

Blue Vale Keep

Location · Fortress-City

Part of: The Drakespire Mountains

Population: Approximately 12,000

Government: Military governance; the Commander of the Blue Knights holds executive authority within the Keep and the Vale approaches

Blue Vale Keep is not a city that grew. It was built, deliberately and over generations, to be exactly what it is: a fortified crossing point through the only gap in the Drakespire Mountains, garrisoned by an order capable of holding it against any realistic threat. The Keep occupies the narrowest point of the Blue Vale, where the mountain walls press close enough that no army could bypass it across open ground. The fortress itself is massive -- layered walls, towers, gates within gates -- and the city that has grown inside and immediately around it is entirely a product of that fortress. The markets are here because travelers pass through. The taverns are here because travelers stop. The permanent residents are here because the Blue Knights need blacksmiths, physicians, provisioners, and the hundred other trades an active military order consumes. Every building in Blue Vale Keep exists in relation to the gate it guards. Travelers describe it as the cleanest city they've ever passed through and the most uncomfortable. Both observations are accurate. The Blue Knights take civic order seriously as a matter of theology, not merely policy. The streets are maintained, crime is addressed swiftly, and public drunkenness has consequences. The inspection protocols at the gate are thorough and unhurried. Anyone who looks like they might be carrying unsanctioned magic gets a longer conversation. This is, again, theology. The Keep exists to police what crosses the mountains. It does.