



DUNGEON FACTION Q&A

1. Hello. First, please introduce yourself.

Hi, my name is Alexander Mishulin. I'm Creative Director for the developer, Nival Interactive, and one of the *Heroes of Might and Magic® V* game designers.

2. How did you come up with the idea of creating a new faction for Heroes V?

Actually, it was not a single idea but rather a chain of ideas and decisions. In *Heroes of Might and Magic V* we try to unite each faction with a sole idea. When we looked at the old Dungeon faction we saw various mythological creatures who were only united by the fact that they lived underground. (And even this was a weak uniting feature, because placing some of them – for instance, Medusas – underground was somewhat questionable.) And we wanted not just creatures in the faction, but a race, with its own philosophy, history, special features, and lifestyle. Then we thought of Dark Elves. Dark Elf is a very popular fantasy race, probably one of the races with the biggest cult following – besides dragons, of course. ☺ They have their own distinctive style and features, and consequently they bring unique ideas not only to the Dungeon faction but to the whole game.

3. Why did you call this faction Dungeon? Does it mean that the old Dungeon faction will totally disappear?

In creating *Heroes of Might and Magic V* we follow not a revolutionary but an evolutionary path. The old Dungeon faction has not totally disappeared; it was just reorganized and now has a unique idea and unique race living there. We left some creatures that had been living in Dungeon in the previous games. It's only natural that you can hire Minotaurs and Black Dragons in the Dungeon town, isn't it? Plus, Dark Elves are living underground, so, again, their housing in the Dungeon is quite natural. And they are quite strong in magic, which again fits the classical concept of the Dungeon from the previous games.

4. What were your inspirations when creating this new faction?

We somewhat based ourselves on the classical fantasy descriptions and general idea of Dark Elves, yet changed it to fit the *Heroes of Might and Magic V* universe. Actually, we were inspired by two ideas: the conception of Dungeon in the previous HoMM games and the conception of Dark Elves in various fantasy worlds, especially those Dark Elves that live in the city of Menzoberranzan described by R.A. Salvatore. The idea of Dungeon underground faction inspired us because it brings in wholeness and completeness to the gaming world and has many distinctive features from the gameplay point of view, while the idea of Dark Elves brings in a new culture with its own bright characters, individuality, architecture, and beliefs, which are all very inspiring. This mix makes for a really interesting and attractive faction!

This nation is not as evil as Demons, nor do they worship death like Necromants. Dark Elves used to be Sylvan Elves, but one day they made a pact with Faceless and accepted darkness. That's what we kept in mind when creating them. As fast, strong, free, and beautiful as common Elves, yet indifferent and merciless like one's shadow. Their actions are not aimed at others' sufferings nor do they try to bring good to the world. They follow their own way, and if you turn out to be in their way, they won't even listen to your excuses.

Classical Dark Elves worship spiders, but we replaced spiders with dragons – as dragons are very important creatures in the *Heroes of Might and Magic V* world, as well as in the Might and Magic universe in general. Visually, classic fantasy Dark Elves are pictured with purple skin and pale hair. As our Dark Elves are renegades from the Sylvan faction, they differ from the Sylvan Elves more in their morals than in their looks. However, their look delivers the general idea of this



faction: free, strong, fast, and “dark.” Indifferent to others’ desires and sufferings, they follow their own way that lies through the shadows...

5. Why are women that important in this faction? Is it to balance the game?

In all the fantasy origins Dark Elves live in a matriarchy – the status of women in their society is rather high. We decided not to change that. Not only does it bring some more diversity to the *Heroes of Might and Magic V* world, it also distinguishes the Dark Elves more from the Sylvan Elves. Plus, female units make the faction more pleasurable to one’s eye. ☺

6. Why did you decide to create an “underground” faction?

We felt that there definitely should be a more cohesive underground section in the game to deepen the gameplay role of the underground level. An underground faction is not new to the *Heroes of Might and Magic* series. The first idea in the Heroes series was to make underground levels just like stocks of different bonuses and resource items, but then it was decided to create rather large dungeons with their own castles and creatures there. In HoMMV we extended this idea to the unique underground race, and it seemed only natural to us. The *Might and Magic* fantasy world wouldn’t be as rich without huge underground caves and dungeons, inhabited by an underground race that balances the game world and the gameplay.

7. What will the dungeon faction bring to the mix in terms of gameplay? Is it might or magic oriented? Does it have any never-seen-before abilities?

Dark Elves are very good warriors, quite dangerous to their opponents. They are strong and rather fast, so they can throw mighty attacks on the enemy. Yet their numbers are scarce and the cost of warriors is rather high, so their power is balanced by smaller amounts of troops. Dark Elves are quite magic-oriented, as their heroes are good in magic resistance. In *Heroes of Might and Magic V*, each faction has its own unique abilities, and Dark Elves are no exception. They can receive bonuses for various combinations of strikes.

8. What will be the role of the Dungeon faction in the story of Heroes V?

Their role in the story is rather big, but that’s all I will tell for now. I’m not trying to tease you; I just don’t want to spoil first impressions and the fun you will have from exploring the story of *Heroes of Might and Magic V*. Just believe me, as each faction has its unique features, each also has its own unique role in the plot of the game, making the story fuller and brighter.

9. So now that everybody knows about the six factions in Heroes V, would you tell us which one is your favorite and why?

That’s a difficult question! We created factions one at a time (first there were humans, then demons, and so on), and as each faction appeared in the game I thought: “This faction will be my favorite!” ☺. I still can’t pick a definite favorite, as each faction is so absolute in its diversity and pre-eminence. However, if I had to name one, it would probably be the Necropolis. I’m very fond of Gothicism, and in this faction our artists followed Gothic architectural style. But Dark Elves are a very close runner-up, as they have this dark and shadow mood around them, too. Plus, I think it will be very interesting to play a Dark Elf in the *Heroes of Might and Magic* world!