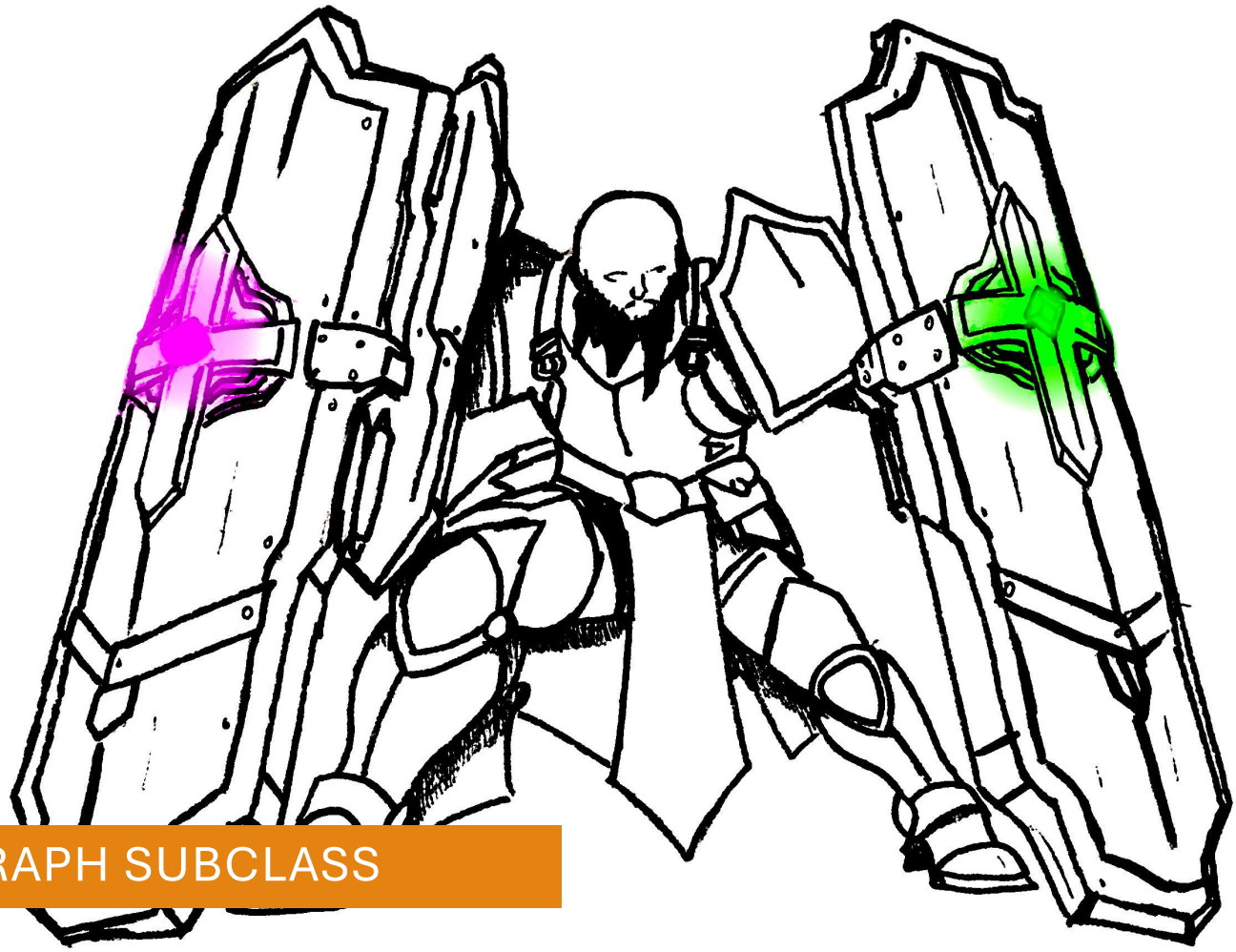
THE ROOK



A SERAPH SUBCLASS

DESIGNER NOTES

TOUCHSTONES

The Battle of Helm's Deep; the Siege of Minas Tirith

> The Wardholds do not protect because they are unbreakable. They protect because their bearer refuses to fall while they still can be raised.

The Rook began with a simple idea: A dual-shield tank. Most warrior or paladin-type classes in tabletop games utilize a sword and shield, or a two-handed blade weapon of some sort. The shield is almost always an after-thought, giving an armor bonus at the least and a few extra enchantments and goodies at best. They are mobile, running into the battle and jumping into harm's way.

The Rook asked me to stop thinking like the hero standing in the battle and instead look at the battlefield from a different perspective. What would it be like to play a defender that forced the battlefield to adapt to them instead? Instead of seeking cover, what if the tank character became that cover? What would it feel like to become the fortress your companions retreat behind?

Every feature and ability here was built in service of that idea – not simply to make a durable defender, but to create a character whose greatest strength is the promises they refuse to break.

The class started with an image: A lone dwarf, rugged and stout, bracing against the massive wooden doors of a castle gate. His feet are planted. His shoulders strain against the weight. Outside, an army batters at the doors. Behind him stand fellow soldiers and frightened innocents, watching in awe as the lone dwarf prays only for the strength to hold the line.

The doors became shields. The prayer became an oath to protect, and the oath became a blazing jewel set into each shield. That image appears across countless stories and legends, but they all tell the same truth.

The gates are breached.

The defenders fight with everything they have.

And someone chooses to hold the line until help arrives.