

# REAPER DUNGEON DWELLERS™

## Painting *Baran Blacktree* by Rhonda Bender

Welcome to our series of quick painting guidelines for anyone who would like to paint their Reaper Dungeon Dwellers miniatures just like the Reaper studio models. **Baran Blacktree** was sculpted by Bobby Jackson who designed the model to look like he was plucked straight out of the dungeon. This month, Rhonda Bender takes us through the steps she used on the Reaper studio model of **Baran Blacktree**.



Bobby Jackson sculpted **Baran Blacktree** as a seasoned adventurer, with dings and scratches on his gear from past encounters. Together with his name, I felt that a color scheme of dark, less vibrant colors would fit the figure well. I chose to use the non-metallic metal (NMM) technique since it's easier to take good looking photographs of NMM, and also because last month's guide (featuring **07001 Rictus the Undying**) discussed how to use metallic paints, so together with this month's guide, you have a look at both options. Note that the technique I used for the scratches can easily be applied to figures painted with metallic paints.

### Preparing to Paint

After cleaning away flash and mold lines, I fully assembled the piece. It was a little challenging to paint the face, so you might instead prefer to paint the face and a few other areas before you attach the shield arm to the main body. I cut off the slot at the figure's feet so I could attach him to a resin base with a stone tile pattern, and added a spear tip I cut off another figure for a little more dungeon flavor.

It was much too cold where I live to safely use spray primer at the time I was preparing the figure, so I chose to use brush-on primer. This also allowed me to take advantage of the different primers Reaper makes.

I used **09214 Black Primer**, **09299 Grey Primer**, and a 50/50 mix of the two to lay down the basic values of the different areas on Baran – black for anything I intended to be a very dark color, and lighter greys for the metal areas and skin. For a figure intended to have a lighter color scheme, I would have used **09108 White Primer**, possibly with mixes of greys or even some black for darker areas or in shadows.



*Photo 1: Baran, primed and assembled.*

### Painting the Face

Since the face is recessed and set behind the shield, I started with the skin. The colors I used are listed at the end of this overview. Note that I used these same colors in other areas of the figure (leather, dirt on the base) to create a more unified color scheme.



## Painting Black

Although I painted the various black areas at different stages of the painting process, I think it is useful to discuss painting black as an overall topic. The cloak was one of the first areas painted, since the front side of it was recessed behind the rest of the figure and would be harder to reach later. Items close to the body or behind other areas, like the scabbards, were painted before the armor, while more outward sections like the gauntlets and boots were painted after the armor.

Some tips for painting black:

*Black is Black* – when painting black, it helps to remember that black is both the midtone and the highlight color of the area. No more than 25-30% of the surface should be painted with highlight colors.

*Neutrals are Dull* – using only pure black and neutral greys (Misty Grey, Stormy Grey, etc.) on an area tends to look artificial and uninteresting. Instead, you can use other muted colors to highlight black. Using different colors for the highlighting of different areas also helps paint multiple surface materials and/or areas of black on one figure that are slightly differentiated from one another. In addition to the colors I used on this figure, other good options for highlighting black are the Dusky Skin triad, Twilight Blues triad, the Grey Browns triad, and medium tone Caucasian skin colors.

*Blue Recedes* – blue is a cool color that appears to recede, so using a very dark blue in the shadows of black gives it more depth than just black alone. I often use slightly thinned Blue Liner in the shadow areas for black items, and that is what I used on this figure.

I knew there was going to be a lot of texture on the figure, so I painted the cloak as smooth cloth to make a nice contrast to that. Perhaps it is less worn than his other gear because it is a magic cloak he acquired in a recent adventure! I started to paint by visualizing where my light source was (above and to the left in this back view) and roughing in my highlights.

These are brighter to the left side of the figure, and higher up the cloak because of where the imagined light source is. Then it was just the tough work of using mixes of slightly thinned paint to soften the transition lines between the different values of paint. In *Photo 2* below, I had roughed in the highlights and had just started the process of blending on the folds on the lower left. In *Photo 3* below, the left half is fully blended, and I've started on the right half. I had also realized that I needed some brighter highlights on the folds near his head to better simulate the light and keep the viewer's eyes moving around the figure.



*Photo 2: Baran's cloak with highlights roughed in.*



*Photo 3: Baran's cloak with the left half fully blended.*



Painting a figure is a balancing act between making everything appear part of one unified scene and setting areas apart from one another so the viewer can see which item is what. For the black leather accessories, I used highlight mixes of the Stone Grey colors. This set them apart from the black of the cloak, but tied in with the paint colors used on the NMM. These are well-worn adventuring accessories, so I applied the highlights to look like scratches and worn areas. I used a very small brush with a fine tip, applying the paint as stippled dots or small streaks.

### Non-Metallic Metal

I also used the Stone Grey colors to paint the non-metallic metal I used. But successful NMM is much less about the color of the paints you use than people often think. Rather, it is very helpful to understand and apply principles of how light reflects off a metal surface to determine where to place highlights and shadow. That is a bit beyond the scope of this guide, but some 'make it look cool' tips like the following are also very helpful.

*Contrast is Key* – The boots and armor use the same paint color mixes. The boots don't look shiny because they have a smaller range of contrast between the darkest color used and the lightest color used. The metal areas use a larger range of contrast from Blue Liner to a few spots of Pure White.

*Light Near Dark Creates Shine* – When the human eye sees bright highlights placed near to areas of darkness, it tends to perceive that object as being shiny. As an example, the front of the sword is made up of two planes at different angles. I placed the areas of light on one plane directly next to the areas of shadow on the neighboring plane to create the illusion of reflected light.



Photo 4: NMM on Baran's sword.

Spherical objects like the helmet and shoulder pads reflect light a little differently. There you have a hot spot of a bright highlight in the direction of the light source which fades out to a dark shadow encircling it at the edges of the sphere.



Photo 5 NMM on Baran's helmet.

Regardless of the shape you are painting, confining the highlights to small areas so they appear to 'pop' next to the darker colors around them enhances the illusion of shininess, as does using dark lining between plates or under overhangs.

### A Note on Brushes

The fine strokes required to create armor scratches and worn leather are best painted with a high quality Kolinsky sable watercolor brush. These are also the best kinds of brushes for most blending techniques. I prefer a smaller brush with a short bristle head and very fine point for texture painting, and a larger brush with a full belly for blending. Reaper sells a line of Kolinsky sable brushes (08601-08607). You can get more information on other brands and options for brushes at your local fine arts store (but rarely craft or hobby stores), or in discussion threads on the Reaper forums.

### Scratches

Bobby Jackson sculpted a number of scratches and dents onto the figure. To really bring these out requires a little paint manipulation, and I used the same techniques to add additional battle damage. (Pro tip: if I had an area where my primer or paint surface was a little bumpy and I couldn't get a nice blend, that was a great place to add a scratch!)



To paint scratches you need to use a consistent direction of light. For Baran, I pictured the light as coming from above and a little to the side in the direction he is facing. Scratches are nothing more than a line darker than the surface right next to a line lighter than the surface. The light line needs to face your light source. So for a horizontal scratch, the dark line is on top, and the light line is on the bottom. For a vertical scratch on the front of this figure, the dark line is on the right, and the light line is on the left. I think I messed it up in a few spots, so don't feel badly if you do, too!

The deeper scratches on the leather tabard and the scratches on the four quarters of the shield were painted in a similar way, but because worn leather isn't a very shiny material, I used much less contrast between the dark line and the light line than I did on the metal surfaces.



*Photo 6: Painted scratches on the shield*

To paint scratches on metal surfaces painted with metallic paint, use matte paint mixes for the dark line, but use bright metallic paints for the light lights.

The tricky part of scratches is that you need a decent amount of brush control. That comes through practice, so if you try it now and have trouble, just keep on painting and eventually you will find it easier and easier to do. Using a small brush with a fine tip can also be very helpful.

Here is a list of the **Reaper Master Series Paints** I used to paint Baran Blackshield. As always, you should feel free to paint your models in any way you like. And most of all, have fun!

#### Skin

Midtone: **09442 Barbarian Flesh**

Shadows: **09176 Military Green**

Highlights: **09234 Bright Skin Highlight, 09444 Scholar Flesh**, small touches of **09061 Linen White**

Cheek, nose, and lip glaze: **09241 Auburn Shadow**

Green Shirt (collar, sleeves between armor and gauntlets)

Midtone: **09158 Olive Drab**

Shadows: **09176 Military Green**, touch of **09066 Blue Liner**

Highlights: **09177 Camouflage Green**

#### Cloak

Midtone: **29843 Solid Black**

Shadow: **09066 Blue Liner**

Highlights: **09163 Dark Elf Shadow, 09164**

**Dark Elf Skin, 09165 Dark Elf Highlight**, touch of **09274 Vampiric Shadow** mixed into top highlights.

#### Dark Brown Leather Tabard

Base color: **29843 Solid Black**

Shadow: **09066 Blue Liner**

Highlights: **09440 Ebony Flesh, 09040 Dark**

**Shadow, 09442 Barbarian Flesh**, touch **09234 Bright Skin Highlight**

#### Non-Metallic Metal, Stones on the Base

Gradients applied to areas appropriate to the imagined light source using the following colors:

**09066 Blue Liner, 09065 Grey Liner, 09085**

**Shadowed Stone, 09086 Stone Grey, 09087**

**Weathered Stone, 09062 Leather White,**

**09039 Pure White**

#### Leather Boots and Gauntlets

Midtone: **29843 Solid Black**

Shadow: **09066 Blue Liner**

Highlights: **09065 Grey Liner, 09085**

**Shadowed Stone, 09086 Stone Grey, 09087**

**Weathered Stone**



Brown Leather Bags and Straps, Dirt Areas on the Base

Midtone: 50/50 mix of 9040 Dark Shadow and 9442 Barbarian Flesh

Shadows: 9040 Dark Shadow, 9440 Ebony Flesh, 9066 Blue Liner

Highlights: 9442 Barbarian Flesh, 9234 Bright Skin Highlight

Rope, Bedroll (under shield arm), Teeth (on spearhead on the base)

Mixes of 9163 Dark Elf Shadow, 9164 Dark Elf Skin, 9165 Dark Elf Highlight, 9274 Vampiric Shadow

Rust and Weathering

Glazes of 9160 Woodstain Brown, 9241 Auburn Shadow, 9201 Orange Brown

Applications of dry pigment powders



*You can see more shots of Baran Blacktree at [www.reapermini.com](http://www.reapermini.com)!*



***Rhonda Bender and Bird With a Brush Painting Studio***

*Rhonda Bender is an award-winning painter based in Knoxville, Tennessee. She paints for Darksword Miniatures and other manufacturers in addition to painting for Reaper. Rhonda is the author of Reaper's best-selling Learn to Paint Kit: Core Skills, and Learn to Paint Kit: Layer Up! She also teaches miniature painting classes at conventions in the United States, including ReaperCon, Adepticon, and CMON Expo. In 2017, she was inducted into the Reaper Miniatures Hall of Fame. When not painting miniatures she enjoys playing board games with her husband Kevin, and catering to the mercurial whims of her three cats. You can see more of her work at [www.facebook.com/wrenthebard/](http://www.facebook.com/wrenthebard/)*