Tribunal for their foul deeds. She told them that she would use her powers over dusk and dawn to make sure Nerevar would come back and make things right again. But the Tribunal laughed at her and said that soon they would be gods themselves and that the Chimer people would forget their old ways of worship. And Azura knew this would be true and that it would take a long time before her power might bring Nerevar back. "What you have done here today is foul beyond measure and you will grow to regret it, for the lives of gods are not what mortals think and matters that weigh only years to mortals weigh on gods forever." And so that they might know forever their wicked deeds Azura changed the Chimer into Dunmer, and their skin turned ashen and their eyes into fire. "Let this mark remind you

of your true selves who, like ghouls, fed on the nobility, heroism, and trust of their king."

And then the Tribunal went into Red Mountain and met with Dagoth-Ur. Dagoth-Ur saw what had been done, for his skin had changed as well, and he tried to avenge the death of Nerevar but to no avail. He was driven off and thought dead. The Tribunal found the tools he had been guarding and, through study of Ragrenac's methods, turned themselves into gods.

Thousands of years after their apotheosis, the Tribunal are still the gods of Morrowind and the old ways of worship are remembered only by a few. And the murder of Nerevar is known to fewer. But his queen and generals still fear his return, for the words of Azura linger long and they see the mark of her curse on their people every day.

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