

Bharzul - Watcher's Gate by Tom Cartos

Background

Bharzul is uniquely located within the Dawn Lands of Cartosia. Behind the city's northern wall is the great Moribund Sea, filled with all manner of pirates, dangerous beasts and unknown leviathans. To the East and West are the Epicouatl mountains, impassable save for a few known routes many hundreds of miles away. Directly to the South is an almost sheer drop for thousands of feet.

A narrow, carved stone stair, known as the Steps of Agony, winds its way up the southern cliffside, but it is constantly soaked in spray from the Moribund Falls, making it treacherous at best. Any approach to the city is deadly, making it one of the best protected places on the continent.

Despite this, the dwarves have spent centuries perfecting their own methods of defence, should the natural barriers ever prove ineffective. While visitors are permitted if they can make the journey, particularly for trade, the native dwarves and their kin almost never leave. They have watched civilisation completely crumble around them twice in their history and know that their impenetrable citadel is all that saved them from the same fate.

The Watchers Gate greets any who make the climb up the Steps of Agony. The last few hundred feet widen out into a grand staircase flanked by bronze statues of soldiers. The gate is part of the gold tipped wall that surrounds the city, a hundred feet tall and over fifty feet thick. Two enormous statues of ancient dwarven warriors wielding the legendary armaments of Bharzul gaze down on anyone approaching. It is believed that if the city were ever under attack, the bronze warriors and their army of soldiers would awaken and fight to defend it.

Grid Information

GRID SIZE – 44x34(300DPI)

VTT SIZE – 6160x4760 (140DPI)

RECOMMENDED PRINT SIZE – A0/ANSI E

Design Notes

Watcher's Gate Entrance

- **01 – Stairway** – The grand stone staircase may seem like a relief after enduring the steps of agony, but it is all carefully designed to keep out invaders. The staircase funnels visitors into a narrow corridor that is overlooked by ballista and archers on the walls above. At the top of the stair is a lower plinth that splits right and left. The gate can only be approached by small groups on foot in either direction, keeping any siege engines or battering rams at bay.

- **02 – Winding Steps** – These steps are only about 5ft wide, meaning at most only two people can climb them side-by-side. A small group can easily defend the stairs for a very long time as attacking forces are bottlenecked.
- **03 – Mechanical Lift** – The dwarves have many mechanical contraptions around the city. These water-driven lifts are a common site, particularly useful for moving large objects around the cities levels and also making the various platforms more accessible for those who can't use the stairs.
- **04 – The Watchers** – The Watchers were twin warriors of dwarven legend who protected the city in the distant past. They carried two weapons known as the Legendary Armaments of Bharzul, a Great Axe and Great Hammer. The location of the actual armaments has been lost to time, but their legend is as well-known as the Watchers who wield them.
- **05 – Gate Entrance** – The passage through the wall is overlooked from the barracks on either side and the ramparts above, meaning anyone who somehow manages to break through the first gate finds themselves in a killbox scenario.
- **06 – Barracks** – These are the guard barracks and armoury for this section of the wall.
- **07 – Waterway** – The Dwarves funnel water from the Moribund Sea in channels and pipes throughout the city. Aside from being the primary source of water for drinking and cleaning, it is also used to generate power for the various contraptions and as part of the city's defence system. Sluice gates in different parts of the city and within the walls themselves can be opened to quickly flood areas that are under attack. When these particular sluice gates are opened, water shoots from the bronze figureheads on the outer walls, washing anyone who is in their path off the side of the cliff.
- **08 – Mechanical Lift** – This lift goes to the upper ramparts (**11**)
- **09 – Stairs** – These stairs lead up to the upper ramparts (**10**)

Watcher's Gate Wall

- **10 – Stairs** – These stairs lead from the upper rampart down to the street level (**09**)
- **11 – Mechanical Lift** – This lift goes down to the street level (**08**)
- **12 – Crane** – While the mechanical lifts are very useful, they can be fairly slow. Moving general goods up onto the wall is usually accomplished using hoists, pulleys and cranes.
- **13 – Upper Ramparts** – The wall leads almost the entire way around the city, breaking only where it reaches the mountainside. It is large enough that people live and work up in here in some places, although key areas like the main gates and watchtowers are only accessible to the city guard.
- **14 – Mechanical Ballista** – These ballista are formed like giant crossbows and can be loaded and fired rapidly by a single person.
- **15 – Gate Entrance Overlook**
- **16 – Trebuchets** – These trebuchets have enough range that they can launch large cast iron balls over the edge of the cliff and steps and land a direct hit on anyone at the bottom, several thousand feet below.