

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™

CAMPAIGN SUPPLEMENT

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Champions of Ruin™



Jeff Crook, Wil Upchurch, Eric L. Boyd

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Introduction

The conflict between good and evil has occurred throughout Toril's history and continues to permeate the day-to-day lives of its people—but neither good nor evil ever manages to get the upper hand for long.

These archetypes tantalize and terrorize: reavers, criminals, miscreants, antiheroes, pirates, murderers, cultists, seducers, servants of dark gods, villains, and archvillains. Evil compels. Whether it's attractive and seductive or depraved and disgusting, evil stimulates our imaginations and evokes strong responses.

What are heroes without great threats—and what if you are one of these threats? What grand schemes can you prepare and evil designs can you execute if you're not hampered by good ideals? *Champions of Ruin* offers many opportunities for both players and Dungeon Masters interested in exploring the darker side of Faerûn.

what you need to play

To use this sourcebook, you need the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, plus the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting.

Finally, several books are referenced herein. In many cases, this reference is in the form of a superscript abbreviation of the book's title, which is tacked onto the end of the name of a spell, monster, or some other game element. The books (including some of those mentioned above) and their abbreviations, when applicable, are as follows: *Book of Vile Darkness* (BV), *Complete Warrior* (CW), *Draconomicon* (Dra), *Epic Level Handbook* (EL), *Fiend Folio*, *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting* (FRCS), *Lords of Darkness* (LD), *Magic of Faerûn*

(Mag), *Monster Manual II* (MM2), *Monstrous Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn* (Mon), *Player's Guide to Faerûn* (PG), *Races of Faerûn* (Rac), *Serpent Kingdoms* (SK), *Unapproachable East* (Una), and *Underdark* (Und).

How to use this book in your campaign

Champions of Ruin provides players and Dungeon Masters ideas, options, and tools for incorporating evil into a campaign. It provides new evil races, feats, and magic items. Initiate feats lend flavor to evil divine spellcasters. Supremely evil, powerful villains give the DM a gallery of new foes, patrons, or friends for the player characters. The book as a whole offers a wealth of material for expanding the role of evil in a FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign. Alternatively, much of the book can be used with minor adjustments in any setting.

Introduction: Why are some people or creatures evil? Here are a number of different philosophies.

Chapter 1, Races: Three new races are custom-designed for *Champions of Ruin*. Meet the extaminnar and the krinith, two vicious new races, and, at long last, a player can play a draegloth, using the monster class information provided here.

Chapter 2, The Tools of Evil: More than a dozen new feats, more than forty new spells, and a selection of newly unearthed magic items let characters explore their umbral urges.

Chapter 3, Prestige Classes: Six new prestige classes are detailed here, along with tips on how to place them into your campaign.

Chapter 4, Evil Organizations: To join or oppose? The player characters have many opportunities with these organizations. Each entry includes information on joining the groups as well as the costs and benefits of membership.

Chapter 5, Evil Places. Evil nodes, shadow nodes, shrines, and places of evil power await the brave, desperate, or devious.

Chapter 6, Encounters with Evil: This chapter offers practical advice on incorporating evil player characters into a campaign.

Chapter 7, Champions of Evil: Learn more about the elder evil of Faerûn. Aumvor the Undying, Dendar the Night Serpent, Soneillon the Queen of Whispers, Eltah, and others are detailed in all their gore, glory, and greatness.

philosophies of evil

Evil characters offer a rich diversity of opportunities for roleplaying. They can be complex people tormented by failure to live up to good ideals, although some evil characters never bother to analyze whether their actions are good or evil. Others believe that the end justifies the means, and that good can ultimately come of evil acts; some are opportunists who serve no higher purpose than personal advancement.

When playing an evil character, some people have a tendency to view evil in black-and-white terms and to assume that the evil character in the party is looking for any opportunity to betray, rob or murder his companions. This is an extreme viewpoint.

Evil can manifest itself in many ways, not all of them so overt as stabbing the party's paladin in the back or tossing victims into the fiery belly of a brazen idol. While assault and murder are obvious manifestations of an evil character's behavior, ruthless selfishness can often be a more potent expression of evil than the psychotic thief who murders his companions in their sleep.

A character can be evil and yet not seem to be evil; he can be evil yet consider himself the epitome of goodness; or his evil might only show itself under certain conditions. A character who has contracted lycanthropy, for example, might donate treasure to widows and orphans, build temples, slay dragons, and help old ladies across the street—but on the night of the full moon, he hunts down and slaughters those widows and orphans and feeds the same old ladies to the dragon. Most of the time he is good, but his curse wipes out all the good that he does.

A naturally good or neutral character might be driven to evil through the need to seek revenge, finding evil acts an easy way to accomplish her goals. Another might stray from righteousness and goodness by using evil means to justify good ends.

Of course, evil can be self-evident. No one is going to question whether the priest of Cyric is really a good guy at heart; he isn't—if he were, Cyric wouldn't grant him any spells. But just because he is evil doesn't mean he is going to slaughter his companions and steal their treasure at the first opportunity. If evil were really that self-destructive, good wouldn't have nearly as hard a time combating it.

At the same time, it can be hard to understand what would motivate a person to become evil. It is the rare individual who admits—much less embraces—being evil, and most people consider themselves, if not wholly good, certainly not irredeemably evil. Yet Faerûn is filled with irredeemably evil antiheroes, gods and monsters.

So what is evil?

If you wish to play an evil character, you might act exactly as you would play a good character, except in reverse. Instead of going out to slay the red dragon that has been terrorizing the elf village, you go out to slay the gold dragon that has been terrorizing the orc village. However, if you are going to interact and perhaps adventure with a party of good and neutral characters, you might need to explore your character's evil nature a little more deeply and try to find out what it is that defines the evil alignment you have chosen for him.

Various philosophies of evil are briefly discussed below. Each section provides tips for what sorts of religion each philosophy follows; examples of organizations, deities, character types, or creatures that embody a particular philosophy; and the alignment or alignments commonly held by those who practice the philosophy.

tradition/there is no evil

One potential cause for evil is simply following the norms and standards of your ancestors and society. Evil is defined by society, not by the inherent laws of gods or nature. What might be considered the darkest taboo in one place might be a perfectly acceptable practice somewhere else. For example, slavery is illegal in many parts of Faerûn but is fairly common in Thay, where even a good person might keep a slave or two simply because it is a societal norm. In some regions, the use of narcotics and hallucinogenic drugs is strongly discouraged, while in others it is an integral part of the daily spiritual lives of the people.

Other situations are not so obvious. Sorcery, for example, is forbidden in some regions for no other reason than that the people distrust it. Anyone practicing sorcery in such a place might well be called evil by the region's judges and sheriffs, while just across the border, sorcery is an honored profession. In civilized lands, violent retribution or revenge is the exclusive domain of the civil or religious authorities. The rule of law is meant to protect the innocent from hasty judgment by a grieving father or angry mob. If you are harmed and you lash out in retaliation, your actions might be seen to be as evil as the crime you are avenging. But in border regions and lawless areas where a person has to rely on his own devices, personal acts of revenge are the norm and are considered no more evil than an act of self-defense. Evil can often be defined not by an individual's acts or personal philosophy, but by the culture in which he is acting at the time.

Characters might use this philosophy to justify their actions, and they could very well be correct, depending on their individual circumstances. A half-orc from the Spine of the World or a drow character from the Underdark might have a much more liberal interpretation of what constitutes evil compared to someone from Silvermoon or Cormyr.

In any case, either the player or the DM must assign an alignment to the character, if for no other reason than the fact that alignment plays a critical role in how certain magic works—*forbiddance* spells, or damage reduction that is overcome by a certain kind of aligned weapon, for example. Morally am-

ambiguous characters can be assigned the same alignment as their patron deity, if no other solution presents itself.

Religion: Characters holding this philosophy are attracted to small regional or cultural religions and cults.

Example: Cult of the Dragon.

Common Alignments: Neutral evil, chaotic evil.

I AM NOT evil

Some people recognize that evil exists in the world, but they do not in any way think of themselves as evil, no matter how depraved their actions might be. The Eldreth Veluuthra (discussed on page 78 and further detailed in *Lords of Darkness*) is a perfect example of an evil organization that thinks its every action is in the service of good.

A character with this philosophy must still be assigned his correct alignment, no matter what he thinks of himself, for the same reasons as characters who believe in the Tradition/There Is No Evil philosophy. Either the player or the DM should assign alignment according to the preponderance of the character's actions. If he occasionally does good things but most often resorts to evil ends to justify his evil means, he should be given an evil alignment, no matter what his objections.

Religions: Characters with this philosophy often worship gods of good.

Example: Eldreth Veluuthra.

Common Alignment: Lawful evil.

evil curse

The character has become evil through some magical agent—a curse from a god, a disease such as lycanthropy, through contact with an artifact, or another form of powerful magic. In some cases, his outlook with respect to law and chaos does not change. The curse is usually resisted at first, but the longer it is in effect, the more likely it is that the character will give in to the curse's evil characteristics.

Religions: The character might attempt to retain his former religion, but will gradually gravitate toward a religion that most closely matches his alignment or that welcomes him for what he is now.

Example: Maler.

Special: Good paladins and clerics under an evil curse usually lose their divine abilities.

Common Alignments: All.

seduction

The character has been lured with promises of power, glory, wealth, or pleasure into performing evil acts. He is not proud of his actions, but his desire for these rewards outweighs his dislike of what he has become. He might even come to accept his evil nature and relish it. A character can be magically seduced through powerful enchantment spells or by being awed in the presence

of an evil god. Seduction differs from an evil curse in that the character is not opposed to what is happening to him. He might not at first even be aware that he is acting in an evil manner, but when he does realize it, he doesn't seek to change his ways.

Religions: The character is usually active within an evil religion, since it is most often the religion, or his association with it, that has seduced him.

Example: Shar.

Common Alignments: All.

driven to evil

A character could be driven to evil in several ways. His life or circumstances might have been so harsh that he had to commit evil acts just to survive. He might be seeking retribution for some unimaginable wrong done to him or those he loved. He might be fighting fire with fire, so to speak, driven to evil just to keep a worse evil at bay.

Unlike the character who doesn't accept that he is evil, this type of character often doesn't see himself as truly evil—but he doesn't deny that what he has done in the past could be taken that way. Often, he has some grandiose intention to make up for what he has done; of course, by that time it might be too late for him to change his ways.

Religions: Any. This sort of evil is not associated with a particular religion.

Examples: Many a thieves' guild is filled with these types of characters.

Common Alignment: Neutral evil.

just plain mean

The character is incapable of controlling his violent or anti-social impulses. He might be kind, intelligent, and perfectly capable of completing a task, holding a conversation, and working successfully at a craft. But when something sets him off, there is no telling what he'll do. There is no way of knowing from one day to the next what will ignite his fury; he usually blames his outbursts on others and doesn't accept that he has done anything wrong, nor does he feel regret or remorse.

Religions: Any. This sort of evil is not associated with a particular religion.

Examples: Fighters, thieves, and barbarians.

Common Alignment: Chaotic evil.

natural born evil

The character has been brought up in a society in which evil is the rule of thumb, and he knows no other way of life. He was born on a battlefield or in an orc den, learned to deceive almost before he learned to talk, and probably committed his first truly vile act before he was ten years old.

This type of evil character is the most likely to undergo an alignment shift once exposed to other cultures. He is also the most likely to hate and fear anything that is different from himself.

Religions: The character prefers the shamanistic religion or cult in which he was raised.

Examples: Monster societies.

Common Alignments: Chaotic evil, lawful evil

mad, i tell you

Because of some psychosis, obsession or overpowering phobia, the character is driven to perform acts of incomprehensible evil. Even characters dedicated to the philosophy of evil or to evil gods often find this character's actions beyond the pale of acceptable behavior. Depending on the nature of the madness, the character could feel remorse for the things he does, but he cannot stop himself from repeating them. Another character might delight in the things he does, or he might not even be aware of what he is doing.

Religions: Depending on the madness and how it manifests, the character might be incapable of participating in organized religion of any type, or he might be a leader of an evil religion or cult. He might even be a patron of a good religion. But underneath he hides a terrible secret, an impulse that drives him to do things that would horrify a demon. On the other hand, some evil religions and organizations could welcome him after discovering his madness so that they can manipulate him and make use of his particular talents.

Examples: Bane, Cyric.

Common Alignments: All, especially those with chaotic tendencies.

inherently evil

The character's race dictates that he is evil. This is usually only the case with certain monster races, especially undead and outsiders.

Religions: Monster religions, if any.

Example: Night Masks.

Common Alignments: Any evil.

evil choice

For some reason, the character has chosen to act in an evil manner, one that he admits is evil and for which he feels no remorse. His reasons might be selfish, he might be bent on revenge by any means possible, or he might be driven to complete a task or achieve a goal, and will let nothing stand in his way. On the other hand, he could simply be a sociopath equally capable of acts of extreme good or extreme evil, neither of which move him emotionally or spiritually, and in which he is incapable of seeing any contradiction. Characters of this bent find it easy to conceal their alignment and move about in polite society.

Religions: Any religion that serves his selfish purpose, including good-aligned ones.

Examples: Iron Throne, Arcane Brotherhood.

Common Alignments: Lawful evil, neutral evil.

better to rule in hell than serve in heaven

This character is actively opposed to good, finds goodness to be repellent in every form, and thinks being good is a sign of weakness of character. He is driven by hate and lust and revels in the thwarting of goodness at every turn.

Religions: The most active and radical evil religions and organizations attract this type of character.

Examples: Cyric, Bane, Shar.

Common Alignments: Any evil.

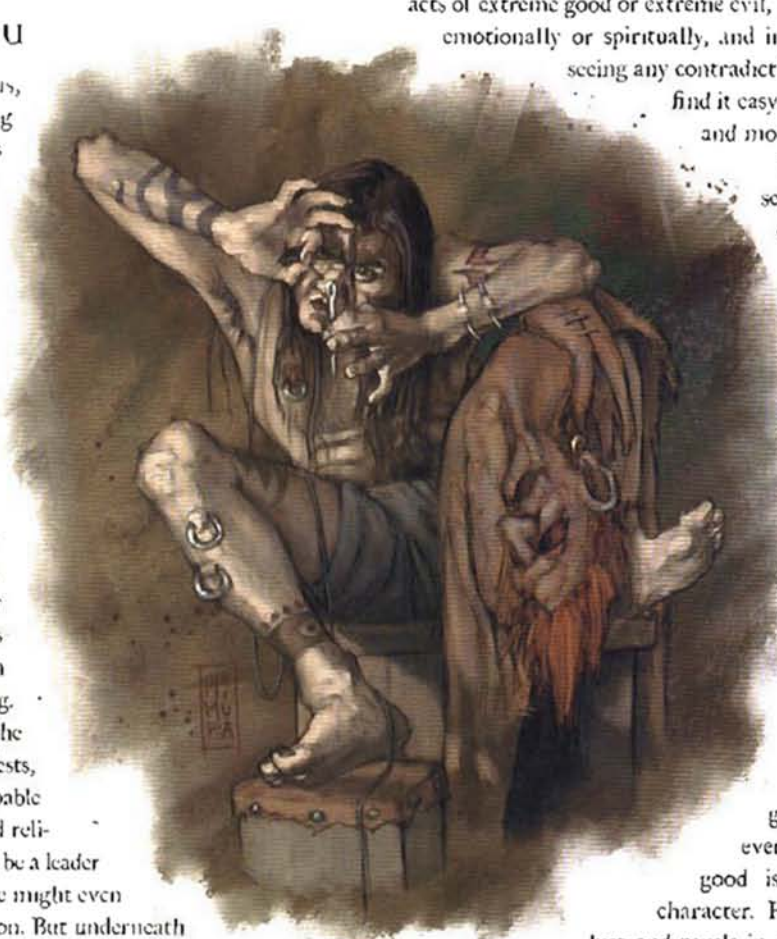
the ends justify the means

This path follows a slippery slope. The character seeks some greater good, perhaps the overthrow of a heinous villain or the establishment of a good church or organization in the face of adversity; nothing will stop her from achieving this goal, even if she must do evil to accomplish it.

Religions: The character might belong to any religion, but good-aligned deities rarely look with favor upon evil acts.

Examples: Mystra, Shaundakul, Oghma.

Common Alignments: All.



*Mad, I tell you:
Evil twisted by insanity*



RACES

Some races are rumored to have a predisposition toward evil; in fact, this trait varies greatly from race to race. Tieflings often experience prejudice against them because of their evil ancestry even though many of them are neutral or even good. The stereotyping of tieflings as inherently evil often lacks substance. In contrast, the races presented here merit their reputations as truly malevolent. While not every draegloth, extaminar, or kriuth follows an evil philosophy, most are evil or at best neutral; good members of these races are rare.

draegloth

Draegloths are half-fiend terrors that are ritually created by drow priestesses who test their devotion to Lolth by mating with summoned demons. Only once in a great while does this coupling produce a child, and the birth of a draegloth is seen as an omen of the goddess's favor, often sparking wars, assassinations, and other intrigues. Draegloths are genderless, sexless creatures incapable of procreation. Most draegloths are incredibly loyal to the priestess that bore them, serving them as enforcers, bodyguards, and occasionally lovers. When a draegloth's mother dies or the house it serves is destroyed, it is often left to wander the Underdark, becoming a scourge wherever it goes.

Draegloths are cruel creatures known for their great strength and stealth. They hunt the tunnels of the Underdark for food and the opportunity to spread evil. A lone draegloth can terrorize an entire village of deep gnomes or grimlocks, and it will usually move on before a concerted effort to slay it can be put together. Draegloths rarely venture out of the Underdark, knowing that their natural advantages would be neutralized in the world above,

and that their unique ancestry would make them targets for heroes and villains alike.

Racial History

The point of origin of the draegloth race is unknown. Many of the historically dominant drow houses have their own legends, each of which claims that the house was the first to receive Lolth's blessing. Of course, the veracity of such claims is questionable at best, and they have been responsible for more than one conflict between matron mothers. Draegloths have been around long enough that no one can say that any of these claims are invalid, but House Baenre of Menzoberranzan was likely the first beneficiary of a draegloth servant. This theory probably holds more truth than others; a draegloth loyal to House Baenre is known to have sheltered its leaders during the strife that eventually made them the undisputed rulers of Menzoberranzan.

For thousands of years, draegloths were extremely rare, appearing infrequently in a few drow enclaves across the Underdark. Starting around two thousand years ago, draegloth sightings became more and more frequent, even being reported far from the nearest drow enclave. Such reports were often dismissed as the frightened ramblings of Underdark travelers, but it was true—a small number of draegloths had broken free of their dependence on the drow, who were, of course, unconcerned by this development. After all, free-roaming draegloths had been present in their cities for some time, having been set loose as wars and internal conflicts saw their matron mothers and houses destroyed. This oversight would prove to be costly to the drow enclave of Ir'Sylin.

The drow of Ir'Sylin thought nothing of rumors that a draegloth had been terrorizing a nearby settlement of duergar. Refugees from the dwarf enclave told of a rampaging, four-armed demon that dragged bodies away to be eaten. When this lone draegloth appeared at the edge of Ir'Sylin, the lizard riders guarding the city greeted it with a cautious deference, for even a free draegloth is Lolth's child. The draegloth did not attack immediately, instead biding its time until the enclave's ruling

matron mother demanded an audience. There, the draegloth sprung his trap; within seconds, the matron's elite guard had been torn apart, and the rogue draegloth's slaving jaws were inches from her throat. A *teleport* contingency saved her life and preserved the tale of Ir'Sylun; all the other members of the enclave were either slaughtered in their homes or hunted down in the following weeks.

Since that time, the drow have attempted to maintain tighter controls on draegloths who are without a house. They are not allowed to live in drow cities without a house affiliation or the sponsorship of a powerful noble. Rogue draegloths find themselves watched at all times—even if they do have a sponsorship—and some seek out new matron mothers to pledge themselves to in order to avoid this suspicion. There has been at least one case of falsifying the birth of a draegloth in order to legitimize a house's claim to Lolth's blessing. Such deceptions were considered blasphemous before Lolth's disappearance, but now they have an almost cultlike effect on those who wish to believe that the Spider Queen has returned to their house.

Since their goddess's disappearance, draegloths have become more independent, many no longer serving the matron mothers without demanding equal status. More and more have gone wandering the Underdark in search of adventure and a means to either restore Lolth to her former glory, or, barring that, to increase their demonic sires' power on the Material Plane. As a result, demon cults have found themselves with unexpected allies, and draegloths are starting to form their own cults to elevate their fathers' names. Draegloths rarely work together, but they are not above working with others to achieve their goals.

This is especially true for the younger members of the race, in whom Lolth's grip never firmly took hold.

outlook

Draegloths are sly and cunning creatures with a penchant for wild rages that end in the deaths of those around them. They are excellent advisors, because their minds are seemingly created for understanding the many threads of drow intrigues, and their innate savagery allows for a plethora of options in dealing with any enemies. They can be patient listeners when

around those they respect, and Lolth has given them the ability to meditate and pray for hours while searching for a solution. Their unique combination of patience, cunning, and ruthlessness makes them among the most feared hunters in the Underdark.

Draegloths see all creatures in the world other than drow and other Lolth-blessed beings as cattle or puppets. They have no problem with killing other sentient beings for food or pleasure. This does not mean that they cannot respect another being for her status or power, and draegloths make excellent companions and servants to the matron mothers who bore them. But outside of this well-defined religious and social role, selfless acts on behalf of another are outside the draegloths' realm of comprehension.

The only thing that outshines a draegloth's loathing for other creatures is its faith. Worship of Lolth (or more recently Vhaeraun) drives a draegloth's existence, and many become clerics devoted to her. They act as bodyguards and advisors to the matron mothers out of respect for Lolth, and even now that she has disappeared, most draegloths continue to worship her with their customary fervor. However, some draegloths have lost faith in the Spider Queen and now look to their demonic sires for guidance. For other denizens of the Underdark, these are the most dangerous draegloths, because while their faithful cousins war with the drow and search for signs of Lolth, those who have left her are organizing demon-worshipping humanoids around them.

Such draegloths have started interacting with more weak-minded humanoids recently, rather than hunting them as they once would have, in order to gain power and reach for their new organizations. Grimlocks are their favorite recruits, thanks to those creatures' barbaric ferocity and willingness to follow a strong leader in exchange for the ability to thrive in the dangerous Underdark environment.

personality

Draegloths are possibly the most purely evil race in all of Toril. They are born from the confluence of two great evils into a world where villainy is normal and goodness is as absent as the light of the sun. Members of this race enjoy inflicting great cruelty on others, and they learn how to do so from their mothers, who nurture this trait with great relish and care. Draegloths are known for their lack of appreciation of beauty. Unlike most



Draegloth

other races, they do not have any aesthetic sense, they do not appreciate art in any form, and they are not swayed by attractive members of their own race or others. It is whispered that the only time a draegloth feels peace is when it is committing acts of evil and depravity.

physical description

Draegloths resemble impressively large drow, with black skin, a long white mane, and glowering red eyes. They stand between 7-1/2 and 8 feet tall and weigh between 300 and 375 pounds. Their legs have two joints, making them extremely quick and agile, and their bodies are framed with thick, powerful muscles. A draegloth's face is elongated and skeletal. It has four arms, two of which are normal-looking drow arms that appear undersized compared to its body and are often used for spellcasting. The other two arms are long and powerful extremities, ending in wicked claws and with hands hanging low, much like an ape's. Draegloths do not feel the need to wear clothing, since each individual's body is covered with a fine coat of white fur. Draegloths are born fully developed and live to be about 300 years old, although the savage life of the Underdark robs most of their full lifespan.

relations

Most draegloths spend their lives around drow, who either revere them, fear them, or both. For their part, the half-demons enjoy their special place in the drow community, and might act arrogantly toward what they often see as the lesser half of their lineage. They regard the rest of the Underdark races as little more than animals, there only to please them or provide them with food and treasure. The draegloths have exhibited a particularly strong antipathy toward gloamings (see *Underdark* page 12), who

return the emotion with equal intensity. Some arcanists who are familiar with both races have suggested that the feud originates amongst the demons who spawned the races, but to date no one has corroborated such claims.

On the rare occasion that a draegloth leaves its Underdark habitat, it finds none of the surface races to be palatable companions. These draegloths often live in surface caverns, only leaving at night, while others find drow communities such as those in the forest of Cormanthor in which to live.

Alignment

Draegloths are creatures of pure evil, no matter which side of the family each individual favors; they desire to be nothing more than they are. They favor the chaotic alignment of both parents as well, although their devotion to their mothers often drives them to orderly behavior in their service. Draegloths who remain without the guiding force of a matron mother for a long period of time are likely to abandon their house and wander the Underdark alone.

draegloth lands

Draegloths are found primarily in the drow cities scattered throughout the Underdark. They tend to stick close to their creators unless their house is destroyed or weakened so badly that it becomes dangerous to remain. At that point, they venture off to find new areas to exploit and new victims for their depraved minds. Some of these draegloths might remain in the city, having built up their own independent power bases while serving their matrons.

While some displaced draegloths are content to wander the dark tunnels beneath the surface of Faerûn, others decide to see what lies above. Some are drawn by rumors of drow encampments

TABLE 1-1: THE DRAEGLOTH MONSTER CLASS

		Base						
Level	Hit Dice	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	CR	Special
1st	1d10	+1	+2	+2	+2	(8 + Int mod) × 4	1	Feat, 2 claws 1d4, resistances (acid, 5 cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5), dancing lights 1/day
2nd	2d10	+2	+3	+3	+3	8 + Int mod	2	+2 Str, +1 natural armor, sacric fire 1/day, darkness 1/day
3rd	2d10	+2	+3	+3	+3		2	+2 Dex, darkness 2/day, bite 1d6
4th	3d10	+3	+3	+3	+3	8 + Int mod	3	+2 Str, +2 Int, <i>desecrate</i> 1/day
5th	3d10	+3	+3	+3	+3		3	+2 Con, resistances (acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10), immunity to poison
6th	4d10	+4	+4	+4	+4	8 + Int mod	3	+2 Str, darkness 3/day
7th	4d10	+4	+4	+4	+4		4	+2 Str, +3 natural armor, <i>unholy blight</i> 1/day, 2 claws 1d6
8th	5d10	+5	+4	+4	+4	8 + Int mod	4	+2 Dex, <i>darkness</i> 4/day
9th	5d10	+5	+4	+4	+4		5	+2 Str, Large size, 10-ft. reach, bite 1d8
10th	6d10	+6	+5	+5	+5	8 + Int mod	5	+2 Str, +5 natural armor, resistances (acid 20, cold 20, electricity 20, fire 20)

on the surface, while others leave in order to avoid being hunted by their numerous enemies.

Religion

Draegloths are very devoted to Lolth, the deity whose blessing brings them into existence. They have been as distraught as the matron mothers over Lolth's recent disappearance, and the vast majority of draegloths remain devoted to her cause. Some draegloths have wavered in their faith, however, and find themselves drawn to one of the other deities of the Dark Seldarine; Vhaeraun has gained a few powerful followers this way, and he is actively recruiting them into his forces. Selvetarm accepts draegloths into his worship, but only temporarily, since he plans to return them to Lolth should she ever regain her power. The recruitment of the draegloths into Vhaeraun's service is said to have been a warning to Selvetarm that the Masked Lord was actively working to supplant Lolth's rule of the drow gods.

Language

Draegloths speak the languages of the Underdark drow, as well as the Abyssal tongue of their sires.

Adventurers

Draegloth adventurers are most often on a mission directed by their matron mothers, or have been turned loose to wreak havoc on their house rivals. Individual draegloths adventure to find a way to get closer to their demonic sires, or to cause misery and destruction to anyone who comes across them. Their chaotic nature makes it difficult for them to stay in one place without a clear goal, and they enjoy taking the treasure and lives of others more than they care about enriching themselves.

Draegloth Racial Traits

- +2 Constitution. Draegloths are incredibly tough. They become stronger, tougher, and more agile as they gain draegloth levels (see the table below for additional ability modifiers).
- Draegloth base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immune to sleep-inducing spells and effects.
- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells or effects.
- Automatic Languages: Abyssal, Elven, Undercommon. Bonus Languages: Aquan, Common, Draconic, Drow Sign Language, Gnome, Goblin, Kuo-toan.
- Favored Class: Cleric. A multiclass draegloth's cleric class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty.
- Level Adjustment +4: With its 6 Hit Dice, this adjustment gives the draegloth an E.C.L. of 10 (see the monster class table for details).

CLASS SKILLS

A draegloth's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the draegloth monster class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Draegloths are proficient with all simple weapons, but not with armor or shields.

Feats: A draegloth receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 4th and 10th level. After 10th level it gains feats normally according to its character level.

Claws: A draegloth has two claw attacks that are natural weapons dealing the indicated damage plus Strength bonus.

Bite: Starting at 3rd level, a draegloth gains a bite attack that is a natural weapon dealing the indicated damage plus 1/2 Strength bonus.

Spell-Like Abilities: A draegloth can use these spell-like abilities the indicated number of times per day as a 6th-level sorcerer: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *desecrate*, *faerie fire*, and *unholy blight*.

Extaminaar

The extaminaars are the snake-blooded members of the human noble House Extaminos, which has ruled the city of Hlondeth for more than eight hundred years. During the last century, the extaminaars have gone beyond Hlondeth to set up operations in other cities across Faerûn. They operate from the sewers and the shadows, hatching schemes to increase the power of their house and finding victims on which to perform their vile grafting and breeding experiments.

Extaminaars make excellent rogues, because they are known for their guile and wicked ability to strike from the shadows. Others often try to enlist extaminaars into their organizations because of their skills as crime bosses, interrogators, and information brokers. Still, most extaminaars have proven exceedingly loyal to their noble house.

Racial History: The extaminaars are the descendants of a human noble house that began consorting with a nearby yuan-ti tribe after finding an ancient tome detailing the rituals of the goddess Varac. The tribe of snake people had moved to Turmish, by way of Chondath, after surviving a rift in the leadership of House Se'Sehen, the dominant yuan-ti tribe of the Black Jungles. As the yuan-ti mingled more frequently with the humans of House Extaminos, the two groups' blood began to mix. The end result of decades of such mixing was the introduction of many powerful yuan-ti into the membership of the house, both through birth as well as those sent in to oversee the construction of the Cathedral of Emerald Scales and the spreading of Varac's worship throughout the city.

Once those of the yuan-ti bloodline came of age within House Extaminos, it did not take long before they completely dominated it. Yuan-ti rulers acted as bridges between the yuan-ti tribe and the house, until the two were virtually indistinguishable. Now, a yuan-ti halfblood named Dediana Extaminos openly rules Hlondeth, known as the City of Serpents. The yuan-ti have maintained their rule of Hlondeth using subtle tactics—or a show of strength when necessary—to dissuade restless Turmish and Chondathan leaders from attempting to take the city for their own. From time to time a human noble has claimed leadership of the house, but only those with the blessing of the yuan-ti (and who fervently worship Varae) have survived.

Although Dediana and her predecessors have successfully kept aggressors at bay throughout the years, recently the yuan-ti began to recognize the need for more loyal troops and agents to protect their interests. They were forced to admit that not all of the citizens of Hlondeth were comfortable being ruled by “snakes,” even if the yuan-ti knew themselves to be superior beings. Their solution was to turn their breeding experiments toward a quickly produced humanoid with loyalties to the yuan-ti tribe. The new race, called the extaminaars, was to bridge the gap between humanity and the yuan-ti, to be the public face of House Extaminos in Hlondeth and across the continent.

Extaminaars are hatched in clutches, of watermelon-sized eggs, making it possible to fertilize and care for dozens at a time. Although they grow into humanoid beings, their infant form is more of a hybrid—armless, scaled, and with undefined facial features. Their lack of arms during infancy is often cited as the reason that so many extaminaars have a fondness for incredibly long serpent-arm grafts (see *Serpent Kingdoms* page 154).

Once the first generation of extaminaars was ready, the leaders of House Extaminos decided to send many of them out into Faerûn, in order to keep pace with the spying and resource gathering of the other great houses. The extaminaars were excellent choices for this role, since they could gain direct access to many of the same places as the purebloods with even less need for disguise. They set up secret bases in which they carried out their gruesome and evil experiments, and they recruited local tribes of humanoids and rogues from the cities to assist them in their vile deeds.

Now, the second generation of extaminaars has fully matured, and the next ruler of House Extaminos is said to be among them. The yuan-ti are sending these newly formed servants into the world on less specific missions than the first

wave. Some are being sent to reinforce cells whose leaders have either been destroyed or are ineffective, but most are simply seeking ways to help the clan in general. They search for artifacts to enhance the grafting process, new magic rituals and spells for the breeding pits, and allies in far-flung regions of Faerûn that share the yuan-ti goal of world domination—if not the same idea of who will rule it afterward.

The success and rapid breeding of the extaminaars has led other houses to begin growing their own hybrids, although the first of these clutches is just now coming to maturity. As rumors of this extensive breeding program spread to Hlondeth, the Extaminos realized the need to “brand” their own extaminaars to prevent “doppelgangers” from infiltrating their house.

The third clutch is being bred with a distinctive pattern of scales on their backs, a diamond-shaped collection of brown markings. Each house imparts a unique pattern of scales to its extaminaars, ensuring that they will never be mistaken for those from another group.

Outlook: From birth, extaminaars are raised to venerate Varae above all other gods, and to put the concerns of their house above all else. The trainers have a difficult job—they must teach the growing extaminaars enough self-reliance to lead independent cells in far-flung regions while keeping them strictly under the doctrine of the tribe and its goddess.

The race as a whole is not extremely perceptive, but individuals offset this natural weakness by surrounding themselves with those who can provide them with the information they need. They tend to be very dogmatic toward the yuan-ti view of the world as well as the superiority of their house and the goddess

Varae. They lord their superiority over their victims, mocking and proselytizing to bound captives as they begin the rituals necessary to graft flesh.

Extaminaars often believe that their only purpose is to elevate their house, even to the exclusion of the greater yuan-ti goals or their religious obligations. They maintain regular communication with their superiors in Hlondeth, constantly updating them on the success of their experiments and passing along information that might be useful to the tribe. They are very cautious about their operations, only revealing what is necessary to their underlings and killing anyone who gets too close to discovering their true identity.

An extaminaar agent never gets too tied up in his work to ignore opportunities for adventure. Although devoted to their tribe, roaming extaminaars enjoy their freedom, and



Extaminaar

Illustration by Jason Fagle

will sometimes abandon their lairs for months at a time. A life of adventure often follows, as events conspire to keep the extaminaar away for longer than anticipated. Sometimes a newly dispatched spy never even makes it to his post, either through chance adventure or the realization that he can be free forever from a tribe whose ideals he does not share. The latter case is rare, however—extaminaars are bred for loyalty as well as for ruthless cunning and deception.

Personality: Extaminaars are scheming, cruel beings who will stop at nothing to further the goals of their noble house. They enjoy experimenting on "lesser beings" in their quest to find new and better creatures. They value flesh above all other forms of currency, leading them to often deal in slaves. Extaminaars who take root in cities outside of Hlondeth are famously patient, sometimes lying low for months if their lair or plans are in danger of being discovered. One of these snake-blooded nobles would rather talk his way out a situation than fight, especially if doing so gives his companions time to flank their enemies.

Physical Description: Extaminaars typically stand from 5 feet to 6 1/2 feet tall; because they are extremely skinny, they often appear to be taller than they actually are. Those who possess the very long serpent-arm graft so commonly found in House Extaminos appear to have more girth than normal, because they keep their arms wound around their torsos and their necks hidden underneath expansive robes. Extaminaars weigh less than humans of equal size because their bones are less dense; the weight of individuals usually falls between 100 and 180 pounds. An extaminaar has pale skin with either a yellow or green tinge, and often has brown spots in clusters near his neck and lower back. Extaminaars prefer to grow their hair long and use secretions from glands in the scalp to keep it plastered back. They wear only light clothing unless they are concealing long serpent-arms or other grafts that would give away their true nature. Extaminaars typically live to between 60 and 80 years of age.

Relations: Despite their strange appearance, hidden lairs, and evil goals, extaminaars are social creatures. They prefer to work with small, reptilian beings such as kobolds when they need minions, and nagas or young dragons when they are looking for a more serious partner in crime. Of course, an extaminaar has the same prejudices as his yuan-ti ancestors toward these creatures, considering himself above all other life forms. The yuan-ti, however, consider extaminaars to be one of the lowest forms of related races, and would never work for one (although they will certainly use an extaminaar to further their goals).

Extaminaars rarely associate with the people of the community they are in, since they see them as either food or living subjects for their experiments. They have no favored targets—they see all other beings as fit subjects for their grafting and breeding programs. An extaminaar needing an outside contact within the community might deign to work with a member of a lesser race, but he will rarely reveal his true nature to his contact, and such

arrangements are often short-lived thanks to the extaminaar's paranoia and desire to work in privacy.

Alignment: Extaminaars are evil to the core, although some among them favor a more balanced and neutral approach to their experiments. Still, the need for living test subjects and the incredible pain their captives suffer through makes avoiding the call of evil very difficult for all extaminaars but the most strong-willed. Those who run House Extaminos and control the city of Hlondeth favor lawfulness, and they expect the citizens of that city to display complete deference to their rule. Those extaminaars who venture to other lands tend to be more chaotic; they find themselves often on the move and in the company of an ever-changing cadre of minions and slaves.

Extaminaar Lands: The extaminaars were first created by the union of a Turmish noble house with a tribe of yuan-ti living in the Orsraun Mountains. To this day they are mostly concentrated in those mountains, as well as in the city of Hlondeth, which they control. Other extaminaars have moved to cities across Faerûn in order to experiment and spy, awaiting the day when the yuan-ti empire will stretch across the continent, and indeed the world.

Extaminaars who travel to other cities tend to set up their base of operations in sewer systems or damp caves (preferably river caves or snake-infested limestone structures). Where this is not possible, they sometimes take over buildings and then dig large basements and cavern complexes underneath the structures.

Religion: The nobles of House Extaminos first began intermingling with the yuan-ti through their discovery of the rituals of Varae, and they continue to worship her to this day. The rulers of the noble house have built a wondrous and hideous temple to Varae in Hlondeth called the Cathedral of Emerald Scales, and all extaminaars sent out across the continent are blessed in a blood ritual at the cathedral before they leave. Extaminaars who find themselves in contact with other yuan-ti will often pay lip service to Sseth in order to avoid conflict, but yuan-ti with a rudimentary knowledge of House Extaminos and its traditions can see through this ruse rather easily.

Clerics of Varae choose their domains from among Evil, Scalykind^{SE}, and Trickery. Varae's favored weapon is the sickle.

Language: Extaminaars speak yuan-ti and also learn some functional skills in Turmish, the human language of their homeland. All extaminaars have a working knowledge of Common as well; those who travel extensively spend more time learning the trade tongue than those who stay in Turmish. Those with the aptitude to speak multiple languages often learn Draconic, as well as the tongue of any land they settle in. These additional language skills can aid an extaminaar when dealing with local humanoids and operatives, and can help one maintain a cover identity he has adopted.

Adventurers: Extaminaars might find themselves drawn to adventure as they set out to stake a claim in one of Faerûn's great cities. Establishing a secret testing ground can also lead to its share of problems, including wiping out any indigenous

creatures and acquiring the means to outfit a lair with the proper infrastructure. Most extaminaars do not seek out adventure unless it has as its goal the elevation of their house in some way.

EXTAMINAAR RACIAL TRAITS

- **-2 Strength, +2 Dexterity:** Extaminaar are agile but not as strong as other humanoid their size.
- **Medium:** As a Medium creature, an extaminaar has no special bonuses or penalties due to his size.
- **Extaminaar base land speed is 30 feet.**
- **Low-Light Vision:** An extaminaar can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- **+2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves versus poison:** Extaminaars do not easily succumb to venom of any kind.
- **+4 racial bonus on Swim checks:** Extaminaars are comfortable in the water, and their light frames make it easier for them to stay afloat.
- **+2 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks:** Extaminaars can wriggle their way out of sticky situations.
- **Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*speak with animals* (snakes only); 3/day—*charm animal* (snakes only). Extaminaar often fill their lairs with poisonous snakes to dissuade interlopers.
- **Automatic Languages:** Common, Turmic, and Yuan-ti. Bonus Languages: Abyssal, Chondathan, and Draconic.
- **Favored Class: Rogue.** A multiclass extaminaar's rogue class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty.
- **Level Adjustment +0.**

Krinth

For the past two thousand years, the City of Shade has existed on the Plane of Shadow, kept in good condition by slaves captured from that plane as well as from Faerûn. The Netherese wizards who rule the city also trafficked with demonic creatures made of the same tenebrous substance as the plane itself. On occasion, these demons would force themselves on the slaves; the offspring from these couplings are a unique race known as the krinths.

Krinths are known for their physical endurance, their single-mindedness, and their quick tempers. They make excellent warriors and servants because of the first two traits, but the third often means they are short-lived at both roles.

Racial History: The krinths came into being shortly after the City of Shade found itself trapped on the Plane of Shadow. The powerful Netherese arcanists of the floating city regularly held congress with the shadowy fiends of the plane, and often the demons demanded to know the secrets of human pleasure. From these unions came a race of half-demon beings that came to be called the krinths. These are the facts.

However, the krinths themselves do not ascribe to this rather unflattering origin, instead insisting that they had always lived in the shadow world and that they were offered as slaves to the Netherese in return for treasure and knowledge of the Material Plane and its magic. They point to colonies of krinths in the Plane of Shadow as evidence for this theory, although in truth these are simply escaped krinths who have managed to carve out a niche for themselves in their dark home.

The first krinths were born of unions between Netherese and demons. These krinths were unable to reproduce, making them a rare occurrence and little more than an interesting curiosity to both the shades and the demons who spawned them. For a short time, the krinths even enjoyed an elevated status within the city, where they were viewed as an expression of the union between the realm of shadow and its new residents. They were given well-appointed living quarters and allowed to study under the best teachers and mages in the city. The Shadovar secretly hoped that the krinths would somehow give them the added knowledge and power needed to dominate the plane and its denizens.

It did not take long before krinths began to pop up among the slaves, however. This development led quickly to the reassignment of all krinths as slaves of the royal family. Some krinths escaped enslavement by appealing to those who had become close to them, and even those who were enslaved were often given preferential assignments. The rulers of Shade feared that abusing the krinths could bring down the wrath of the shadow demons, although in truth these demons cared little for their spawn.

For a reason unknown to them or their masters, the krinths became fertile about one thousand years ago and started reproducing among themselves. This quickly created two different castes of krinths—the trueborn, or full krinths, and the halfbreed demonspawn. The demonspawn, once having been favored by the Shadovar, now found themselves outcasts in their own community. The trueborn krinths treated the demonspawn with cruelty and contempt, forming a deep division in the krinths community that lasts to this day. The number of demonspawn has dropped dramatically since Shade's return to Faerûn, but plenty of demonspawn children remain within the city. Many demonspawn krinths have turned informant, attempting to help the Shadovar crush the growing krinths underground movement before it can become a true threat.

The true story of the sudden fertility of the krinths reaches all the way back to one of Faerûn's oldest struggles. The goddess Shar, having been systematically defeated by her sister Selûne at every turn, found herself looking elsewhere for ways to win their eternal battle. She saw in the krinths an opportunity to create a race of servants who could bridge the gap between Faerûn and the Plane of Shadow. Shar is secretive and subtle, and so she did not reveal herself to the krinths, instead choosing to watch them develop from afar. She was disappointed that the Netherese could not find their way back to Faerûn, however, and largely gave up on the krinths until Shade's recent appearance.

over Anauroch. Now she is once again interested in turning the krinith to her.

For their part, the krinith have adjusted well to life as slaves under the Shadovar. Their natural tendencies are to work hard and play hard, so the erratic and often grueling schedules they keep as slaves do not bother them. The number of krinith quickly outstripped the royals' need for them, and so they can now be found working for any number of patrons around the city. They have steadily climbed back up to favored-slave status, and they usually choose to keep the company of other krinith rather than spend time with slaves of other races.

Since the city's return to Faerûn, the krinith have been restless. Siar has sent agents to infiltrate the city, and to whisper thoughts of freedom and promises of her rewards into the ears of eager krinith. With the number of krinith who have escaped the city rising steadily, under the influence of Siar as well as their own desire for freedom, the Shadovar have tightened the reins on the City of Shade. The krinith are still alien to every culture in Faerûn, and even in places where they have proven their value, they still arouse curiosity and suspicion.

Outlook: Krinith are not philosophers. Their natural inclination is to only think about what they are doing at the moment, and perhaps what they will be doing afterward. On the Plane of Shadow this outlook helped them immensely, allowing them to thrive even under the yoke of their Shadovar masters. It also means that they have difficulty with long-term planning of any kind, and function best when matters of strategy are left to others.

Now that they have reached Faerûn, the krinith find that they have more opportunities open to them than ever before. Some krinith have seen the beauty of the forests and caverns of Faerûn and wish to live there, rather than in the city above the desert. This desire led to many escape attempts during the early Shadovar excavation projects, and the shades have since put tight controls on any krinith that leave the city. Some krinith are finally awakening to the reality of their slavery, and it is frustrating to them that they cannot leave the City of Shade to explore this new world around them. While there is nothing close to a full insurrection brewing, a burgeoning underground movement

helps krinith escape into the world at large, and fights for krinith interests within the city.

Krinith mature more quickly than the Shadovar. To the Shadovar, this simply means that their slaves can take on more responsibilities at an earlier age. This trait does give the krinith some insight into the true nature of those around them, since people act much differently around children than they do around adults. Krinith children excel at sports, and spend most of their

free time playing and inventing new games. They do not experiment with different interests as the children of other races do, because the krinith mind does not

worry about finding and pursuing its passion. Occasionally a krinith will show some artistic talent or skill with mathematics or spellcraft, although the Shadovar generally frown upon such diversions.

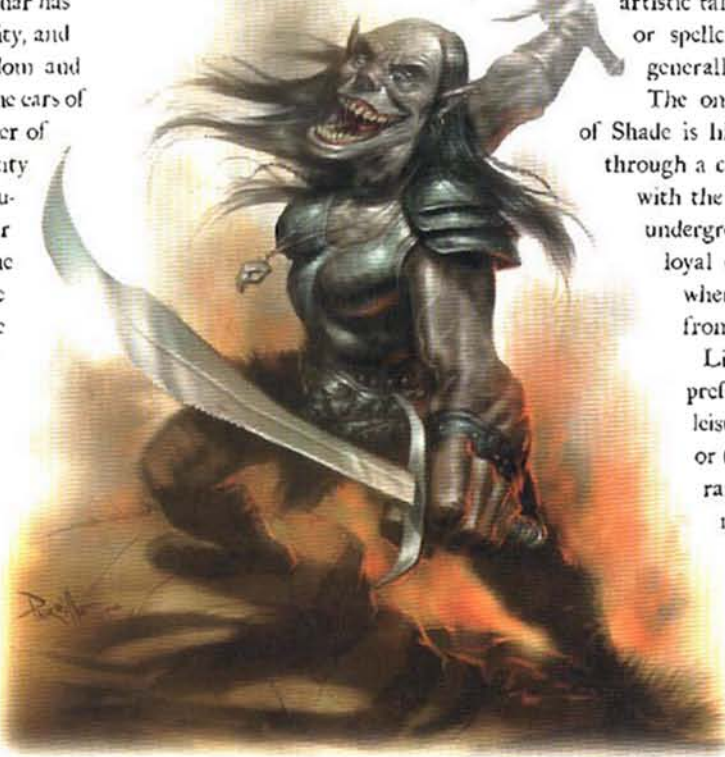
The only way a krinith in the City of Shade is likely to learn magic or art is through a clandestine teacher, or perhaps with the encouragement of the krinith underground, who seek to develop a loyal cadre of mages for the time when they attempt to break free from the yoke of slavery.

Like their children, krinith adults prefer rigorous activity in their leisure time, often playing sports or training in combat. During the rare holidays in which they have more than one day off at a time, krinith stay up all night long drinking large quantities of beer, wine, and other festive libations. Aside from the rift between demonspawn and trueborns, krinith treat one another and others with respect. Even though many are now longing for freedom,

they do not actively hate the Shadovar who rule them.

Personality: Krinith are seen as dour and humorless by most other races. When they are working at a task, they rarely allow themselves to become distracted from it. The krinith are said to work as hard at leisure as they do at laboring, drinking copious amounts of alcohol, enjoying food to gluttonous proportions, playing games of chance, and taking physical pleasures as often as possible. Members of this race work hard and play hard, and they never seem to rest.

Physical Description: A krinith appear similar to an average specimen of the nonfiendish half of their bloodline. Krinith are generally born to human, orc, or dwarf parents—the most common slave races in the City of Shade. Krinith with dwarf ancestry are shorter and more stout than those of human or orc ancestry, but they are not as short as true dwarves. Krinith range



Krinith

anywhere between 5 and 7 feet tall and usually weigh between 150 and 250 pounds. All krinth, regardless of their ancestry, have straight black hair, black eyes, and dusky gray skin. Krinth reach adulthood at age 20 and live between 100 and 125 years.

Relations: Although the krinth are slaves in the City of Shade, they still occupy a higher social stratum than the other humanoid slaves of the city. The Shadovar generally give them better positions and treat them with less cruelty than their other slaves. Since krinth are related to the shadow demons of their adopted home plane, some Shadovar fear that mistreating them would risk making enemies of the demons and their offspring.

The krinth regard the city's other slave races as beneath them. They often treat their fellow slaves with more contempt than their owners do, and their violent tempers often cost them dearly when they take the life of, or disable, another slave. Krinth who have escaped the City of Shade and made their way onto the continent usually maintain this haughty attitude, although they realize that they must soften it somewhat if they are to get along. Most escaped krinth become mercenaries and seek to join a larger organization. Several have joined with the Zhentarim through caravans moving through Anauroch, and others have gone into the Underdark and now fight for the drow. On rare occasions, a krinth joins a more traditional community and learns to live alongside normal races, even hiding his true nature from his new neighbors.

Alignment: Krinth are very chaotic in nature, despite their single-mindedness in duty. They also tend to favor the evil of their sires, although some have shown the capacity to break out of this mold, and even to do good. Those who escape the City of Shade are more likely to lean toward neutrality, which might have been the cause for their flight in the first place.

Krinth Lands: Most krinth are slaves in the City of Shade, performing high-level tasks as well as menial labor for their Shadovar masters. They tend to reside in subterranean lairs even on the floating city, since they prefer to live in isolation from other races. Krinth who escape the city often retreat to the Underdark if they can find entry; otherwise, they simply travel as far from Anauroch as possible. They consider open terrain to be indefensible and uncomfortable, and the entire race suffers from a mild case of agoraphobia. Thus, in cases where they cannot find their way into The Night Below, krinth often take up residence in heavy forests, jungles, or in mountain valleys hidden away from the sun and other humanoids.

Religion: Krinth have no common racial deity; instead, they tend to worship powerful demon lords, especially those from their home plane. A krinth rarely worships the demon who spawned him unless the demon is a powerful lord that calls his spawn to him. Krinth who escape their servitude and take up a life outside the City of Shade often adopt native gods in order to better fit in. The deities discussed below are the most common choices of worship for krinth who have left their old lives behind through virtue or chance.

Those krinth who take up with the Zhentarim via one of the caravans that run through the Anauroch generally worship Bane.

The Black Lord rules his people through power and fear, much like the demons that the krinth are used to worshiping.

Those krinth who find their way to the Underdark often take up the worship of whatever god is prevalent in the community in which they find themselves, most commonly Lolth or Laduguer.

Shar also maintains her interest in these new Faerûnians, and has directed several of her cells to actively recruit those krinth who labor in the City of Shade as well as those who have left it.

Language: All krinth speak Common and Halruaan. Krinth who have lived with the Shadovar might also know Netherese, the dead language of the dead empire. Although krinth often have contact with their sires, not all of them learn to speak or understand the Abyssal tongue. Individual krinth who escape the City of Shade might learn other languages appropriate to their new region or the peoples who live there. All krinth are literate, except for barbarians.

Adventurers: Most krinth are happy with their roles as the favored slaves of the Shadovar. They secretly believe that the shadow demons that spawned them will elevate them someday, but their decent treatment at the hands of their masters is enough for now. Those who are not happy are either rooted out and killed, or they escape out of the floating city and find a new life on—or under—the surface of Faerûn. A krinth's stubborn will to finish the job often helps him stand strong in the face of the sorts of horrors that adventurers meet on a regular basis.

KRINTH RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma: Krinth are hardy and resistant to illness and damage, but they often lack self-determination and a sense of purpose outside that given to them by others.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, krinth have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Krinth base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- +1 racial bonus on all Will saves. Krinth are resilient in mind as well as body.
- +1 bonus on all saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities with the shadow descriptor.
- +2 racial bonus on Hide checks in shadowy conditions.
- +4 racial bonus on saving throws against fear. As the spawn of demons, the krinth were born of fear and malice.
- Krinth cannot become shaken, and they ignore the effects of the shaken condition; they can still become frightened or panicked, though in most cases their innate resistance to fear keeps them from it.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Netherese. Bonus Languages: Abyssal, Chondathan, Damaran, Undercommon.
- Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass krinth's fighter class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty.
- Level Adjustment +0.

TOOLS OF EVIL



Feats and spells serve to add interesting flavor to evil characters and campaigns. Initiate feats allow divine spellcasters to personalize their spell list based on their deity, often granting them spells unique to their philosophies. Vile feats allow characters to form stronger bonds with particularly evil patrons such as demons and devils. Magic nodes can now be loci of evil power; for details on how node magic works, see Chapter 5 as well as page 49 of *Underdark*.

feats

Champions of Ruin introduces several feats of pure cruelty and evil. Characters devoted to dark gods or vicious means can use these feats to enhance their wicked power.

BLOODSOAKED INTIMIDATE

Your bloody and vicious approach to combat makes you a fearsome foe.

Prerequisites: Snatch Trophy.

Benefit: When you collect a trophy using the Snatch Trophy feat, you can make an Intimidate check as a swift action against an adjacent opponent who witnesses your savage act (see the Swift and Immediate Actions sidebar for more information).

Normal: Making an Intimidate check in combat is a standard action.

CHAKRAM RICOCHET

You can hurl a chakram so that it strikes two enemies instead of one.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, base attack bonus +1, proficient with chakram.

Benefit: If you hit a creature with a thrown chakram, you can cause it to ricochet and strike a secondary target in an adjacent square (within 5 feet of the primary target). You immediately make an attack roll against the secondary target, at a -2 penalty. If the attack hits, you deal damage normally.

Special: A rogue with Chakram Ricochet can deal sneak attack damage to both targets if they are within 30 feet and denied their Dexterity bonus to AC.

CORRUPT SPELL [METAMAGIC]

You can transform one of your spells into a thing of evil due to a deal you make with an evil power.

Prerequisites: Any evil alignment.

Benefit: This feat adds the evil descriptor to one damaging spell you can cast. You must choose the spell at the time you select the feat. If the spell deals damage, half of the damage is unholy damage. For example, a corrupted *fireball* cast by a 6th-level wizard deals 6d6 points of damage: 3d6 points of fire damage and 3d6 points of unholy damage. Thus, creatures immune to fire still potentially take 3d6 points of damage.

Special: A character can take this feat multiple times, choosing a different spell each time.

This feat originally appeared in *Book of Vile Darkness* and has been revised for D&D v.3.5.

CRAVEN

Like most sly rogues, you are a dangerous coward. However, your sneak attacks deal more damage than normal.

Prerequisites: Sneak attack class feature, cannot be immune to fear.

Benefit: You take a -2 penalty on saving throws against fear effects. However, when making a sneak attack, you deal an extra 1 point of damage per character level.

DIRE FLAIL SMASH

You have mastered the style of fighting with the dire flail and have learned to deal thunderous blows with the weapon.

TABLE 2-1: FEATS

General Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Chakram Ricochet	Dex 13, base attack bonus +1, proficient with chakram	Strike two adjacent targets with one chakram
Craven	Sneak attack class feature, cannot be immune to fear	Deal extra damage equal to your level on sneak attacks, -2 on saves vs. fear effects
Dire Flail Smash ¹	Str 13, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dire flail)	Target struck by both ends of your dire flail is dazed for 1 round
Dirty Rat	Tumble 4 ranks	Gain additional +1 on attack rolls when flanking
Feral Animal Companion	Animal companion class feature, any evil alignment	Gain animal companion with +2 Str, +2 Con, and disease-carrying bite
Flay Foe ¹	Str 15, base attack bonus +6, proficient with slashing melee weapon	Subsequent attacks deal +1d6 slashing damage
Improved Fiendish Servant	Fiendish servant class feature	Gain more powerful fiendish servant with the fiendish creature template
Malign Spell Focus	Any evil alignment	+1 bonus on save DCs against spells with the evil descriptor
Mortifying Attack	Death attack class feature	Creatures that witness your death attack are shaken for 2d4 rounds
Mutilator	Base attack bonus +4	Decapitate slain enemy as a free action
Natural Bully	Intimidate 6 ranks	Weak enemies take a -2 penalty on attacks made against you
Node Sensitive	—	Automatically detect nearby nodes
Node Spellcasting ²	Caster level 1st	Access node magic
Node Defense	Node Spellcasting	Gain insight bonus to AC and saving throws near attuned node
Node Store ²	Node Spellcasting	Store two spells in a node
Poison Immunity ²	—	You are immune to a specific poison and gain +1 bonus on saves against other poisons
Pulverize Foe ¹	Str 15, base attack bonus +6, proficient with bludgeoning melee weapon	Subsequent attacks deal +1d6 bludgeoning damage
Shadowform Familiar	Krinth, summon familiar class feature	Gain a familiar with the incorporeal subtype
Shadowstrike ¹	Krinth, base attack bonus +1	Gain +1 bonus on attacks and deal +1d6 damage with melee weapon in shadowy conditions
Skewer Foe ¹	Str 15, base attack bonus +6, proficient with piercing melee weapon	Subsequent attacks deal +1d6 piercing damage
Snatch Trophy	—	Take trophy from fallen victim as a free action
Bloodsoaked Intimidate	Snatch Trophy	Make Intimidate check as swift action
Touch of Benevolence	Any evil alignment	50% chance to ignore any effect that targets or damages evil creatures
Bardic Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Doomspeak	Bardic music class feature, Intimidate 8 ranks, Perform 8 ranks	Target takes a -10 penalty on attacks, saves, ability checks, and skill checks for 1 round
Divine Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Profane Outburst	Ability to rebuke undead, any evil alignment	Spend rebuke undead attempt to grant undead creatures within 60 ft. a +1 profane bonus to AC
Via Negativa	Ability to rebuke undead	Spend rebuke undead attempt to deal extra damage with an <i>inflict</i> spell

Initiate Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Initiate of Ghaunadaur	Cleric level 3rd, patron Ghaunadaur	Command/rebuke oozes, add spells to cleric list
Initiate of Gruumsh	Orc or half-orc, ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells, patron Gruumsh	Cast prepared <i>cure</i> spell or spontaneously cast <i>inflict</i> spell as swift action, add spells to cleric list
Initiate of Kossuth	Cleric level 3rd, patron Kossuth	Summoned fire elementals have max hit points, add spells to cleric list
Initiate of Loviatar	Cleric level 5th, patron Loviatar	Gain +1 bonus on attack rolls and saving throws against fear for 1 min./level after taking damage
Initiate of Shar	Ability to cast 1st-level divine spells, patron Shar	Bluff and Hide are class skills, add spells to cleric list
Initiate of Varac	Extammar, cleric level 3rd, patron Varac	Create shield of emerald scales (1/day for 1 min./level) that ignores certain force effects, add spells to cleric list
Metamagic Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Corrupt Spell ²	Any evil alignment	Adds evil descriptor to one spell you can cast
Entangling Spell	—	Spell entangles targets for 1 round
Lingering Spell	—	Spell deals 1d6 damage of the same energy type for 1 extra round
Metanode Spell	Node Spellcasting, caster level 1st	Reduce cost of metamagic spells cast in a node
Reaping Spell	Any evil alignment	Target killed by spell cannot be raised, reincarnated, or resurrected
Vile Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Disciple of Darkness	Lawful evil alignment	Gain +1 luck bonus on an attack roll, skill check, ability check, level check, or saving throw 1/day
Hellbound Knight ¹	Disciple of Darkness, base attack bonus +4	Wielded weapon treated as lawful and evil for purpose of overcoming damage reduction; +1 profane bonus on attack rolls against lawful outsiders
Evil Brand	—	+2 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures
Evil Embraced	Evil Brand	Gain damage reduction 10/good for 1 round
Scion of Sorrow	Neutral evil alignment	Gain +1 luck bonus on an attack roll, skill check, ability check, level check, or saving throw 1/day
Tormented Knight ¹	Scion of Sorrow, base attack bonus +4	Wielded weapon treated as evil for purpose of overcoming damage reduction; successful attack deals 1d4 Cha damage to lawful or chaotic outsiders
Thrall to Demon	Chaotic evil alignment	Gain +1 luck bonus on an attack roll, skill check, ability check, level check, or saving throw 1/day
Demonsword Knight ¹	Thrall to Demon, base attack bonus +4	Wielded weapon treated as chaotic and evil for purpose of overcoming damage reduction; +1d6 damage against lawful outsiders

1 A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

2 You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon, skill, school of magic, selection of spells, or node type.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dire flail).

Benefit: If you hit the same creature with both ends of your dire flail in the same round, it must make a Fortitude saving

throw (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier) or be dazed by the pain for 1 round.

Special: A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

DIRTY RAT

You are quite adept at slipping under a foe's guard while he's distracted.

Prerequisites: Tumble 4 ranks.

Benefit: You gain an additional +1 bonus on attack rolls when flanking an opponent.

DOOMSPEAK [BARDIC]

You can demoralize an enemy with horrible condemnations and grim portents of impending doom.

Prerequisites: Bardic music class feature, Intimidate 8 ranks, Perform 8 ranks.

Benefit: You can spend one of your bardic music uses to utter a string of crass and appalling epithets and curses at one enemy within 120 feet. The intended target must be able to hear and comprehend your damning remarks. A target that fails a Will save (DC 10 + your character level + your Cha modifier) is cursed with a -10 penalty on attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks for 1 round. This is a supernatural, necromantic effect.

ENTANGLING SPELL [METAMAGIC]

Your spell releases residual eldritch power that entangles your enemies.

Benefit: The feat can be applied to any instantaneous spell that deals acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage, such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt*. After the spell is cast, lingering tendrils of raw energy persist; creatures damaged by the spell are entangled for 1 round. The spell is considered to be in effect during this time and can be dispelled normally. An entangling spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

FERAL ANIMAL COMPANION

You can enslave a feral animal and adopt it as your animal companion.

Prerequisites: Animal companion class feature, evil alignment.

Benefit: Instead of calling a normal animal companion, you can call a feral animal companion that foams at the mouth. Any creature harmed by the animal's bite attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract red ache (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 292). The disease has no harmful effect on the feral animal. In addition, your feral animal companion gains a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution. Attempts by others to influence your feral animal companion with Handle Animal checks take a -10 penalty.

Special: This feat does not transform a normal animal companion into a feral animal companion.

FLAY FOE

You are skilled at flaying the flesh from your enemy's bones.

Prerequisites: Str 15, base attack bonus +6, proficient with slashing melee weapon.

Benefit: If you hit the same enemy more than once in a single round with a slashing melee weapon, you deal an extra point of damage with each hit after the first.

Special: A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

IMPROVED FIENDISH SERVANT

You gain the service of a powerful fiendish animal servitor.

Prerequisites: Fiendish servant class feature.

Benefit: Add the following creatures to your list of eligible fiendish servants: ape, black bear, boar, crocodile, dire badger, dire bat, dire weasel, heavy warhorse, leopard, monitor lizard, constrictor snake, Large viper snake, wolverine. In addition, any fiendish servant you call has the fiendish creature template (*Monster Manual* page 107). The fiendish servant otherwise conforms to the rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 183).

LINGERING SPELL [METAMAGIC]

Residual eldritch energy from your spell continues to harm your enemies after the spell's main effect has expired.

Benefit: The feat can be applied to any one instantaneous spell that deals acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage, such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt*. After the spell is cast, lingering tendrils of energy persist, dealing 1d6 points of damage of the appropriate energy type at the beginning of your next turn to all creatures initially damaged by the spell. The spell is considered to be in effect during this time and can be dispelled normally. A lingering spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

MALIGN SPELL FOCUS

Your evil spells are more potent than normal due to a deal forged with an evil power.

Prerequisites: Any evil alignment.

Benefit: Add +1 to the DC for all saving throws against any of your spells that have the evil descriptor.

Special: This feat originally appeared in *Book of Vile Darkness* and has been revised for D&D v.3.5.

MORTIFYING ATTACK

Those who witness your brutal death attack are unnerved and jarred by the experience.

Prerequisites: Death attack class feature.

Benefit: All creatures within 30 feet that witness you make a successful death attack must succeed on a Will save (DC equal to death attack damage dealt) or be shaken for 2d4 rounds. Any creature you consider your ally is unaffected. In addition, creatures that fail the save are so horrified by the attack that they lose their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class for 1 round. The target of the death attack must also make the saving throw if it survives. This extraordinary ability is a fear effect.

MUTILATOR

After striking down your enemy in battle, you can skillfully mutilate the corpse to prevent others from raising it from the dead.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, any evil alignment.

Benefit: After delivering the killing blow to a creature (that is, reducing it to -10 hit points) with a melee weapon, you can decapitate or otherwise hack apart the corpse as a free action. Doing so does not provoke attacks of opportunity and ensures that the creature cannot be revived using a *raise dead* spell. You can mutilate only one enemy per round in this fashion.

NATURAL BULLY

You easily terrify weaker adversaries.

Prerequisites: Intimidate 6 ranks

Benefit: All enemies within 30 feet of you that have one-half your Hit Dice or less are bullied; they take a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls made against you. A bullied enemy that succeeds in hitting and damaging you is no longer subject to the penalty and cannot be bullied by you for 24 hours. Creatures immune to fear effects cannot be bullied and do not take the penalty on attacks rolls to hit you.

POISON IMMUNITY

After prolonged exposure to a poison or toxin, you have rendered yourself immune to it.

Benefit: You are immune to one specific poison (chosen by you), whether available as a blade poison, the venom of a specific creature, or one other toxin. You also gain a +1 circumstance bonus on saving throws against other poisons.

Special: A character can take this feat multiple times, choosing a different poison each time. The +1 bonus against other poisons does not stack with itself.

PROFANE OUTBURST [DIVINE]

With a horrendous release of divine energy, you steel your undead allies and minions against harm.

Prerequisites: Ability to rebuke undead, evil alignment.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can spend one of your rebuke attempts to bathe all undead creatures within 60 feet in divine energy, granting them a +1 profane bonus to Armor Class for 1 minute.

PULVERIZE FOF

You enjoy smashing your opponents into submission.

Prerequisites: Str 15, base attack bonus +6, proficient with bludgeoning melee weapon.

Benefit: If you hit the same enemy more than once in a single round with a bludgeoning melee weapon, you deal an extra 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage with each hit after the first.

Special: A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

REAPING SPELL [METAMAGIC]

The dark energy of your spell devours the soul of any creature killed by it.

Prerequisites: Any evil alignment.

Benefit: A *raise dead*, *reincarnate*, or *resurrection* spell cannot return to life a creature killed by a reaping spell, and a *true resurrection* spell has only a 50% chance of succeeding. A reaping spell that fails to kill the target has no additional effect. A reaping spell uses up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell's actual level.

swift and immediate actions

The *Miniatures Handbook* introduced the concept of a new action type: the swift action. Likewise, the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* introduced another new action type: the immediate action. Some of the feats and spells in *Champions of Ruin* use these concepts. A description of how they work follows.

Swift Action: A swift action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. You can perform one swift action per turn without affecting your ability to perform other actions. In that regard, a swift action is like a free action. However, you can perform only a single swift action per turn, regardless of what other actions you take. You can take a swift action any time you would normally be allowed to take a free action. Swift actions usually involve magic or psionics, or the activation of magic or psionic items; many characters (especially those who don't use magic or psionics) never have an opportunity to take a swift action.

Casting a quickened spell or manifesting a quickened power is a swift action. In addition, casting any spell or manifesting

any power with a casting time or manifesting time of 1 swift action is a swift action.

Casting a spell or manifesting a power with a casting or manifesting time of 1 swift action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Immediate Action: Much like a swift action, an immediate action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. Unlike a swift action, an immediate action can be performed at any time—even if it's not your turn. Using an immediate action on your turn is the same as using a swift action, and counts as your swift action for that turn. You cannot use another immediate action or a swift action until after your next turn if you have used an immediate action when it is not currently your turn (effectively, using an immediate action before your turn is equivalent to using your swift action for the coming turn). You also cannot use an immediate action if you are currently flat-footed.

SHADOWFORM FAMILIAR

You can summon a familiar from the Plane of Shadow.

Prerequisites: Krinth, summon familiar class feature.

Benefit: Your summoned familiar looks like a dark, shadowy version of a normal familiar. It is insubstantial and gains the incorporeal subtype (see *Monster Manual* page 310).

A shadowform familiar is more closely bound to you than a normal familiar, and the maximum distance from you the shadowform familiar can travel is 30 feet per caster level. If you are separated from your shadowform familiar by a distance greater than this, the shadowform familiar dissolves into nothingness and is considered slain.

Special: This feat does not transform a normal familiar into a shadowform familiar.

SHADOWSTRIKE

Due to your ties to the Plane of Shadow, you strike more effectively in areas of dim illumination.

Prerequisites: Krinth, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: When making an attack with a melee weapon in an area of shadowy illumination (see *Player's Handbook* page 164), you gain a +1 circumstance bonus on the attack roll and deal an extra 1d6 points of damage.

Special: A krinth fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

SKEWER FOE

A ruthless combatant, you like to impale enemies on spears and similar piercing weapons.

Prerequisites: Str 15, base attack bonus +6, proficient with piercing melee weapon.

Benefit: If you hit the same enemy more than once in a single round with a piercing melee weapon, you deal an extra 1d6 points of piercing damage with each hit after the first.

Special: A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

SNATCH TROPHY

You can quickly and skillfully collect a trophy of your victory over a fallen foe.

Benefit: After dealing a creature enough damage to drop it to negative hit points, you can slice or pry off a trophy as a free action. You must be adjacent to the dead or dying creature. The trophy could be a small body part such as a finger or ear. Carving a trophy in this manner requires a light slashing or piercing weapon and deals 1d6 points of damage to the target creature. (A creature with regeneration can regrow the severed body part.) Alternatively, you can take a small item worn or carried by your fallen foe, such as a piece of jewelry, pouch, potion, light weapon, or helmet, in which case the victim takes no damage. The snatched item can weigh no more than 2 pounds. You must have a free hand to collect the trophy.

TOUCH OF BENEVOLENCE

Despite your evil alignment, you are prone to moments of benevolence and mercy.

Prerequisites: Any evil alignment.

Benefit: Although you are evil and spells such as *detect evil* reveal your true alignment, you have a 50% chance of ignoring any effect that specifically targets or damages evil creatures.

Special: To keep this feat, a character must demonstrate periodic acts of kindness and mercy. A DM can revoke this feat if the character fails to act in an appropriately conflicted manner.

VIA NEGATIVA

You can channel greater amounts of negative energy into your *inflict* spells.

Prerequisites: Ability to rebuke undead.

Benefit: As a free action, you can spend one of your rebuke attempts to deal additional harm with an *inflict* spell. You must spend the rebuke attempt before making the attack roll. If the attack roll succeeds, the *inflict* spell deals an extra 1 point of damage per character level (maximum +20). If the attack roll fails, the rebuke attempt is spent and wasted.

vile feats

Vile feats were first introduced in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. Only intelligent characters of evil alignment can use vile feats. Vile feats are granted to characters at the behest of a powerful evil agency—a god, demon, or something similar. As such, vile feats are supernatural abilities rather than extraordinary abilities. Some DMs might also want to require a character who seeks a vile feat to perform a special ritual or make an actual bargain with a powerful creature of evil. The patron creature could even (at the DM's discretion) have the ability to revoke the feat should the character displease it.

This chapter reproduces three vile feats from *Book of Vile Darkness* (Disciple of Darkness, Evil Brand, and Thrall to Demon) and introduces several new ones.

DEMONSWORN KNIGHT [VILE]

A scornful champion of the demon princes, you detest and oppose devils and other creatures that refuse to heed the call of chaos.

Prerequisites: Thrall to Demon, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: Any weapon you wield is treated as chaotic and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. In addition, against lawful outsiders, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage with any successful weapon attack.

Special: This feat can only be taken once. A character who takes this feat cannot also take the Hellbound Knight or Tormented Knight feat. A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats. In addition, your eyes turn dead black, and your teeth become as sharp as fangs.

DISCIPLE OF DARKNESS [VILE]

You formally supplicate yourself to an archdevil. In return for this obedience, you gain a small measure of the archdevil's power.

Prerequisites: Lawful evil alignment.

Benefit: Once per day, while performing an evil act, you can call upon your diabolic patron to add a +1 luck bonus to any one attack roll, saving throw, ability check, skill check, or level check.

Special: This feat can only be taken once. A character who takes this feat cannot also take the Scion of Sorrow or Thrall to Demon feat.

EVIL BRAND [VILE]

You are physically marked forever as a servant of an evil power greater than yourself or as a villain who does not care that you seek only death, destruction, and misery for others. The symbol is unquestionable in its perversity, depicting a depravity so unthinkable that all who see it know beyond a doubt that the bearer is forever in the sway of the blackest powers.

Benefit: Evil creatures automatically recognize the symbol now emblazoned upon you as a sign of your utter depravity or discipleship to a powerful patron, although the specific identity of the patron is not revealed. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures.

EVIL EMBRACED [VILE]

You embrace the power of your fiendish patron and call upon that power in moments of great need.

Prerequisites: Evil Brand.

Benefit: Once per day, as an immediate action (see page 21), you can call upon your fiendish patron to steel you against harm. You gain damage reduction 10/good for 1 round (until the start of your next turn).

HELLBOUND KNIGHT [VILE]

A devoted disciple of the Nine Hells, you have sworn to strike down creatures that oppose law and threaten tyranny.

Prerequisites: Disciple of Darkness, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: Any weapon you wield is treated as lawful- and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. In addition, against chaotic outsiders, you gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls.

Special: This feat can only be taken once. A character who takes this feat cannot also take the Demonsword Knight or Tormented Knight feat. A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats. In addition, as soon as you take this feat, your eyes turn red.

SCION OF SORROW [VILE]

You formally supplicate yourself to a powerful yugoloth lord. In return for your unflinching obedience, you gain a small measure of the wretched fiend's power.

Prerequisites: Neutral evil alignment.

Benefit: Once per day, while performing an evil act, you can call upon your fiendish patron to add a +1 luck bonus to any one attack roll, saving throw, ability check, skill check, or level check.

Special: This feat can only be taken once. A character who takes this feat cannot also take the Disciple of Darkness or Thrall to Demon feat.

THRALL TO DEMON [VILE]

You formally supplicate yourself to a demon prince. In return for this obedience, you gain a small measure of the demon prince's power.

Prerequisites: Chaotic evil alignment.

Benefit: Once per day, while performing an evil act, you can call upon your demonic patron to add a +1 luck bonus to any one attack roll, saving throw, ability check, skill check, or level check.

Special: This feat can only be taken once. A character who takes this feat cannot also take the Disciple of Darkness or Scion of Sorrow feat.

TORMENTED KNIGHT [VILE]

You are inexorably bound to the loathsome yugoloths that lurk in the Barrens of Doom and Despair, and you strive to bring misery and pain to all creatures that oppose them.

Prerequisites: Scion of Sorrow, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: Any weapon you wield is treated as evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. Any chaotic or lawful outsider you successfully damage with a melee or ranged weapon must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or take 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

Special: This feat can only be taken once. A character who takes this feat cannot also take the Demonsword Knight or Hellbound Knight feat. A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats. In addition, as soon as you take this feat, your flesh turns pale and becomes unnaturally cold to the touch.

Initiate Feats

Initiate feats give additional focus and flavor to divine spellcasters of specific gods. Often, they grant access to unique spells only known to the most devout servants of these deities. Initiate feats for several prominent evil deities are presented below. *Player's Guide to Faerûn* contains initiate feats for a few other evil deities, namely Bane, Cyric, and Malar.

INITIATE OF GHAUNADAUR [INITIATE]

You have learned the dread secrets of the god of oozes, slimes, jellies, and outcasts.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 3rd, patron deity Ghaunadaur.

Benefit: You can command or rebuke oozes as an evil cleric commands or rebukes undead. You can use this supernatural ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Cha modifier.

In addition, you add the following spells to your cleric spell list.

- 1st **Corrosive Grasp**^{M46}: 1 touch/level deals 1d6+1 acid damage.
- 2nd **Blindsight**¹⁰: Grants blindsight out to 30 ft.
- 3rd **Amorphous Form**^{U41}: Subject becomes puddinglike and can slip through cracks quickly.
- 5th **Slime Hurl**: Hurl up to three globs of green slime.
- 7th **Mantle of the Slime Lord**: Nonintelligent oozes do not attack you, and you gain some ooze immunities.

INITIATE OF GRUUMSH [INITIATE]

The singular eye of the great orc god Gruumsh watches over you.

Prerequisites: Orc or half-orc, ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells, patron deity Gruumsh.

Benefit: Once per day, as a swift action (see the Swift and Immediate Actions sidebar, page 21), you can cast any *cure* spell you have prepared, or you can spontaneously cast an *inflict* spell.

In addition, you add the following spells to your divine spellcaster list. If you have more than one divine spellcasting class before taking this feat, you must decide to which class's spell list to add the spells.

- 2nd **Battle Line**: Creates an area of doom on the battlefield.
- 3rd **Bloodspear**: Makes one spear into a wounding weapon.
- 5th **Pocket Cave**: Creates an extradimensional space where you and your allies can hide.
- 6th **Eyebite**: Target becomes panicked, sickened, and comatose.
- 7th **Waves of Exhaustion**: Several targets become exhausted.

INITIATE OF KOSSUTH [INITIATE]

You have faced the fierce elemental flame and unlocked some of the secrets of Kossuth's church.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 3rd, patron deity Kossuth.

Benefit: All fire elementals that you summon using the *summon monster* spells have +2 hit points per die (instead of average hit points).

In addition, you add the following spells to your cleric spell list.

Level

- 2nd **Aganazzar's Scorcher**¹⁴⁶: Path of fire deals 1d8 damage per 2 levels (max 5d8).
- 4th **Fire Stride**^{PRCS}: Multiple use *dimension door* that works only through large fires.
- 5th **Shroud of Flame**¹⁴¹: Target bursts into flames, taking 2d6 fire damage per round and dealing 1d4 fire damage to creatures within 10 ft.
- 8th **Incendiary Cloud**: Cloud deals 4d6 fire damage/round.

INITIATE OF LOVIATAR [INITIATE]

With great pain comes great power. This and other secrets you have learned from the church of Loviatar.

Prerequisites: Cleric level 5th, patron deity Loviatar.

Benefit: The first time you take damage in any combat, you gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and a +1 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects for 1 minute per cleric level.

In addition, you add the following spells to your cleric spell list.

- 2nd **Nybor's Gentle Reminder**¹⁴¹: Target is dazed for 1 round, thereafter -2 on attacks, saves, and checks, and distracted.
- 3rd **Mystic Lash**¹⁴¹: Energy whip deals 1d6 electricity damage/three levels (max 4d6) and stuns for 1 round.
- 5th **Fleshshiver**¹⁴¹: Target is stunned for 1 round, takes 1d6/level damage, and is nauseated for 1d4+2 rounds.

INITIATE OF SHAR [INITIATE]

You have been initiated into the greatest secrets of Shar's church.

fiend lords and spells

A number of powerful fiends serve as patrons for clerics and other divine spellcasters. Clerics following Asmodeus, Baphomet, Demogorgon, Orcus, Yeenoghu, and other such creatures often lead bloodthirsty cults of like-minded followers. However, these powerful demons and devils do not have any divine ranks and lack the ability to grant cleric spells as gods normally do.

There is a way around this limitation. A character can strike a special bargain with a powerful fiend, which gives the fiend the ability to grant spells to that character from a choice of domains. In effect, a powerful fiend can serve as a conduit for certain universal principles or the nascent divine power of its own extraplanar home, but only for

mortals who agree to the dark and insidious bargain it offers. This bargain is represented by one of three feats: Disciple of Darkness, Scion of Sorrow, or Thrall to Demon (see Vile Feats, page 22). A character with cleric levels who chooses one of these feats can choose domains made available by the particular demon, yugoloth, or devil he chooses as his patron, and he receives his cleric spells from that dark entity.

The vast majority of evil clerics choose gods for patrons, since they need not use a feat to simply gain access to cleric spells with a divine patron. But devil lords and demon princes crave the adulation of mortals, too—and many seek out individuals willing to give them the adulation they crave.

Prerequisite: Able to cast 1st-level divine spells, patron deity Shar.

Benefit: You add Bluff and Hide to your list of class skills.

In addition, you add the following spells to your divine spellcaster spell list. If you have more than one divine spellcasting class before taking this feat, you must decide which class has the additional spells added to its list.

- 1st **Disguise Self:** Changes your appearance.
- 3rd **Crushing Despair:** Subject takes -2 on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, and checks.
- 4th **Armor of Darkness^{PRC}:** Creates a shroud of shadow around target that grants darkvision, a bonus to AC, and a bonus to some saving throws.
- 5th **Darkbolt^{PRC}:** One beam of darkness/2 levels deals damage and dazes opponents.

Special: The *armor of darkness* and *darkbolt* spells also appear on the Darkness domain list. With this feat, you can cast them as regular cleric spells, not just domain spells.

INITIATE OF VARAE [INITIATE]

You fervently worship Varae, the serpentine goddess, and guard well the secrets of your faith.

Prerequisites: Examinaar, cleric level 3rd, patron deity Varae.

Benefit: Once per day, as a standard action, you can transform your skin into shimmering emerald scales. The scales absorb *magic missile* damage as the *shield* spell, and they enable you to pass through *walls of force* as if they weren't there. The emerald scales last for 1 minute per character level. This is a supernatural ability.

In addition, you add the following spells to your cleric spell list.

- 2nd **Blinding Spittle^{PRC}:** Ranged touch attack blinds subject.
- 4th **Serpent Arrow^{PRC}:** Transforms up to eight missiles into Tiny vipers.
- 6th **Veil:** Changes appearance of group of creatures.
- 8th **Animal Shapes:** One ally/level polymorphs into chosen animal (snakes only).

node magic feats

The node magic feats presented here originally appeared in *Underdark*. These versions update and supersede those in the previous product.

METANODE SPELL [METAMAGIC]

You cast metamagic spells to greater effect in nodes to which you are attuned than elsewhere.

Prerequisite: Node Spellcasting, caster level 1st.

Benefit: When casting a spell improved by a metamagic feat, you can deduct the class of the node layer in which you currently

stand from the increased spell level. The class of the layer does not equal the class of the node unless you are standing in the innermost portion of it.

For example, if you use *Maximize Spell* to augment the 5th-level spell *flame strike* in the innermost (+1) layer of a Class 1 node, you cast the spell as if it were only two levels higher than normal, not three, because the node pays one spell level's worth of the metamagic cost. This feat is most useful to casters who do not prepare spells (such as bards and sorcerers) and to wizards who rarely leave their nodes and can therefore prepare and cast their spells at the adjusted level.

If you use this feat to reduce the cost of preparing a metamagic spell and then leave the node, the spell you prepared is unavailable until you return to a node layer of at least the same class as the one in which the spell was prepared.

NODE DEFENSE

You can use the magical power of a node to defend yourself from harm.

Prerequisite: Node Spellcasting, caster level 1st.

Benefit: You receive an insight bonus to your Armor Class and on saving throws equal to the class of any node that you currently occupy and to which you are attuned, up to a maximum of +4. For example, if you are inside the middle (+2) layer of a Class 3 node, you gain a +2 bonus.

NODE SENSITIVE

You can perceive a node just by passing near it.

Benefit: You automatically note the presence of any node to which you are attuned within 30 feet.

Normal: A creature without this feat that comes within 30 feet of the outermost layer of a node can make a DC 20 Intelligence check to note the presence of the node. A creature with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat can attempt either an Intelligence check or a Spellcraft check at the same DC to notice the node.

NODE SPELLCASTING

You have discovered the secret of the magic of a particular type of node.

Prerequisite: Caster level 1st.

Benefit: You are attuned to one type of node and the magical power it provides. When you choose this feat, choose a type of node (earth, evil, or Shadow Weave). This feat grants you access to the various node magic feats and node powers, and allows you to make a Spellcraft check instead of an Intelligence check to notice nearby nodes of the type to which you are attuned.

Normal: A creature without this feat cannot take other node-related feats, cannot access a node's full potential, and must make an Intelligence check to notice nearby nodes or to manipulate node powers.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it attunes you to a different node type.

NODE STORE

You can store a prepared spell in a node to which you are attuned.

Prerequisite: Node Spellcasting, caster level 1st.

Benefit: Each time you take this feat, choose two spells of any level that you know and can cast. If you are a spellcaster who prepares spells, you can now prepare those two spells in addition to your normal spell complement as long as you are in a node to which you are attuned, just as if you had two extra spell slots per day. These extra prepared spells are stored in the node instead of in your mind. You can cast them normally while you are within that node, even if you have left the node and returned since storing them there.

If you are a spellcaster who does not prepare spells, choose two spells that you know. You can now cast those two spells while in a node to which you are attuned as if you had two extra spell slots per day available. Each such slot can be used only to cast its designated spell; it cannot be used for any other spell (including the other spell designated with this feat). If you leave the node, these extra spell slots become unavailable to you, but you can use them again if you return, provided that you haven't already used them since the last time you rested.

You do not need to designate a specific node in which to store your spells when you choose this feat, but you can have spells stored in only one node at a time. You can change the node in which your spells are stored by meditating for 1 hour inside the new node you have selected.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to two new spells.

new spells

Magic and spells occupy a role of central importance in Faerun, a world rich with arcane and divine elements. Empires often rise and fall based on the power of their spellcasters. *Champions of Ruin* presents a wide selection of spells with a focus on evil, corruption, and power. For more spells tied to these themes, see *Book of Vile Darkness*.

assassin spells

1ST-LEVEL ASSASSIN SPELL

Woodwisp Arrow: Enables a masterwork arrow or bolt to pass through wood.

2ND-LEVEL ASSASSIN SPELLS

Brilliant Energy Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt radiates light and ignores armor.

Spellslayer Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals extra damage to a creature with ongoing spells cast upon it.

3RD-LEVEL ASSASSIN SPELLS

Arrowsplit: Transform a masterwork arrow or bolt mid-flight into 1d4+1 masterwork missiles.

Darkflame Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals normal damage plus 2d6 damage each round for 3 rounds.

4TH-LEVEL ASSASSIN SPELLS

Bloodfreeze Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals extra 2d6 cold damage and paralyzes target.

Shadow Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals 1d6 points of Strength damage.

bard spells

1ST-LEVEL BARD SPELL

Undersong: Make Perform checks in place of Concentration checks.

2ND-LEVEL BARD SPELLS

Control Darkness and Shadow: Manipulate existing areas of darkness and shadow.

Tvash-Prull's BonefiddleTM: Target takes 1d6 sonic damage/round and -20 penalty on Move Silently checks.

3RD-LEVEL BARD SPELL

Love's Lament: Creatures in 60-ft. cone take 1d6 Wisdom damage and are nauseated for 1d4 rounds.

5TH-LEVEL BARD SPELL

Remorseless CharmTM: Suppress the target's alignment, removing all alignment-related inhibitions.

6TH-LEVEL BARD SPELL

Symphonic NightmareTM: Haunting music disrupts target's sleep for 1 day/level.

blackguard spell

3RD-LEVEL BLACKGUARD SPELL

Bedevil: Summon a mischievous spirit to torment your enemy.

cleric spells

3RD-LEVEL CLERIC SPELLS

Air Breathing: Subjects can breathe air freely.

Locate Node: Finds closest node in 1 mile/level radius.

Slashing Darkness: Ray deals 1d8/two levels damage and heals undead the same amount.

5TH-LEVEL CLERIC SPELL

Necrotic Skull Bomb: Exploding skull releases negative energy; targets each gain 1d4 negative levels.

6TH-LEVEL CLERIC SPELLS

Ravage: A pillar of black, unholy power deals 1d6 vile damage/2 levels (max 10d6).

Remorseless Charm^M: Suppress the target's alignment, removing all alignment-related inhibitions.

7TH-LEVEL CLERIC SPELLS

Mark of the Unfaithful: Mark someone as an enemy of your faith.

Shadow Trap: Bind a greater shadow to an object as its guardian.

9TH-LEVEL CLERIC SPELL

Anathema: Break the divine link between your god and lower-ranked members of your faith.

druid spells

1ST-LEVEL DRUID SPELLS

Enrage Animals: Render normal animals hostile and vicious.

Woodwisp Arrow: Enables a masterwork arrow or bolt to pass through wood.

2ND-LEVEL DRUID SPELLS

Locate Node: Finds closest node in 1 mile/level radius.

Whip of Thorns: Create a thorny whip that can damage or entangle opponents.

3RD-LEVEL DRUID SPELLS

Air Breathing: Subjects can breathe air freely.

Node Door: Allows teleportation between any known nodes.

4TH-LEVEL DRUID SPELL

Unholy Beast: Target animal transforms into an unholy minion under your control.

7TH-LEVEL DRUID SPELL

Mark of the Unfaithful: Mark someone as an enemy of your faith.

9TH-LEVEL DRUID SPELLS

Anathema: Break the divine link between your god and lower-ranked members of your faith.

ranger spells

1ST-LEVEL RANGER SPELLS

Enrage Animals: Render animals hostile and vicious.

Woodwisp Arrow: Enables a masterwork arrow or bolt to pass through wood.

2ND-LEVEL RANGER SPELLS

Brilliant Energy Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt radiates light and ignores armor.

Spellslayer Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals extra damage to a creature with ongoing spells cast upon it.

3RD-LEVEL RANGER SPELLS

Arrowsplit: Transform a masterwork arrow or bolt mid-flight into 2d4 masterwork missiles.

Darkflame Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals normal damage plus 2d6 damage each round for 3 rounds.

4TH-LEVEL RANGER SPELLS

Bloodfreeze Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals extra 2d6 cold damage and paralyzes target.

Doublestrike Arrow: One arrow or bolt strikes two targets within 30 feet of each other.

Shadow Arrow: Masterwork arrow or bolt deals 1d6 points of Strength damage.

sorcerer/wizard spells

2ND-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

Div Locate Node: Finds closest node in 1 mile/level radius.

Abjur Node Lock: Deters others from using a node's powers.

Evoc Scourge of Force: Tendrils of force lash foes for 1d8 +1/2 levels damage each.

3RD-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELLS

Trans Air Breathing: Subjects can breathe air freely.

Control Darkness and Shadow: Manipulate existing areas of darkness and shadow.

Conj Bedevil: Summon a mischievous spirit to torment your enemy.

Node Door: Allows teleportation between any known nodes.

4TH-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELL

Trans Serpent Arrow: Transforms missiles into Tiny vipers.

5TH-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELL

Necro Necrotic Skull Bomb: Exploding skull releases negative energy; targets each gain 1d4 negative levels.

6TH-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELL

Ench Remorseless Charm^M: Suppress the target's alignment, removing all alignment-related inhibitions.

7TH-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELL

Conj Shadow Trap: Bind a greater shadow to an object as its guardian.

9TH-LEVEL SORCERER/WIZARD SPELL

Conj Node Genesis^X: Creates a Class 1 node.

Air Breathing

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 3, druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 hours/level; see text

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The transmuted creatures can breathe air freely. Divide the duration evenly among all the creatures you touch.

The spell does not make creatures unable to breathe water.

Air breathing dispels and counters water breathing.

Arcane Material Component: A short reed or piece of straw.

Anathema

Enchantment (Compulsion)

Level: Cleric 9, druid 9

Components: V, S, F, DF

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Unlimited

Target: One creature of the same faith as the spellcaster

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You can permanently break the divine link between your deity and a lower-level cleric, druid, ranger or paladin of your faith, or upon a common worshiper. The spell has no effect on spellcasters of a faith other than your own. You can pronounce an *anathema* upon any character of your faith, no matter where he is, even if on a different plane. You cannot pronounce an *anathema* against someone who is already dead. Some deities do not allow an *anathema* to be pronounced against the innocent or against their chosen, while others grant their high-level clerics free use of this most terrible of divine curses.

An individual under *anathema* can no longer cast divine spells or call upon the power of his god to turn or command undead, heal, harm, smite, shape change, or use any other divine power associated with his character class. An ordinary worshiper placed under *anathema* is not allowed to take advantage of any of the faith's services, such as healing, naming, marrying, or burial of the dead. Anyone who dies while under *anathema* is barred from entry into his deity's plane just as though he had never declared allegiance to a god. His soul is condemned to eternally writhe in the Wall of the Faithless.

On a more personal level, the *anathema* spell marks the subject as accursed with regard to others of the faith. They are not allowed to speak to him, look at him, or even acknowledge his existence. The common members of the faith are only aware that the subject is under *anathema* if so informed by the church hierarchy; however, clerics, paladins, druids and rangers of the

faith can automatically detect an *anathema* effect simply by looking at the subject.

The effect is permanent until lifted, either by the original spellcaster, or by a cleric of the same faith, of a higher level than the caster, who casts an *atonement* spell upon the subject. The subject of an *anathema* can also remove its effect by changing his divine allegiance (see *Changing Deities*, page 233 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*).

Focus: The subject's name must be inscribed in a book or scroll especially consecrated for this purpose and detailing the crimes (real or imagined) for which the subject is being condemned. The book is not consumed in the process.

Arrowsplit

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Assassin 3, ranger 3, justice of weald and woe 3

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, causing it to split in mid-flight into 1d4+1 identical masterwork arrows, or bolts. All the missiles strike the same target, and you must make a separate attack roll for each missile. The arrow or bolt must be fired during the same round the spell is cast, or the magic dissipates and is lost. The projectile is destroyed even if it misses its target.

Material Component: Masterwork arrow or bolt.

Battle Line

Abjuration

Level: Initiate of Gloomsh 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: Up to two contiguous 5-ft. squares/level, maximum 10 squares (S)

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: See text

By means of this spell you draw a visible, unholy "line in the sand" that causes a feeling of dread and hesitation in all creatures that cross it. Any creature entering the affected area must make a Will save or become shaken. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same spellcaster's *battle line* spells for 24 hours.

bedevil

Conjuration (Summoning) [Evil]
 Level: Blackguard 3, sorcerer/wizard 3
 Components: V, S, M
 Casting Time: 1 round
 Range: See text
 Duration: 1 day/level (D)
 Saving Throw: No
 Spell Resistance: Yes

You summon a mischievous spirit and send it to bedevil your enemy. The spirit seeks out its assigned victim wherever she might be, as long as she is on the same plane as you when you cast the spell. It then proceeds to irritate and annoy her through a variety of manifestations. The victim of a *bedevil* spell finds herself constantly seeing movement out of the corner of her eye. Her sleep is frequently interrupted by bed shaking and blanket shifting and the sounds of voices that fade upon waking. When spellcasting, she suffers a variety of minor irritations that threaten to disrupt her spells, and she constantly feels haunted and watched. The result of this bedevilment is that she takes a -1 penalty on all ability checks, skill checks, and Will saving throws and has a 5% chance of arcane spell failure (which stacks with any spell failure chance from armor worn).

Detect evil cast upon the subject of this spell reveals the presence of the bedeviling spirit, while *protection from evil* keeps the spirit from adversely affecting the victim. A *dispel evil* spell destroys the mischievous spirit, but *remove curse* or similar magic has no effect on it.

Material Components: A tiny iron statuette of a devil or imp, plus either a drop of the intended victim's blood or one personal article belonging to the intended victim.

bloodfreeze Arrow

Transmutation
 Level: Assassin 4, ranger 4, justice of weald and woe 4
 Components: V, M
 Casting Time: 1 swift action
 Range: Touch
 Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt
 Duration: Instantaneous
 Saving Throw: Fortitude partial; see text
 Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, transforming its head into blue ice. In addition to taking normal damage from the missile, the target takes 2d6 points of cold damage and is paralyzed. A successful Fortitude save negates the paralysis, and the target can make a new save each round (at the start of the caster's turn).

Material Component: Masterwork arrow or bolt.

bloodspear

Transmutation
 Level: Initiate of Gloomish 3
 Components: V, S
 Casting Time: 1 standard action
 Range: Touch
 Target: Spear touched
 Duration: 1 round/level
 Saving Throw: None
 Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows you to channel the fury of Gloomish into the god's favored weapon—a spear. The weapon's tip begins to drip blood, and the spear acts as if it had the wounding special ability (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 226) for the duration of the spell. The spell is automatically canceled 1 round after the weapon leaves your hand. You cannot have more than one *bloodspear* in effect at a time.

This spell has no effect on a spear that already has the wounding special ability, and it does not work on artifacts.

brilliant energy Arrow

Transmutation
 Level: Assassin 2, ranger 2, justice of weald and woe 2
 Components: V, M
 Casting Time: 1 swift action
 Range: Touch
 Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt
 Duration: Instantaneous
 Saving Throw: None
 Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, transforming its head into brilliant energy that gives off light as a torch (20-foot radius). A brilliant energy missile ignores nonliving matter. Armor bonuses to AC (including any enhancement bonuses to that armor) do not count against it because the missile passes through armor. It deals normal damage and has no effect on constructs, undead, and objects. The arrow or bolt must be fired during the same round the spell is cast, or the magic dissipates and is lost. The projectile is destroyed even if it misses its target.

Material Component: Masterwork arrow or bolt.

control darkness and shadow

Transmutation [Darkness, Shadow]
 Level: Bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 3
 Components: V, S
 Casting Time: 1 standard action
 Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
 Area: Shadows in one 5-ft. cube/level
 Duration: Concentration + 1 round/level
 Saving Throw: None
 Spell Resistance: No

You can affect existing shadows, both natural and magical, by causing them to deepen, lighten, or even move. You can cause one of the following effects at a time, and can switch them once per round as a free action for the duration of the spell. The chosen effect covers the entire area of the spell; multiple effects may not be applied to different areas. The possible effects are described below.

Deepen Darkness and Shadow: Normal shadows now grant a +4 bonus on Hide checks and provide concealment to creatures within them. Magical darkness now confers total concealment to anyone within its area.

Lighten Darkness and Shadow: Normal shadows are suppressed within the area, making it impossible to hide within them or use abilities such as the shadowdancer's shadow jump ability. Magical darkness no longer provides concealment, and the area can now be illuminated by any light source.

Move Shadow: The affected shadow moves as you direct within the area. You can create shadow illusions (as those created by a *silent image* spell, but without color), reveal hidden creatures by taking their shadow away, cause shadows to follow you within the area of the spell, or otherwise move the shadow as you see fit. You cannot move areas of darkness in this way.

darkflame Arrow

Evocation

Level: Assassin 3, justice of weald and woe 3, ranger 3

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt

Duration: Instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, engulfing its head in black fire. The arrow deals normal damage and wreaths the target in black flame that deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. The black flames continue to engulf the victim for 2 more rounds, dealing 2d6 points of damage each subsequent round (at the start of your turn), and they cannot be extinguished (although they can be dispelled). The arrow or bolt must be fired during the same round the spell is cast, or the magic dissipates and is lost. Creatures with immunity or resistance to fire take full damage from the black flames. The projectile is destroyed even if it misses its target.

Material Component: Masterwork arrow or bolt.

doublestrike Arrow

Transmutation

Level: Ranger 4, justice of weald and woe 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: One arrow or bolt

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell is cast upon a single arrow or crossbow bolt, enabling it to strike two targets instead of one. The character firing the arrow selects the two targets, both of which must be within 30 feet of each other, and makes a separate attack roll against each target (using the same attack bonus). After striking or missing the first target, the arrow swerves and continues on course to the second target.



A doublestrike arrow spell in action

A doublestrike missile cannot hit the same target twice, and it is destroyed even if it misses its intended targets.

Material Component: Arrow or bolt.

Enrage Animals

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Druid 1, ranger 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: Animals within 30 ft. of each other

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell incites and enrages animals, making them hostile and vicious. Only ordinary animals (those with Intelligence scores of 1 or 2) can be affected by this spell. The maximum number of Hit Dice of animals you can affect is equal to $2d4 + \text{your caster level}$. A dire animal or an animal trained only to attack on order is allowed a saving throw; other animals are not. For example, a ranger could enrage a normal bear or wolf with little trouble, but it's more difficult to drive a trained guard dog into a frenzy so that it attacks its master.

The affected creatures attack the nearest creature, including any other creatures affected by this spell.

Locate Node

Divination

Level: Cleric 3, druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S, F/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 1 mile/level; see text

Area: Circle, centered on you, with a radius of 1 mile/level; see text

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You sense the direction of any node within range. You can choose to locate the nearest node, the closest node of a particular type, or a specific node you have visited before; in the latter case, the range is 2 miles/level and the area is a circle, centered on you, with a radius of 2 miles/level.

The spell is blocked by even a thin sheet of lead, and it cannot detect nodes protected by a *node lock* spell.

Arcane or Divine Focus: A pebble found in a node.

Love's Lament

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Bard 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 60 ft.

Effect: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell, you create a cone of music that draws upon the sadness, guilt, and despair of those within its area of effect. All creatures in the area take a -4 penalty on Listen checks for 1 round. In addition, those who fail to save against *love's lament* are reminded of all their lost loves and disappointments in life. The music seizes upon these feelings and magnifies them, so that the victims of the spell take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and are nauseated for 1d4 rounds.

Mantle of the Slime Lord

Abjuration

Level: Initiate of Ghaunadaur 7

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Effect: Nimbus of divine energy

Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes a glossy nimbus of energy to surround you. This barrier looks like a gelatinous layer of thick, dirty water to observers, but it does not hinder you in the least. While the mantle is active, nonintelligent oozes will not attack you unless you attack them. In addition, you gain immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning effects. Lastly, when a critical hit or sneak attack is scored on you, there is a 75% chance that the critical hit or sneak attack is negated and damage is instead rolled normally.

Mark of the Unfaithful

Evocation

Level: Cleric 7, druid 7

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Unlimited

Target: One creature

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

You permanently place a mark upon a character or creature that identifies it as an enemy of the faith. Anyone of your faith who encounters the bearer of a *mark of the unfaithful*, even if he is disguised, *altered*, or *polymorphed*, feels a natural hostility

toward that person and gains a +6 circumstance bonus on Sense Motive checks made against the marked creature. This hostility might not induce the viewer to attack, but he certainly will not be inclined to trust or believe anything the marked one says.

Clerics, paladins, druids and rangers of the faith can automatically detect the *mark* simply by looking at the subject.

A *mark of the unfaithful* is permanent until dispelled or removed by a cleric of the same faith, of higher level than the caster, who casts an *atonement* spell upon the subject.

Focus: The subject's name must be inscribed in a book or scroll especially consecrated for this purpose and detailing the crimes (real or imagined) for which the subject is being marked.

necrotic skull bomb

Necromancy

Level: Cleric 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: 20-ft.-radius spread

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You imbue a humanoid skull with negative energy and hurl it. The skull detonates on impact, releasing the negative energy contained within. All creatures in the spell's area, except for undead, gain 1d4 negative levels (see *Energy Drain*, page 308 of the *Monster Manual*, for details about negative levels).

Assuming a creature survives the effect of the spell, it regains lost levels after a number of hours equal to your caster level (maximum 15 hours). Usually, negative levels have a chance of draining a creature's levels, but the negative levels from *necrotic skull bomb* don't last long enough to do so.

An undead creature in the spell's area gains 1d4×5 temporary hit points for 1 hour.

Material Component: A humanoid skull.

node door

Conjuration (Teleportation)

Level: Druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Varies; see text

Target: You and touched objects or other touched willing creatures

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None and Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: No and Yes (object)

You instantly transfer yourself from your current node to any other node of the same type that you have visited. You always arrive at the exact spot desired—whether by simply visualizing the area or by describing your destination (for example, “the Shadow Weave node in the garden at the Temple of Old Night”). After using this spell, you can't take any other actions until your next turn.

If you arrive in a node that is already partially occupied by a newly added object, you arrive in the closest clear space in that node. If the node is completely filled or has been destroyed by any means, you bounce to the next closest node of the same type (determined randomly or by the DM). Each such “bounce” deals 2d6 points of damage to you and any who accompany you.

You can bring along objects as long as their weight doesn't exceed your maximum load. You can also bring one additional willing Medium or smaller creature (carrying gear or objects up to its maximum load) or its equivalent per three caster levels;

a Large creature counts as two Medium creatures, a Huge creature counts as two Large creatures, and so forth. All creatures to be transported must be in contact with one another, and at least one of those creatures must be in contact with you. As with all spells for which the range is personal and the target is you, you need not make a saving throw, nor is spell resistance applicable to you. Only objects held or in use (attended) by another person receive saving throws and spell resistance.

Special: You must have the Node Spellcasting feat to cast this spell.



Necrotic skull bomb

node genesis

Conjuration (Creation)
 Level: Sorcerer/wizard 9
 Components: V, S, XP
 Casting Time: 1 tenday (8 hours/day)
 Range: Touch
 Effect: One Class 1 node with a 10-ft. radius
 Duration: Instantaneous
 Saving Throw: None
 Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, the arcane energies reroute local ley lines and telluric currents, precipitating the creation of a Class 1 node (you determine the type when you cast the spell). The new node is centered on and emanates from a point on the ground you touch. The rough boundary of the new node can cross any type of terrain or empty space, and can cross different types of materials. You have some leeway in determining the initial shape of your node's outer boundary—it doesn't have to be a perfect sphere.

The newly generated node retains its Class 1 status for one year. Thereafter, its diameter increases at rate of 20 feet per year, until it eventually reaches a diameter equal to 20 feet per the caster level you possessed at the time of casting. When the node's diameter reaches the low end of the range for the next higher class (see Table 5-1 on page 96), its class increases by +1. For example, a Class 1 node becomes Class 2 when its diameter reaches 40 feet, and Class 3 when its diameter reaches 120 feet.

Nodes you create with this spell are automatically considered *node locked* by you. They are otherwise just like natural nodes and subject to destruction in the same ways.

XP Cost: 5,000 XP.

Special: You must have the Node Spellcasting feat to cast this spell.

node lock

Abjuration
 Level: Sorcerer/wizard 2
 Components: V, S
 Casting Time: 1 standard action
 Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
 Target: One node
 Duration: Permanent
 Saving Throw: None
 Spell Resistance: No

A *node lock* spell cast upon a node magically "locks" it against others who might wish to use its power. You can affect a node whose class is equal to one-half your caster level or less. For any caster except you, a *node lock* adds +15 to each Spellcraft DC associated with the use of the node's standard powers. In addition, the node cannot be detected by a *locate node* spell. A successful *dispel magic* breaks a *node lock*.

Special: You must have the Node Spellcasting feat to cast this spell.

pocket cave

Conjuration (Creation)
 Level: Initiate of Gloomsh 5
 Components: V, S, DF
 Casting Time: 1 standard action
 Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
 Effect: Extradimensional cave, up to two 10-ft. cubes/level (S)
 Duration: 1 hour/level (D)
 Saving Throw: None
 Spell Resistance: No

You conjure up an extradimensional cave that has a single entrance on the plane from which the spell was cast. You can only cast this spell on a surface made of rock or some form of earth. The entry point looks like a dark cave entrance that is 4 feet wide and 8 feet high. Only those you designate can enter the cave, and the portal is shut and made invisible behind you when you enter. You can open it again from your side at will. Creatures entering the cave will find themselves in a dark, wet cavern. The place contains enough oxygen to sustain as many creatures as can fit in the area for the duration of the spell. Edible fungus grows along the walls, and condensation drips down one wall into a pool of fresh, clean water that never seems to run dry.

External conditions such as weather do not affect the pleasant atmosphere of the cave, and nothing except the designated creatures can pass through the portal in either direction. At the end of the spell's duration, all within the *pocket cave* return to the spot where they entered the cave or else to the nearest open space, if that spot is occupied.

RAVAGE

Necromancy [Evil]
 Level: Cleric 7
 Components: V, S, DF
 Casting Time: 1 standard action
 Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
 Area: 10-ft.-radius cylinder, 40 ft. high
 Duration: Instantaneous
 Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
 Spell Resistance: Yes

A terrible column of swirling black energy engulfs creatures and rips at their bodies and souls. All living creatures within the spell's area take 1d6 points of vile damage per two caster levels (maximum 10d6). Unlike regular damage, vile damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

remorseless charm

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Evil, Mind-Affecting]

Level: Bard 5, cleric 6, sorcerer/wizard 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell eliminates normal inhibitions and silences the subject's conscience. Under its effects, a good creature might commit acts of extraordinary evil without any feelings of remorse. For instance, a paladin who strives to never destroy a foe that has surrendered might decide that she's better off meting out justice immediately and killing the enemy. This spell affects the target's norms and expectations; for example, once affected, a good-aligned target might be willing to attack his friends when urged to do so through a *suggestion*. This would not eliminate his need to atone, according to the tenets and punishments prescribed by his faith or law.

The compulsion is permanent until broken by a *break enchantment* spell or similar magic, or until it is removed by the spellcaster.

Material Component: One piece of masterwork artwork of at least 1,000 gp in value. The artwork must depict acts of debauchery or evil that are titillating and fascinating, not disturbing or revolting. The spell is cast upon the artwork, which is then revealed to the subject of the spell, triggering its effects. The enchantment on the artwork lasts for 1 day per spellcaster level, much like a *symbol*, until it is viewed and its magical effect is triggered.

scourge of force

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One tendril of force plus one additional tendril per three caster levels (maximum four)

Targets: One or more targets, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

One or more whiplike tendrils of force spring from your hand and lash targets within range. Make a melee touch attack for each tendril using your highest attack bonus. If a tendril hits, it deals 1d8 points of force damage plus 1 point of force damage per two caster levels (maximum 1d8+5). You can lash a target with multiple tendrils.

serpent arrow

Transmutation

Level: Justice of weald and woe 3, sorcerer/wizard 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Up to eight projectiles, all of which must be within 40 ft. of each other at the time of casting; see text

Duration: Up to 10 min./level; see text

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You transform wooden arrows, darts, or twigs into Tiny vipers (see *Monster Manual* page 200). These missiles remain rigid and harmless until fired or hurled. They automatically bite any creature they hit, each dealing 1 point of damage plus poison (injury, Fortitude DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con). The missiles remain in snake form for the duration of the spell, fighting the creatures they initially struck using their normal attack bonus. If a missile misses its target, or the target originally struck moves out of reach, the snake moves to attack the nearest creature other than you. If a target falls dead and no others are in range, the spell ends even if its duration has not run out. When the spell expires, the vipers melt away, leaving nothing behind.

Material Components: Up to eight wooden arrows, darts, or straight twigs, plus a scale from any sort of snake.

shadow arrow

Necromancy

Level: Assassin 4, justice of weald and woe 4, ranger 4

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, transforming it into pure black shadow. Make a ranged touch attack with the missile instead of a normal ranged attack. Instead of dealing normal damage, a *shadow arrow* deals 1d6 points of Strength damage. The arrow or bolt must be fired during the same round the spell is cast, or the magic dissipates and is lost. The projectile is destroyed even if it misses its target.

Material Component: Masterwork arrow or bolt.

shadow trap

Conjuration (Summoning) [Shadow]

Level: Cleric 7, sorcerer/wizard 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch
Duration: 1 hour/level (D)
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell, you place a magic trap on any object that casts a shadow. If the object is disturbed in any way that causes its shadow to shift (for instance, if it or a nearby light source is moved), a bound greater shadow (see *Monster Manual* page 221) emerges from the object's shadow to attack the nearest living creature. The shadow can be turned or destroyed as normal; otherwise, it remains for a number of rounds equal to your caster level. If the trapped object resides in a place that has no shadows, the trap does not trigger, although the spell remains in effect.

Material Component: A sheet of black cloth large enough to drape over the warded object.

slashing darkness

Evocation
Level: Clr 3
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect: Ray
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

A hissing, hurtling ribbon of pure darkness flies from your hand. A creature struck by this ray of darkness takes 1d8 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d8). An undead creature instead heals 1d8 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d8).

slime hurl

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Initiate of Ghannadaur 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: Three globs of green slime
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You conjure and hurl three roughly spherical globs of dark green slime. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack to strike a target with a slime glob (roll separately for each glob, using your best ranged attack bonus). Any creature struck by a glob is coated in a patch of green slime (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 76) and begins to experience its effects immediately. You can hit a creature with multiple globs, each of which must be dealt with separately.

The conjured green slime does not disappear automatically and must be destroyed in the normal way.

spellslayer arrow

Transmutation
Level: Assassin 2, justice of weald and woe 2, ranger 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Touch
Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, transforming it into a glowing missile that destabilizes other forms of magic. In addition to dealing normal damage, a *spellslayer arrow* deals an extra 1d4 points of damage for each ongoing spell currently in effect on the target. For example, an arrow would deal an extra 3d4 points of damage to a creature under the effects of *bull's strength*, *haste*, and *mage armor*. The arrow or bolt must be fired during the same round the spell is cast, or the magic dissipates and is lost. The projectile is destroyed even if it misses its target.

Material Component: Masterwork arrow or bolt.

symphonic nightmare

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Bard 6
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Living creature touched
Duration: 1 day/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

A creature targeted by this spell loses the ability to dream during sleep or rest. Rather, in place of dreams, the target's slumbering mind is filled with the sounds of a discordant orchestra. After the victim's first attempt to sleep, he incurs a -2 penalty on all Wisdom-based skill checks. This penalty persists as long as the *symphonic nightmare* effect maintains its hold on him. This spell affects all creatures that sleep or enter sleeplike trances; creatures without the need to sleep are effectively immune.

In addition, the creature's sleep is now haunted. It can no longer gain complete rest from sleeping or resting. The target does not regain hit points or heal ability damage naturally, nor is it able to prepare spells if doing so requires a full night's rest. The creature is, however, now immune to the *dream* and *nightmare* spells, as well as to other effects that cause nightmares (such as the night hag's dream haunting ability).

The caster can lift the effect of this curse at will, but it is otherwise difficult to remove a *symphonic nightmare* before its duration expires. A *remove curse* cast at a higher caster level than the *symphonic nightmare* spell removes it, as does a successful *break enchantment*. Otherwise, a *wish* or *miracle* is required to lift the curse.

Focus: A small statue of an opened skull within which is arranged a miniature orchestra. The quality of this component must be extraordinary, giving it a value of at least 1,000 gp.

travash-prull's bonefiddle

Necromancy

Level: Bard 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature that has a skeleton or exoskeleton

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You call up a ghostly fiddle howl in the air above the targeted creature. This howl immediately descends into the subject's body and begins to saw back and forth against its skeleton. Although the music produced is eerily beautiful, it causes intense pain and anguish to the victim. In each round of the duration, the victim takes 1d6 points of sonic damage and has a -20 penalty on all Move Silently checks; the sonic damage is considered to be continuous damage for the purposes of disrupting spellcasting. As a standard action, you can move the *bonefiddle* to another creature in range, but the new target gains a saving throw to resist the spell. If a target ever makes its saving throw, the *bonefiddle* vanishes and the spell ends. The spell's effects continue even if the target moves so you no longer have line of sight or line of effect to it, but you cannot shift the *bonefiddle* to a new target unless you have both line of sight and line of effect to the current target and to the intended target.

Material Component: A miniature silver fiddle worth at least 30 gp.

undersong

Transmutation

Level: Bard 1

Components: V

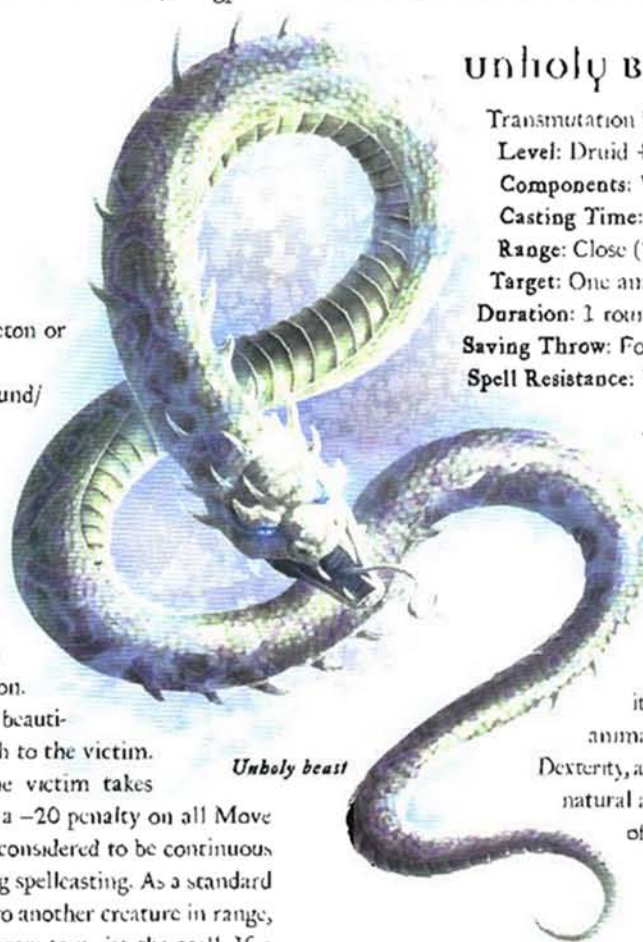
Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 minute/level

When you cast this spell, a familiar and soothing song wells up in your mind. The song does not distract you from any task at hand--on the contrary, by humming along to the tune you can focus your mind with ease. As long as this spell is in effect, you can use any Perform check in place of a Concentration check. You must decide which skill to use before any check is made.



Unholy beast

unholy beast

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Druid 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One animal of up to 1 HD/level

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

When you cast this spell, the subject creature temporarily transforms into a being of evil, serving you for the duration of the spell. The animal's limbs and face contort, it sprouts tusks and bone spurs through its skin, and its eyes turn completely black. The animal gains a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution, and a +2 bonus to natural armor. Furthermore, the damage of its natural attacks increases as if it were one size category larger. An *unholy beast* serves you as if it were under the influence of a *dominate animal* spell.

Illustration by Jason Engle

whip of thorns

Transmutation

Level: Druid 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Effect: 15-foot-long whip covered with sharp thorns

Duration: 1 round/level, or until discharged

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, a piece of vine grows into a thorn-studded whip capable of savagely ripping your opponent's flesh. You

can wield this whip as if you were proficient, and it follows all the rules for a whip except that it deals 1d8+1 points of lethal damage per strike. Any time you strike a Large or smaller opponent successfully with the whip, you can release it and entangle the creature. Doing this ends the spell, but the thorny vine continues to wrap around your enemy until the opponent breaks free with a successful Escape Artist check (DC equal to the save DC of the spell). On a failed check, the creature takes an additional 1d4 points of damage and remains entangled. On a successful check that exceeds the DC by 10 or less, the creature takes the additional damage in the process of freeing itself. A creature can also attempt to burst the vine with a DC 20 Strength check, although it takes 1d4 points of damage whether or not the attempt succeeds.

Material Component: A tiny piece of vine.

woodwisp arrow

Transmutation

Level: Assassin 1, druid 1, justice of weald and woe 1, ranger 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Touch

Target: One masterwork arrow or bolt

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell is cast upon a masterwork arrow or bolt, enabling the missile to pass through wood as though it was air, negating any cover benefit the target might enjoy because of wooden doors, tables, or stockade walls, or negating the AC modifier of a wooden shield. The spell doesn't grant the spellcaster the ability to see through wooden obstructions, so unless a *clairvoyance* spell or similar magic is already in effect, the target is treated as having concealment instead of cover. The arrow or bolt must be fired during the same round the spell is cast, or the magic dissipates and is lost. The projectile is destroyed even if it misses its target.

epic spells

The following spells were created using the special rules in the *Epic Level Handbook*. They reveal new depths of magical depravity and represent some of the most dreadful spells Faerûn has ever endured.

Aumvor's fragmented phylactery

Transmutation

Spellcraft DC: 30

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: One or more objects, including the caster's phylactery

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

To Develop: 210,000 gp; 5 days; 8,400 XP. *Seeds:* *transform* (DC 21), *ward* (DC 14). *Mitigating factors:* field specialization (-5).

This spell can only be cast by a lich. It either separates the lich's phylactery into multiple objects or expands the phylactery to include multiple objects, as determined by the spellcaster. The number of such objects can be no greater than the caster's modifier for its spellcasting ability (Charisma for a sorcerer, Intelligence for a wizard). Thereafter, destroying the lich's phylactery requires the destruction of the whole set of objects that comprise the phylactery. As long as at least one such object of the set exists, the caster cannot be permanently killed.

This spell can be cast repeatedly on a phylactery or part thereof. Each time it is cast, the number of objects that comprise the lich's phylactery can be increased by an amount equal to the caster's modifier for its spellcasting ability.

Aumvor's soulshatter

Necromancy

Spellcraft DC: 51

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 300 ft.

Target: One living creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

To Develop: 357,000 gp; 8 days; 14,280 XP. *Seeds:* *slay* (DC 25), *animate dead* (DC 23). *Factors:* creating a ghost (+8). *Mitigating factors:* seed within specialist school (-5).

For any one living creature within range, you separate soul from its body. The target is entitled to a DC 51 Fortitude save to survive the attack. If the save is successful, the creature instead takes 3d6+20 points of damage. If the save is failed, the subject's soul is dead and passes on to the afterlife, but the body remains alive.

After the successful casting of this spell, the body of the creature can then be possessed (as by a *magic jar* spell) or dominated (as by a *dominate person* spell) without resistance (automatic saving throw failure). The body retains the physical characteristics (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, skills based on those abilities, and extraordinary abilities) of the departed soul but otherwise reflects the abilities and skills of the possessor or dominator. If not possessed or dominated, the body lies dormant—alive, but lacking an animating force.

The soul can be returned to the body by means of a *raise dead* or *resurrection* spell at any time. The passage of time has no effect on the success of either spell, assuming the body is still alive.

Bonfire of insanity (ritual)

Necromancy [Chaotic, Evil, Vile]

Spellcraft DC: 217

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 1-mile radius

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

Development: 1,953,000 gp, 39 days, 78,120 XP; Seeds:

animate dead (DC 23), *slay* (DC 25); Factors: area effect (+15) to 20-ft. radius (+2) increased 800% (+32), additional 160 HD (+160); Mitigating factors: increase casting time (-20), ghouls (-10), uncontrolled undead (-10)

A bonfire is built of human bones and burned during a rainstorm while this spell is cast. The smoke from the fire rises up and mingles with the rain clouds, filling them with vile power. As the tainted water rains down and soaks the ground, up to sixty corpses within range rise up as ghouls. Even skeletal remains are affected. The corpses receive no saving throw against the spell's effects, not even if they are buried in consecrated ground.

Humanoids (including the spellcasters) of up to 80 HD that are touched by the vile rain must make a Fortitude saving throw or be afflicted with a magical disease that turns them into flesh-starved ghouls within 24 hours. The disease is resistant to all forms of magical healing less powerful than a *heal* spell.

The total Hit Dice worth of undead created from this spell, both from corpses and living creatures, is 180.

The spell does not grant the spellcaster any ability to control the undead created by the spell. These undead can be commanded, rebuked, or turned normally.

Material Component: A bonfire, at least 10 feet in diameter, made out of the remains of at least twenty humanoids. These remains are destroyed by the fire and are unaffected by the vile rain.

cataract of fire

Evocation [Fire]

Spellcraft DC: 204

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 0 ft.

Area: 300-ft.-radius cylinder, 2,000 ft. tall; see text

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

Development: 1,836,000 gp, 37 days, 73,440 XP; Seeds:

energy (DC 19), *destroy* (DC 29); Factors: increased damage die (+40), increased damage (+70), cylinder (+2), increase area (+18), maximized (+28); Mitigating factor: personal (-2)

This spell is similar to the *flame strike* spell, in that a pillar of magical fire descends upon the target. The difference is the size and destructive power of the spell, and its magical source. A *cataract of fire* delivers 500 points of damage, equally divided between elemental fire and raw magical energy, to everything within a 300-foot radius centered on the spellcaster, 250 points of damage to everything outside the 300-foot radius but within a 600-foot radius, and 100 points of damage to everything else out to a quarter-mile. The pillar reaches well into the clouds and can be used to harm flying creatures. The nature of the spell grants the spellcaster immunity to the magical damage but not the fire damage. A successful Reflex saving throw halves the damage.

The magical energy affects even magical matter, energy fields, and force effects that are normally only affected by a *disintegrate* spell, such as *Bighy's forceful hand*, *wall of force*, *globe of invulnerability*, and *antimagic field*. Such effects are automatically destroyed.

Material Component: A bronze gong, which is struck when the spell is complete. The gong is consumed in the resulting conflagration.

diluvial torrent

Evocation [Water]

Spellcraft DC: 204

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 0 ft.

Area: 20-ft.-radius cylinder of water, 100 ft. tall, drops from a height of 200 ft.; see text

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

Development: 1,836,000 gp, 37 days, 73,440 XP; Seeds:

energy (DC 19), *destroy* (DC 29); Factors: increased damage die (+40), increased damage (+70), cylinder (+2), increase area (+18), maximized (+28); Mitigating factor: personal (-2)

This spell is similar to the *cataract of fire* spell, except that a cylinder of magical water drops upon the target area. A *diluvial torrent* delivers 500 points of damage, equally divided between physical damage and damage from raw magical energy, to everything within a 100-foot radius centered on the spellcaster, 250 points of damage to everything outside the 100-foot radius but within a 300-foot radius, and 100 points of damage to everything else out to 750 feet. The nature of the spell grants the spellcaster immunity to the magical damage but not the physical damage. A successful Reflex saving throw halves the damage.

At the DM's discretion, creatures surviving the initial impact of 628,000 cubic feet of water might also be subject to drowning and/or being swept away by the resulting flood.

Material Component: A silver gong, which is struck when the spell is complete. The gong is consumed in the resulting torrent.



*Diluvial
torrent*

Horrendous dessication

Necromancy

Spellcraft DC: 118

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Area: 300-ft.-radius/level centered on the spellcaster

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half

Spell Resistance: Yes

Development: 1,062,000 gp, 22 days, 42,480 XP; Seeds: *transport* (DC 27); Factors: interplanar (+4), unwilling target (+4), area effect (+2), increase area (+16), area level dependent (+25), damage/volume level dependent (+25), augment minor magic item $\times 10$ (+40); Mitigating factor: loss of limb (-25)

This spell causes everything within the area to become desiccated—withering plants, mummifying flesh, drying up pools and ponds, and turning lush land to dust. Any living thing, not including the spellcaster, within the area takes 40 points of desiccation damage per spellcaster level.

The spell also absorbs 1,000 pounds (120 gallons) of water per caster level from any standing or moving body of water.

Casting this spell permanently withers one of the spellcaster's limbs.

Material Component: One application of dust of dryness.

Necromantic singularity

Necromancy [Death]

Spellcraft DC: 119

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 300 ft.

Area: 1-mile radius

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: Yes

Development: 1,071,000 gp, 22 days, 42,840 XP; Seeds: *slay* (DC 25); Factors: increase HD (+96), target to area (+10), area radius (+2), increase area (+36); Mitigating factor: destroy minor artifact (-50)

This powerful spell brings into being a short-lived conduit between the Material Plane, the magical Weave, and the Negative Energy Plane, allowing undiluted negative energy to spew into the world. The energy instantly slays up to 1,000 HD worth of living creatures. The spell kills creatures one at a time, in order of proximity to the singularity, until all 1,000 HD are accounted for.

Material Components: A sphere of annihilation. The sphere is destroyed by the spell.

Magic Items

Evil characters and creatures employ almost all the magic items and devices available to good beings. In addition, the items and special abilities described below have great appeal to those who like to dominate, horrify, or flay others. These items and abilities, while not necessarily evil themselves, are ideally suited to evil use.

The expanded format for the descriptions that follow is designed to add depth and detail to each item or ability. Some items have a background in the lore of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, which is provided where it applies. After the item's physical description is a prerequisite (if any) that a character must have to make use of the item, followed by details on how its effect is activated. Further game details, such as the benefit the item provides and its market price, follow thereafter.

Armor special abilities

These armor special abilities are available in addition to the special abilities given in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and other sources.

GNASHING

Armor with this property bites at a foe that grapples you.

Lore: A character who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check knows that the first suit of gnashing armor was created by the human cleric Ferstal, a worshiper of Tiamat. Her suit of gnashing full plate featured carvings of dragon heads.

Description: This armor has images of many different faces carved into it. The visages show expressions of vicious cruelty. One bares its clenched teeth in a snarl; another's mouth is open as if to bite.

In most cultures, gnashing armor is crafted to look like the region's main terrors: devils, demons, mythological creatures, or popular local or regional villains. For instance, gnashing armor made by humans living in the Nelander Isles would show scarred and vicious reavers or fearsome ogres.

Activation: A suit of gnashing armor automatically bites any opponent that is grappling the wearer.

Effect: When the wearer of a suit of gnashing armor is grappling, the carvings of faces animate and begin to bite, striving to tear at the opponent. The suit deals 1d6 points of damage to each grappling foe. The damage is considered piercing, slashing, and bludgeoning.

Aura/Caster Level: Strong transmutation; CL 11th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate objects*, variable gp, variable XP, variable days (depending on the armor being improved).

Weight: —.

Price: +1 bonus.

HIDEOUS

A suit of armor or a shield with this property helps you intimidate your enemies.

Description: Armors or shields with this property are embellished with scalps, skulls, bones, dried viscera, and other countless horrors.

This armor emits a faint odor of rancid meat and a faint illusory miasma of flies. The flies give off a buzzing sound seem to taste the embellishments of flesh and bone.

Activation: Armor or a shield with the hideous special ability automatically grants its wearer its bonus.

Effect: Hideous armor provides a +5 competence bonus on Intimidate checks and a -2 penalty on Diplomacy checks.

Aura/Caster Level: Faint conjuration; CL 4th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must have 5 ranks of Intimidate, +1,875 gp, +150 XP, +4 days (add to the cost of the armor being improved).

Variants: Two more powerful versions of the hideous special ability are sometimes used. The improved version grants a +10 competence bonus on Intimidate checks, costs +7,500 gp, +600 XP, +15 days and has a market price of +15,000 gp. The greater special ability grants a +15 competence bonus on Intimidate checks, costs +16,875 gp, +1,350 XP, +34 days and has a market price of +33,750 gp.

Weight: —.

Price: +3,750 gp.

OCULAR

A suit of armor or a shield with this property grants all-around vision.

Lore: A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check yields the fact that long ago, a small cult of humanoids living in Skullport venerated the Great Mother and her progeny. These beholder worshipers endeavored to create a variety of items to make them more like their idols.

Description: Armor and shields with this property feature multiple small eyes on stalks. At any one moment, some of the eyes are open and some are closed.

Activation: Armor or a shield with the ocular ability automatically grants its wearer its bonus.

Effect: This property grants the wearer all-around vision, making her exceptionally alert. The many eyes provide a +4 competence bonus on Spot and Search checks, and the wearer can't be flanked.

A *blindness* spell cast on the wearer negates this property.

Aura/Caster Level: Strong abjuration; CL 15th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *arcane eye*, variable gp, variable XP, variable days (depending on the armor being improved).

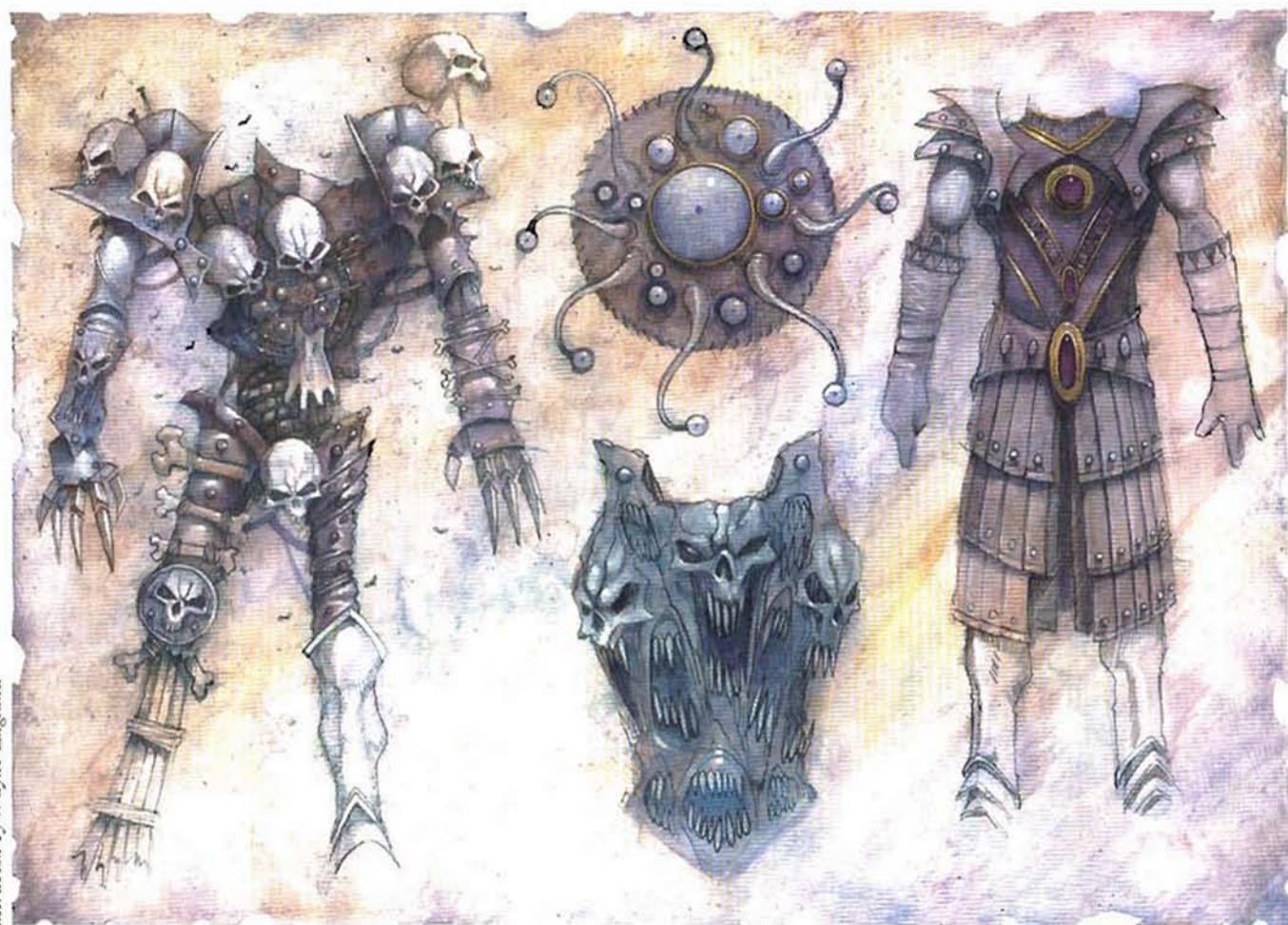
Weight: —.

Price: +2 bonus.

WARY

A suit of armor or a shield with this property improves your roguelike ability to be responsive to flanking enemies.

Description: Armors or shields with this property tend to be nondescript.



Hideous hide armor (left); an ocular shield (top); gnashing breastplate (bottom); wary leather armor (right)

Prerequisite: Improved uncanny dodge ability.

Activation: Armor or a shield with the wary ability only functions if its wearer has improved uncanny dodge.

Effect: This armor property increases your effective rogue level by four with regard to being flanked.

Aura/Caster Level: Faint transmutation; CL 5th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cat's grace*, +2,500 gp, +200 XP, +5 days (add to the cost of the armor being improved).

Weight: —.

Price: +5,000 gp.

specific Armor

The following suit of armor has served more than one evil champion since the day it was first forged.

HELLSTEEL

This dark, red-veined armor can sheath its wearer in a protective fiery aura.

Lore: A DC 20 bardic knowledge check reveals that an abishai armorsmith named Nirzayal crafted the first suit to bear the

name Hellsteel, but other similar suits have appeared since, and not all of them crafted in the fiery pits of the Nine Hells. A DC 30 bardic knowledge or Gather Information check reveals that a vengeance knight named Cordelia Flametongue (see page 71) possesses one such suit.

Description: This suit of black full plate armor is made from the scales of a remorhaz tempered in the fires of the Nine Hells. Red, marblelike veins run through it.

Activation: Activating the armor's *fire shield* ability (see Effect, below) is a free action. The *fire shield* ability functions only if the wearer is evil.

Effect: *Hellsteel* is a suit of +3 full plate that grants its wearer resistance to fire 5. Upon speaking a command word, the wearer can use a warm *fire shield* once per day. Any creature other than the wearer that touches the armor for a full round (such as by grappling or being grappled by the wearer) takes 2d6 points of fire damage per round as the metal sears its flesh.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate evocation; CL 10th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fire shield*, *resist elements*, +12,825 gp, +1,026 XP, +12 days.

Weight: 50 lb.

Price: 25,650 gp.

weapon special abilities

The following weapon special abilities are available in addition to those presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and other sources.

DOOMSTRIKE

The wielder of a doomstrike weapon can cleave into an enemy immediately upon sundering his weapon.

Description: Doomstrike weapons have blades or heads coated in a thin layer of blue-black frost or rime. In addition, they tend to have sinister yet ornate designs worked into them.

Activation: A melee weapon with the doomstrike ability only functions if its wielder has the Improved Sunder feat.

Effect: After successfully sundering an enemy's weapon, the wielder of a doomstrike weapon can cleave into the enemy, as though using the Cleave feat.

Aura/Caster Level: Faint evocation; CL 5th.

Construction: Cleave, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shatter*, +4,000 gp, +320 XP, +8 days.

Weight: —.

Price: +1 bonus.

RAVENOUS

A ravenous weapon acquires a taste for the blood of those it wounds, dealing extra damage on subsequent attacks.

Description: Ravenous weapons are adorned with teeth or fangs (real or engraved). They make terrible slurping and gnashing noises as they smash bones and carve through flesh.

Activation: A melee weapon with the ravenous ability only functions if its wielder is evil and can make multiple attacks in a single round.

Effect: When a ravenous weapon wounds a creature, it acquires a taste for that creature's flesh and blood. Subsequent attacks made against the same creature during the same round deal an extra 2d6 points of damage (of the same type the weapon normally deals—bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing). For example, Xokarus the blackguard makes three attacks with his +1 *ravenous greataxe*, hitting Andril the paladin all three times. The first attack deals normal damage, while the second and third attacks each deal an extra 2d6 points of slashing damage.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate necromancy; CL 9th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *slay living*, creator must be evil, +9,000 gp, +720 XP, +18 days.

Weight: —.

Price: +2 bonus.

SPLITTING

Any missile fired from a splitting weapon, or an arrow or bolt enchanted with the splitting ability, breaks into two identical missiles before striking the intended target.

Description: V-shaped engravings adorn a splitting weapon or splitting ammunition.

Activation: The splitting ability of a ranged weapon (must be a bow, crossbow, arrow, or bolt) only functions if its wielder has the Precise Shot feat.

Effect: Any arrow or bolt fired from a splitting weapon magically splits into two missiles in mid-flight. Both missiles are identical, sharing the nonsplitting properties of the original missile; for example, a +2 *splitting arrow* splits into two +2 *arrows* in mid-flight. Both missiles strike the same target. Make a separate attack roll for each missile using the same attack bonus.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate conjuration (creation); CL 7th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Precise Shot, *arrowsplit*, +9,000 gp, +720 XP, +18 days.

Weight: —.

Price: +3 bonus.

specific weapons

Villains and vicious characters enjoy weapons that inflict pain in creative or devastating ways. The following specific weapon is usually preconstructed with the qualities described here.

FLENSING GAUNTLET

This hideous spiked gauntlet literally strips flesh from its target.

Description: A *flensing gauntlet* is a ragged-looking, tattered glove and armband of untanned humanoid skin. When the item is activated, the fleshy tatters writhe, and bony hooks sprout from the palm and fingers. It is otherwise a +1 *spiked gauntlet*.

Activation: As a move action, curl your gloved hand into a claw to activate the gauntlets. The effect lasts for 1 round. You can activate the gauntlets up to three times per day.

Effect: A successful attack with an activated gauntlet tears a strip of flesh away from a living corporeal opponent, causing pain and trauma that weakens as well as dealing damage. This effect occurs even if the opponent is wearing armor. The opponent takes an extra 1d6 points of damage plus 1d4 points of Constitution damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage. A Fortitude saving throw negates the ability damage and halves the extra hit point damage.

Incorporeal creatures or creatures of a gaseous nature (such as air elementals) are not affected by this item.

Aura/Caster Level: Strong evocation; CL 12th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *flensing* (see page 70 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*), 8,805 gp, 680 XP, 17 days.

Weight: 1 lb.

Price: 17,305 gp.

wondrous items

The following magic items are often found among the resources of champions of ruin.

CAMELLIA OF THE BLACK LADY

A beautiful flower that beguiles—then punishes.

Lore: A character who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check knows that the Black Lady was a notorious assassin and servant of Shar. She used subversion with beauty and poise, and the scent of sweet flowers.

Description: A *camellia of the Black Lady* is a creamy-white blossom worn in the hair, taking up space on the body as a headband or helmet. On close inspection, the inner whorls of the flower suggest unsettling, depraved forms. The item has a sweet, overpowering odor that carries a considerable distance.

Activation: The flower remains perpetually fragrant and perfectly preserved. The wearer activates the blossom's *dominate person* power by choosing a humanoid target and pressing the stem (a standard action).

The *poison* effect activates automatically once the *dominate person* effect ends.

Effect: When the designated target comes within 20 feet of the wearer, he must make a DC 19 Will save (DC 21 if Selune is his patron deity) or be captivated by a *dominate person* effect. In addition, he is subjected to a *remorseless charm* effect (no save) that stills his moral conscience. The victim must follow the instructions of the wearer, no matter how dreadful those orders might be. The subject remains in the thrall of the wearer for nine days, until the *dominate person* effect is dispelled, or until the *camellia of the Black Lady* is destroyed.

When the *dominate person* effect ends (either through the duration elapsing, a *dispel magic* effect freeing the victim, or the destruction of the flower), Shar's vengeance manifests finally as a *poison* spell, dealing 1d10 points of Constitution damage immediately and another 1d10 points of Constitution damage 1 minute later. Each instance of damage can be negated with a DC 19 Fortitude save (DC 21 if Selune is the victim's patron deity).

A *camellia* can be used only once.

Aura/Caster Level: Strong enchantment and necromancy; CL 13th.

Construction: Requires Craft Wondrous Item, *dominate person*, *poison*, *remorseless charm**, 3,500 gp, 280 XP, 7 days.

Variants: A used *camellia of the Black Lady* still retains its freshness, fragrance, and interesting appearance; it has a price of 200 gp.

Weight: —.

Price: 7,000 gp.

*New spell described on page 34.

SANGUINE NOSTRUM

A powder sprinkled on the heart and mixed with the blood of an enemy.

Description: *Sanguine nostrum* appears as a simple magical powder.

Activation: The powder must be mixed with a recently killed enemy's blood and sprinkled on its heart. Preparing and consuming the heart in this way takes 3 rounds.

Effect: The powder is used to season the fresh heart of an enemy that has been dead for no more than 1 minute. If treated with *sanguine nostrum* and eaten immediately, the enemy's heart grants you great insight, as through the effect of a *moment of prescience* spell. The more powerful the enemy, the greater the benefits; the caster level of the spell is equal to the Hit Dice of the creature whose heart you consumed with the powder.

One vial of *sanguine nostrum* has one use.

Aura/Caster Level: Strong divination and necromancy; CL 15th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *moment of prescience*, 2,500 gp, 20 XP, 5 days.

Weight: —.

Price: 5,000 gp.

Major Artifact

An artifact is an extremely powerful magic item, beyond the ability of present-day spellcasters to create.

GRAY PORTRAIT

This artifact prevents its owner from suffering negative levels, ability drain, and from aging.

Lore: A DC 30 bardic knowledge or Knowledge (religion) check recalls this myth about the *gray portrait*. Long ago, almost two millennia in the past, a vain and selfish chaotic neutral follower of Sune named Belarian the Beautiful sought every means available to sustain and enhance his beauty. Firehair's creed teaches that beauty is not just skin deep, but Belarian only cared about his appearance. His self-infatuation was so great that he turned from his devotion to Lady Firehair and offered to sell his soul to any god or demon able to preserve his physical perfection. One answered, gifting Belarian with immortality and perpetual beauty through an artifact. Who created the *gray portrait*, which entity gave it to Belarian, or what eventually happened to the vain man is a matter of speculation. Over the last two thousand years, various personages have owned the portrait, but its current location is unknown.

Description: Initially only a blank canvas, the *gray portrait* becomes a picture of the owner after one week.

Activation: After an individual possesses the portrait for one week, a picture of that individual owner appears on the canvas.

Effect: The owner of the *gray portrait* does not age or show signs of aging. As long as he owns the portrait, he will appear as young and as healthy as he did when he first acquired the artifact.

When the owner of the portrait is subject to spells or effects that bestow negative levels or cause ability drain, such as *energy drain* spell or a vampire's touch, he does not suffer their effects. Instead, the portrait absorbs these debilitating effects. His image in the portrait transforms to look more haggard and depraved as it suffers the horrors that leave its owner untouched.

The portrait stores and preserves all this horrible magic. If it is ever destroyed, the owner immediately suffers all the negative effects of age, negative levels, and ability drain that the portrait has absorbed. If the owner has outlived his natural life span, he instantly dies.

Aura/Caster Level: Overwhelming abjuration and necromancy; CL 20th.

Weight: 10 lb.

Price: —.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

Evil lurks in many corners of Toril. These prestige classes furnish a broad sampling of paragons of viciousness and violence. Devoted worshipers of Malar, woodland assassins, sporting gladiators, and many other dark-hearted adventurers will find interesting options for their malevolence.

Black blood cultist

"The power of the beasts is undeniable."

—Zert of the Wild Brothers

Worse things than wolves and orcs hunt the dark forests of the North. The beastly lycanthropes known as the People of the Black Blood venerate Malar with bloody rites that claim hundreds of human, elf, and dwarf lives every year. Black Blood cultists, worshipers of these lycanthropic horrors, are drawn from the totemic barbarian tribes scattered across the northern lands. They exhibit fearsome powers drawn from the veneration of the tainted animal spirits of their masters. That their reverence for the lycanthropes goes unrewarded does not matter to the unfettered spirits of the cultists—they rage for their cruel masters and bring death to those who are not touched by the Beastlord's terrible power.

Becoming a black blood cultist

Most Black Blood cultists come from an Urthgardt barbarian tribe that has fallen under the sway of a Malar-worshipping chieftain. Still, there are cultists dedicated to Malarite lycanthrope tribes

in other parts of Faerûn—notably near the High Forest, in northern Cormanthor, and in Chult. Some barbaric nature is necessary to the pursuit of the cult's powers, and barbarian/rangers are especially potent candidates. Druids rarely want to sacrifice their studies to become worshipers of abominations, but some find the savage nature of the cultist to be an irresistible draw. Strength (for savage attacks), Wisdom (for tracking prey), and Constitution (to survive deadly melee combat) are key abilities for a Black Blood cultist.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Chaotic evil, chaotic neutral, or neutral evil

Skills: Knowledge (nature) 2 ranks, Survival 8 ranks

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Track.

Special: Ability to rage.

TABLE 3-1: THE BLACK BLOOD CULTIST

	Base				
	Attack	Port	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Feral rage (claws), damage reduction 1/silver
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Improved grapple
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Feral rage (bite)
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Scent, DR 3/silver
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Stranglehold
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Feral rage (rend)
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Improved natural attacks
8th	+6	+6	+6	+2	Savage grapple
9th	+6	+6	+6	+3	DR 5/silver
10th	+7	+7	+7	+3	Feral form

Hit Die: d12.

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot, Survival, Swim.

class features

Black Blood cultists are savage fighters whose natural attacks become more fearsome as they increase in level.

Feral Rage (Ex): Black Blood cultist class levels stack with barbarian levels for purposes of determining your rage ability. Thus, an 8th-level barbarian/4th-level Black Blood cultist can use greater rage four times per day, just as a 12th-level barbarian could.

Black Blood cultists strengthen their fingers and toughen their nails with special training. As a result, when raging, you gain two claw attacks at your highest base attack bonus. Each claw deals 1d6 points of damage plus your Strength modifier. You can use a one-handed weapon and a claw, but when doing so the claw counts as a secondary weapon (adding only half your Strength bonus to damage, and with a -5 modifier on the attack roll).

At 3rd level, you gain a bite attack when raging in addition to your two claw attacks. The claws are still your primary weapons and the bite is your secondary weapon. The bite deals 1d4 points of damage plus half your Strength modifier. You can use a two-handed weapon with your bite as a secondary attack, or you can use a one-handed weapon with your claw and bite as secondary attacks.

At 6th level and higher, whenever you hit with both of your claw attacks during a rage, you rend your opponent's flesh, automatically dealing double claw damage in addition to normal damage.

Damage Reduction (Ex): At 4th level and at 9th level, you gain damage reduction, which stacks with damage reduction from other sources. Silvered weapons ignore the damage reduction granted by levels in this prestige class.

Improved Grapple: At 2nd level, you gain the Improved Grapple feat even if you do not meet the prerequisites for it.

Scent (Ex): At 4th level, you gain the scent ability.

Stranglehold: At 5th level, you learn to snap the necks of fallen enemies, allowing you to administer a coup de grace with your bite attack as a move action.

Improved Natural Attacks: At 7th level, your natural attacks become even more deadly. Your claw attacks now deal 1d8 points of damage and your bite attack deals 1d6 points.

Savage Grapple: Starting at 8th level, you deal damage as if you had hit with all your natural weapons (including rend, if you are raging) on a successful grapple check.

Feral Form: By 10th level, you have gained great control over your bestial nature. You can now use your claw, bite, and rend attacks even when you are not raging.

playing a black blood cultist

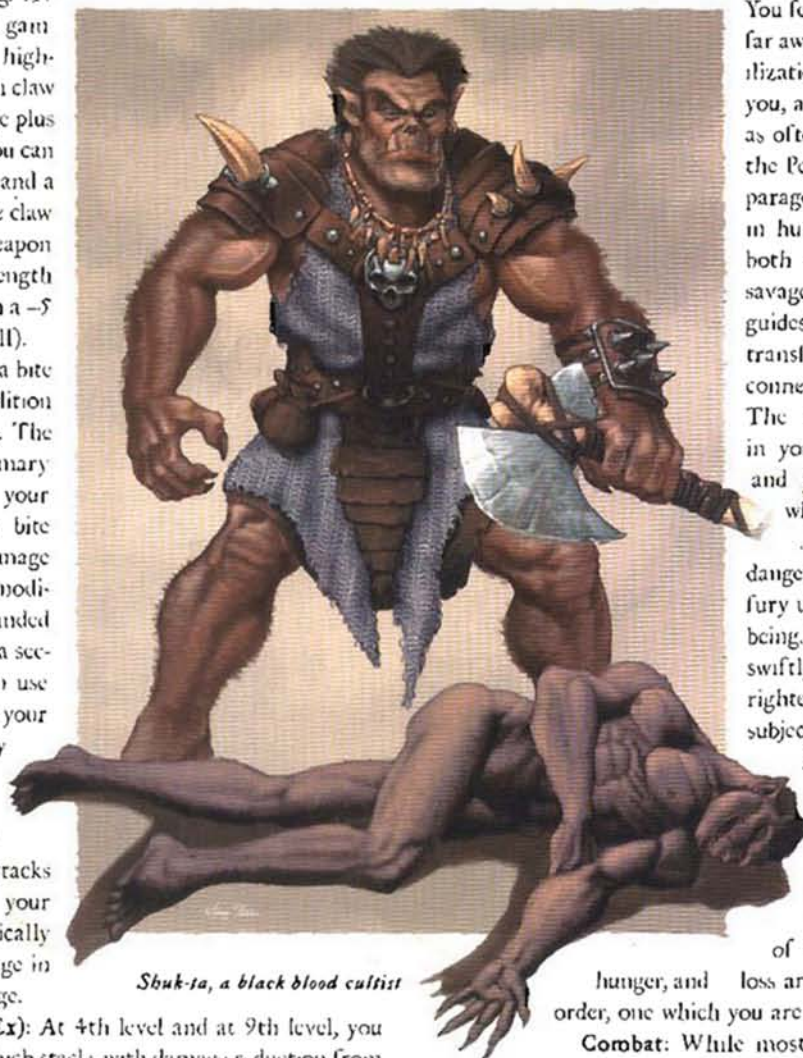
You feel most alive when you are far away from the shackles of civilization. The beast burns inside you, and you strive to unleash it as often as possible. You look to the People of the Black Blood as paragons of your ideal—beasts in humanoid form, the best of both worlds combined into a savage package. Your shaman guides your spirit through its transformation, and he is your connection to the animal inside. The most important things in your life are your territory and your tribe, wherever and whoever that might be.

You are quick to react to danger, instantly attacking with a fury unmatched by any civilized being. Threats are best dealt with swiftly—kill or be killed. The righteous transformations you subject your body to are scars of honor, seen and respected by the animals of the forest and the beasts that rule over them. Civilization holds nothing for you, and you do not share the fears of civilized creatures. Death,

hunger, and loss are all a part of the natural order, one which you are committed to protect.

Combat: While most barbarians prefer blades and clubs in combat, you would rather rend the flesh of your enemies with your own natural weapons. Your teeth can tear as big a hole in your prey as an axe or sword. You are quick to react, closing immediately with the first enemy to dare draw steel against you. Isolate that enemy, put him on the ground, and rip out his throat before moving on to the next. Melee combat is where you are most comfortable. An enemy that has ranged weapons is best avoided and ambushed, although a frontal assault, if quick enough, can take such an opponent by surprise. You've learned that it is difficult for such a foe to aim an arrow while your claws threaten to rip it limb from limb.

Illustration by Marc Sasso



Shuk-ta, a black blood cultist

By 3rd level, your melee combat skills have begun to reach their peak. You can make three attacks per round without even wielding a weapon, and you are a dangerous grappler while raging. Your damage reduction allows you to absorb blows from a grappled foe's allies as your claws and bite deal their damage. If you are working with a pack or other allies, your stealth can help you flank your enemies while they engage in combat with the rest of the characters. A feral Black Blood cultist charging out of nowhere is often enough to force even the most stalwart foes into all-out flight.

As you advance in level, your ability to both absorb and dish out damage in melee combat increases. Your rend ability makes it very difficult for any foe to grapple with you for more than a couple of rounds, while your increased control over your abilities make you a dangerous foe whether or not you have flown into a rage. You have the skills to track most foes, and to hide from those who are tracking you.

Advancement: Black Blood cultists can be found all over Faerûn; wherever the Malar-worshipping lycanthropes hold sway, humans, elves, and others look to them as the avengers of the natural world. It is most common for Black Blood cultists to be reared in the tribe or cult, thereby continuing the tradition of their forebears. A tribe always takes care of its young, even after the parents have been killed or otherwise lost. These young grow up alongside the other tribe members with no stigma attached, and often grow stronger because of their independence. Tribal Black Blood cultists are often the most savage, since they have trained from a young age in nothing but the ways of the beast.

Those not born to such barbaric ways might come to a tribal shaman in search of spiritual and physical fulfillment. These supplicants sometimes succumb to the harsh, bloody rituals inflicted upon them by the tribe to test their mettle, but others survive the tests and emerge harder and more savage than before. Almost universally, such trials include an individual hunt during which the seeker must track and slay a great beast to show that he has the favor of the Beastlord. The most severe of these trials unleash the hunter in Black Blood lands, meaning he must not only slay his quarry but avoid the retribution of the native lycanthropes as well. Those who survive are inducted into the tribe in a blood rite.

Training in the arts of the Black Blood cultist can be the most dangerous undertaking in a character's life. He toughens his body against blows by crawling through thorny brambles, clawing and biting on trees, and jumping from great heights until his bones break and heal time and time again. Using specially prepared ointments, he toughens and thickens his nails until his fingers are like claws. Many cultists file their teeth to sharp points.

Resources: Black Blood cultists can often count on plenty of aid from other tribe members when they find themselves in trouble. Of course, weak members who ask for aid too often run the risk of being abandoned or shunned by the tribe, left to fend for themselves in the most dangerous of territories. Black Blood cultists often eschew material goods, gold, and the fineries of civilized life; most of what they need they either make or take. A tribe's leader recognizes that valuable magic items can be of help to the tribe, but using too many such items can weigh heavily on a tribe member's reputation as a beast of nature.

When you do seek out magic items, you should look for magical protections that reduce the number of wounds you take in combat. Enhanced armor is helpful, but items such as *cloaks of displacement* are even better, since they can negate hits from more powerful creatures more easily. Items that boost the effectiveness of your natural attacks are good choices as well; several members of the elf tribe in Cormanthor have silver and adamantite claws with *magic fang* spells woven into them.

black blood cultists in the world

Black Blood cultists tend to be territorial predators—they are not going to run rampant over a region or the campaign world. They have been known to attack towns or groups in retribution for some crime committed against them or their home, but for the most part they are localized. Tribes are led by shamans—usually druids or sorcerers—and almost all follow a sort of totemic religion, while still venerating gods such as Malar and Talona. Characters who make enemies of a tribe of Black Blood cultists can expect to be hunted until the day they die, while those who befriend a tribe and travel with them are likely to witness brutality on levels they could never have imagined.

Organization: The Black Blood cultists found across Faerûn are some of Malar's most fanatic followers. Much like the lycanthropes they worship, the different cultist tribes are independent entities with little or no contact with others like them. Each tribe has a relationship with the People of the Black Blood in its area, although lycanthropes usually pay the cultists little attention. They do recognize the cultists' devotion to Malar and to nature, however, and so they let them roam their tribal lands where no others are allowed.

A tribe's relationship with those around it differs by region. The Chultans have very little civilization around them, and so they focus more on their worship of the region's werebats and of Malar than on bringing down defilers. The barbarians of the North are nomadic, wandering the region around the Night Trees in search of enemy tribes and caravans, which represent the civilized peoples they revile. The elf cultists of Cormanthor concern themselves with stopping the spread of the drow, who tend to rape the lands they inhabit in order to feed their ever-growing numbers.

As mentioned, tribes of Black Blood cultists are often ruled by a sorcerer or druid who claims to be an intermediary between the tribe, the lycanthropes, and the animal spirits they worship. Clerics of Malar rarely spend much time with these groups, who often prefer to train their bodies rather than engage in sacred hunts. Thus, it falls to other "holy men" to guide the barbarians in the ways of the beast. It is not for power alone that a shaman guides a tribe of Black Blood cultists. Often these individuals have had personal interactions with the Malarite lycanthropes that inspire their devotion. Sometimes they have barely survived such an encounter, and other times they have witnessed the lycanthropes meting out nature's justice to trespassers and defilers. Malarite clerics sometimes encourage the formation of a tribe as a way to gain a weapon against those who would oppose the Beastlord's

hunts. Whatever the reason for a tribe's formation, the lands in which the barbarians roam becomes deadly to those who live in opposition to the natural world.

Cultists spend most of their time training their bodies to be killing machines, and the rest of the time worshipping Malar, Talona, or local animal gods to whom they build totems and shrines. While they do not ritually hunt as often as a Malarite, the tradition of the individual hunt goes far beyond initiation into the tribe. Technically only tribal hunts are required, including those targeted against the instruments of civilization, but individual hunting is a major determinant of prestige within the tribe. Large game such as dire animals and dinosaurs is the most prestigious of all targets, and even the children of a tribe can take down a wild boar.

It is not unknown for an entire tribe to be destroyed, either by lycanthropes fed up with the tribe's intrusion upon their hunting grounds, or by heroes from a nearby city who are determined to put an end to the hunting and bloodshed. Sometimes a cultist will find cause to leave his tribe; a tribesman might also be shunned for some act that sets him apart, or for reasons of tribal politics, power, and control. At other times, a renegade cultist might seek a new pack, or might fall in with adventurers who can handle—or exploit—his animalistic temperament and bloodthirsty rages.

NPC REACTIONS

Very few people ever live to tell of an encounter with a tribe of Black Blood cultists, much less an individual member. Those that do speak only of an inhuman lust for blood and a hatred for all life.

The cultists are the enemies of all civilized creatures, whether they are found in towns, forts, or even below the earth. They have as little love for the civilizations of the Underdark as they do for those above ground. One known Black Blood cult has formed in the Underdark, where a tribe of grimlocks worships a pack of werewolves and hunt drow and duergar in the dark tunnels.

BLACK BLOOD CULTIST LORE

Characters with Knowledge (local Chult, the Daelands, or the Silver Marches) can research the People of the Black Blood or the Black Blood cultists. The most relevant information will come from victims, who are often afflicted with terrible wounds as a result of their meeting with or investigation of a tribe. Lycanthropes in disguise might intentionally mislead a character in order to draw them into a deadly ambush in tribal territory. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "They look like animals, they worship animals, they are animals."

DC 15: "A pack of shapechangers lives in this area; how the barbarians have survived so long among them is anybody's guess."

DC 20: The character picks up information about a hidden route through the cultists' lands, or a secret hideaway from which the characters could safely gather information about or strike out at the tribe.

DC 30: A character who tracks down this much information about a local tribe can get lore about a lycanthrope that might be sympathetic to the characters, some background information on the shaman of the tribe, or similar information that can help the characters defeat the barbarians more easily.

Most locals know of at least the existence of a local tribe of animal worshipers who rampage from time to time. The DM should assign a DC between 15 and 25, depending on the nature and recent activities of the tribe in question. Gaining an audience with a tribal chieftain is difficult, if not impossible, for anyone that is not close to nature (rangers, druids, barbarians, etc.). Even if an audience is granted, the chieftain might arrange a hunt or a run-in with some of the local lycanthropes to test the characters and determine Malar's will in the matter.

Black blood cultists in the game

Characters who wander into tribal lands unaware of the danger that lies therein are in for a big surprise. Even if the characters defeat an initial hunting party, or slay a lycanthrope who has been stalking them, they will then be hunted to the edges of the tribe's territory, or perhaps farther. If the characters can evade the hunt for an extended period of time, the chieftain is likely to call off the hunt and go back to his normal activities.

A player who loves the barbaric aspect of combat and doesn't mind putting his character in harm's way in order to cause grievous, personal wounds to his opponents will love this prestige class. The natural attacks of a Black Blood cultist make the character much more than just a fighter with a boost to Strength and Constitution.

Adaptation: Black Blood cultists could be adapted to any pack of lycanthropes or beast god in your campaign. Alternatively, they could worship a similar group of animal-like monsters, such as the desmodu (see *Savage Species* page 218).

Encounters: Any encounter with a Black Blood cultist is likely to be deadly for one side or the other. The savage barbarians will not flee combat, and will continue to tear into their opponents until one or the other is dead. There is little chance of negotiation with the leader of such a tribe, whose loyalties are to his tribe, his territory, and his bestial lords and god.

SHUK-TA (EL 8)

A lone cultist has been separated from his pack, and, along with his pet tiger Unt, has been taking his anger out on local villages.

Shuk-Ta: Half-orc barbarian 5/black blood cultist 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 7d12+21; hp 75; Int +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +16; Atk +13 melee (1d12+7/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +15 melee (1d6+8, claw, only when raging); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d12+7/x3, masterwork greataxe) or +15/+15 melee (1d6+8, claw, only when raging); SA rage 2/day; SQ damage reduction 1/silver, darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +8, Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +4, Ride +3, Spot +4, Survival +9, Swim +7, Flay Foe*, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Track.

*New feat described on page 20.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Rage (Ex): +4 to Str, +4 to Con, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC for up to 8 rounds.

Possessions: Masterwork greataxe, +2 leather armor, gloves of magic fang (grants +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with both claw attacks), 14 gp.

Unt: Pet tiger; hp 53; *Monster Manual* page 285. Shuk-Ta has trained Unt to perform the following tricks: attack, come, fetch, heel, guard, and seek.

KAEDTHIS (EL 17)

The chieftain of the Cormanthor tribe takes matters into her own hands after the PCs dispatch several of her tribesmen as well as a few of the lycanthropes they worship. Kaedthis travels with a dire wolf animal companion upon which she casts an *unboly beast* spell before entering combat.

Kaedthis: Drow druid 7/barbarian 3/black blood cultist 6; CR 17; Medium humanoid; HD 7d8+9d12+16; hp 128; Int +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21; Base Atk +14; Grp +20; Atk +17 melee (1d8+2/x3, adamantite battleaxe) or +19 melee (1d6+5, claw, only when raging); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+2/x3, adamantite battleaxe) or +19/+19 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws, only when raging) and +14 melee (1d4+3, bite, only when raging); SA rage 3/day, spell-like abilities; SQ animal companion (dire wolf), animal companion benefits, damage reduction 3/silver, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, nature sense, scent, spell resistance 27, trackless step, wild empathy +9 (+5 magical beasts), wild shape 3/day (7 hours), woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +12; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +7, Heal +11, Hide +7, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +7, Ride +5, Search +4, Spellcraft +8, Spot +12, Survival +14 (+16 aboveground), Swim +5; Combat Reflexes, Daylight Adaptation, Deflect Arrows, Improved Grapple, Scribe Scroll, Track.

Languages: Chondathan, Draconic, Drow Sign, Elven, Sylvan, Undercommon.

Rage (Ex): +4 to Str, +4 to Con, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC for up to 6 rounds.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level 16th.

Animal Companion (Ex): Kaedthis has a dire wolf as an animal companion. Its abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Animal Companion Benefits (Ex): Link, share spells. PH 36.

Druid Spells Prepared (caster level 7th): 0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic* (2), *detect poison*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*; 1st—*claws of the beast*⁶⁶, *entangle* (DC 15), *longstrider*, *pass without trace*, *speed swim*^{Mag}; 2nd—*barkskin*, *resist*

energy, *soften earth and stone*, *whip of thorns**; 3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *dominate animal* (DC 17), *plant growth*; 4th—*dispel magic*, *freedom of movement*, *unboly beast** (DC 18).

Possessions: gloves of magic fang, adamantite battleaxe, cloak of elvenkind, +2 wild leather armor, ring of protection +2, beaded band of Wisdom +2, periapt of proof against poison, three applications of giant wasp poison, one application of black lotus extract.

*New spell described in Chapter 2.

Kaedthis often coats her hands in poison before entering combat; she is protected from its effects by her periapt.

Tsabtarr: Dire wolf animal companion; CR —; Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Int +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +15; Atk or Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+10, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA trip; SQ low-light vision, scent, tricks; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0, Listen +7, Move Silently +4, Spot +7, Survival +2 (+6 tracking by scent); Alertness, Run, Track*, Weapon Focus (bite).

Trip (Ex): If Tsabtarr hits with a bite attack, it can attempt to trip its opponent (+11 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking attacks of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the dire wolf.

Tricks: Attack, come, defend, down, fetch, heel, seek.

Justice of weald and woe

"Make no mistake. If you harm my people or my land, I will hunt you down like a dog and make you curse the hour of your birth."

—Talanas Senthurme,

Justice of the Suldusk cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra

The justice of weald and woe is the go-to person when something unsavory—usually involving the removal of humans—needs doing. When the foes of the elves are well protected physically, magically, and politically—and the grand lords and ladies dare not sully their hands with the dirty necessities of preserving the heart of elvendom from human encroachment—it is to you, the justice of weald and woe, that they turn. With your bow in hand and the power of nature at your command, you strike, a silent, unseen sniper, solving problems a score of diplomats couldn't solve in a hundred years—then melt back into the forest before what is left of the enemy's forces even knows you were there.

BECOMING A JUSTICE OF WEALD AND WOE

As hunters of men, individuals already skilled in the hunt find themselves drawn to this class. Stealth, skill in making bows and arrows, and knowledge of the forest are the foundation upon which the class is built. Rangers are particularly well suited to become justices, as are rogues, whose sneak attack damage stacks with the sneak attack damage gained from this class. Although spellcasting ability is not a prerequisite, you will begin to learn to cast spells that

draw upon the divine power of nature itself. Druids can become justices, but one will always be less skilled in archery than his ranger and rogue colleagues, and his druid skills will never be as powerful as they would have had he remained a druid.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Craft (bowmaking) 8 ranks, Hide 8 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks, Move Silently 8 ranks, Survival 8 ranks.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow).

CLASS FEATURES

As they gain in level, justices learn the skills they will need to become the silent snipers of the forest, able to infiltrate an enemy camp in the guise of an animal or fire unseen from a concealed position.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: You gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor, or shield.

Spellcasting: You gain spells according to the tables above. You do not gain new spells in any other spellcasting classes that you might have had before you took this prestige class, but you can still cast spells from your previous class. You can only choose spells from the justice spell list; justices use their Wisdom modifier for calculating bonus spells and spell DCs.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd and 8th levels, you gain a bonus archery feat. When you gain a new bonus feat, you must choose from the following list: Deflect Arrows, Far Shot, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Precise Shot, Manyshot, Mounted Archery, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Snatch Arrows, Weapon Specialization (longbow only), Greater Weapon Focus (longbow only), Greater Weapon Specialization (longbow only). You must meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat. Use your justice level when determining whether you meet a prerequisite of a minimum fighter level. For example, a ranger 8/justice 8 would meet the requirement for Greater Weapon Focus (fighter level 8th), but not Greater Weapon Specialization (fighter level 12th).

Woodland Stride (Ex): At 2nd level, you can move through any sort of undergrowth, as the druid ability described on page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Beginning at 3rd and 7th level, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage when striking an opponent when the opponent is denied a Dexterity bonus to armor class, such as when it is surprised and flat-footed, or when you attack from a flanking position, as the sneak attack ability of rogues. Your damage dice stack with any sneak attack damage dice you might have gained from a previous class.

Lucky Shot (Su): Once per day as a free action, you can gain a +10 insight bonus to one attack roll with your longbow. You must declare the use of this ability before rolling the die.

Trackless Step (Ex): At 4th level and higher, you leave no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. You can leave a trail on purpose if you so desire.

Poison Use (Ex): At 5th level, you learn to create and/or extract natural poisons and apply them to your weapons without any danger of harming yourself.

TABLE 3-2:

THE JUSTICE OF WEALD AND WOE

	Base	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
Level	Attack Bonus	Save	Save	Save	
1st	+0	+3	+3	+0	Spells
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+1	Bonus feat, woodland stride
3rd	+2	+4	+4	+1	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Lucky shot, trackless step
5th	+3	+5	+5	+1	Poison use
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Steady hand
7th	+5	+6	+6	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
8th	+6	+6	+6	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+6	+7	+7	+3	Hide in plain sight
10th	+7	+7	+7	+3	Death attack, immunity to poison

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Disguise, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (religion), Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival, Swim, Tumble.

JUSTICE SPELLS PER DAY

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	0	—	—	—
2nd	1	—	—	—
3rd	2	0	—	—
4th	3	1	—	—
5th	3	2	0	—
6th	3	3	1	—
7th	3	3	2	0
8th	3	3	3	1
9th	3	3	3	2
10th	3	3	3	3

JUSTICE SPELLS KNOWN

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	2 ¹	—	—	—
2nd	3	—	—	—
3rd	3	2 ¹	—	—
4th	4	3	—	—
5th	4	3	2 ¹	—
6th	4	4	3	—
7th	4	4	3	2 ¹
8th	4	4	4	3
9th	4	4	4	3
10th	4	4	4	4

¹ Provided the character has sufficient Intelligence to have a bonus spell of this level.

Steady Hand (Ex): At 6th level, you become able to fire your personal longbow in melee combat without provoking attacks of opportunity. You only gain the benefit of this special ability when wearing light or no armor.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): At 9th level, you gain the ability to hide in plain sight, as the ranger ability described on page 48 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Death Attack (Ex): At 10th level, you gain the ability to study your victim for 3 rounds and then make a sneak attack with a longbow that, if it successfully deals damage, has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (your choice). While studying the victim, you can undertake other actions so long as your attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect you or recognize you as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 20 + your Int modifier) against the kill effect, it dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the target is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6+10 rounds. If the target's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once you have completed the 3 rounds of study, you must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if you do not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before you can attempt another death attack.

Poison Immunity (Ex): At 10th level, you gain immunity to all natural poisons and animal venoms. This ability differs from the druid ability of the same name, in that it only applies to poisons derived from natural plants or fungi, or from animal or vermin venoms, not to all poisons, such as venoms from celestial animals or outsiders, or poisons derived from minerals or magic.

Justice of weald and woe spell list

1st—*camouflage*¹, *detect snares and pits*, *endure elements*, *faerie fire*, *hide from animals*, *jump*, *longstrider*, *obscuring mist*, *pass without trace*, *woodwisp arrow*^{*}.

2nd—*barkskin*, *brilliant energy arrow*^{*}, *cat's grace*, *fog cloud*, *sneak*, *spellslayer arrow*^{*}, *speak with plants*, *spider climb*, *tree shape*.

3rd—*arrowsplit*^{*}, *darkflame arrow*^{*}, *darkvision*, *meld into stone*, *serpent arrow*^{*}, *spike growth*, *water breathing*, *wind wall*.

4th—*bloodfreeze arrow*^{*}, *doublestrike arrow*^{*}, *freedom of movement*, *poison*, *screaming shadow arrow*^{*}, *spike stones*, *tree stride*.

^{*}New spell described in Chapter 2.

playing a justice of weald and woe

You serve two critical roles in elf culture. You are the sniper sent to harass the enemy's forces within their own encampment or stronghold, and you are the punisher sent to the furthest ends of Toril to execute judgment against those who harm the elves

or their interests. You are a skilled hunter and a master of using your surroundings to disguise your movement. Your skill with the longbow is unparalleled, and you mix martial skill with magical ability to both mask your passage and make your arrows more damaging, frightening, and deadly. You are patient and cautious, yet relentless in pursuit of your goals.

The class originated within the Eldreth Veluuthra, an elven nationalist organization dedicated to the destruction of humankind, to deal with adventurers seeking to exploit the ruins of Myth Rhynn. Since that time, the group's training has spread throughout the organization as a whole. Within the organization, you often work alone or in concert with several other specialists whose skills compliment one another. Your missions frequently take you outside the boundaries of acceptable warfare as you are called upon to spread terror among humans or eliminate political leaders whose policies lead to human encroachment into elven forests.

Combat: Your longbow is your best friend; like a part of your arm, it never leaves your hand. Your arrows are like thoughts given form, speeding to do your will. Nature is your ally, hiding your passage, covering your steps, guarding your back, and creating arrows that terrify and slay. Your best technique is to fire from a position of concealment, surprising your opponents.

When working within a party, you operate best from the shadows. Do not be afraid to fire into melee; surprise and flank attacks are your best tactics. Although at 6th level you gain the ability to use your longbow in melee combat, you prefer to let the brawny ones do the slugging—you are a bringer of swift, silent death from afar.

Your enemies grow frustrated and begin to believe it is the forest itself that opposes them, or that a battalion of elves lies hidden in the wood, when it is only you, flitting from tree to tree, crawling through the tall grass like a snake, always striking from the flank, catching your opponents flat-footed. Mix your spells and extraordinary abilities with your uncanny longbow skill to drive fear into their hearts. Your lucky shot, death attack, and poison use abilities allow you to assassinate difficult, even heavily armored foes and leave little evidence of the manner of their death. As you are taught from the first day of your training, a single arrow, properly placed, is often more effective than a storm of bolts.

Advancement: The Eldreth Veluuthra carefully recruits prospective justices from the ranks of rangers and rogues already serving the cause, individuals who have already proven their ability to follow orders without suffering from any moral qualms. They seek individuals with superb longbow and survival skills who show promise (though not necessarily current skill) as spellcasters. These are sent to train with rangers and druids who are themselves students of the ice lich Lossarwyn (see page 83).

Your first missions as a justice are often as a longbow specialist working in concert with other skilled individuals, including rogues, rangers, sorcerers, druids and wizards. If combat begins, your job is to harass the enemy leaders and spellcasters with your arrows. You spend most of your time training with experienced rangers and druids, who put you through your magical and mundane paces, though you are also required to make extensive study of the behavior of your enemies so that you can exploit their weak-

nesses and your strengths. You should learn to handle animals, especially poisonous snakes, since they become useful to you at later levels. Finally, you undergo a thorough indoctrination in elven culture so that, when the time comes for swift deeds on behalf of your people, your hand will not falter.

As you advance in skill, you will be called on more and more often to use your skills as a spy and a hunter of men—thus you will need to concentrate on those abilities that will best serve your missions. As a gatherer of information, you will need disguise and concealment skills, plus

the ability to escape dangerous situations. A cloak of elvenkind and boots of elvenkind are indispensable pieces of your wardrobe.

As a hunter, you will need tracking ability as well as the skills of a spy, since your quarry might take you into the stronghold of those you intend to slay. Even

the best bow wears out over time, so you will need to continue to improve your Craft skill to make better weapons. You might even want to invest in the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat so that you can craft your own magic weapons, such as *arrows of slaying*. At the very highest levels, you are almost exclusively an assassin—the number of arrows in your quiver is a mark of your skill. By this time, you most often train alone, since few have the skill to teach you. You also begin to teach others your skills.

Resources: This prestige class was born from the Eldreth Veluuthra because of its special needs, and the Eldreth Veluuthra remains the primary source of justice training. Here, you can always find rangers and druids sympathetic to your cause who are willing to teach you their secrets. The organization also provides employment in organizational activities after you have completed a mission, as well as quests and missions needing the special combination of abilities that can only be found in a party of adventurers. Finally, with its connections to the elf aristocracy, the organization can sometimes provide cover, protection, and an alibi after you have completed a mission that might have agents of a slain human king hot upon your trail and screaming for your blood (but only if you are extraordinarily careless). Just don't abuse their hospitality.

Justices in the world

Justices provide a refreshing alternative to the high-and-mighty, "shining beacon of goodness" image of most elves in the game.

A justice of weald and woe makes an excellent recurring foe for a group of PCs that have stomped upon a few elven toes at some point in their career. If you have a justice in the game, provide plenty of elf-related ties to your adventures to keep the character active.

Justices live for the one-on-one encounter, the chess match of wits in impossible terrain against a worthy foe, such as an opposed ranger or assassin. The justice is a primarily a man-killer, not a dragon-slayer.

Organization:

Justices are loners, as far as others of their kind are concerned. Whenever two justices meet, friction is likely to result, since all

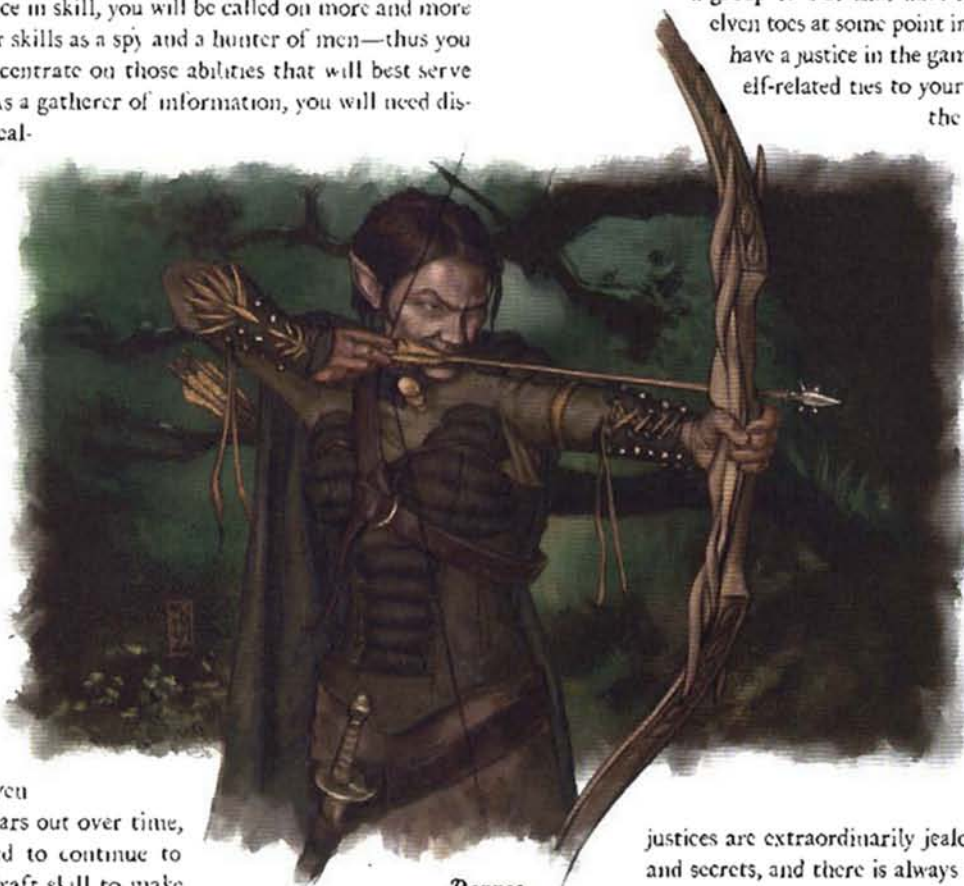
justices are extraordinarily jealous of their abilities and secrets, and there is always the chance that the justice sitting across the table from you has been sent by your last employer to prevent you from talking.

However, like all hunters, justices sometimes come together to tell elaborate lies about their exploits, or to show off their trophies.

Because their missions sometimes overlap, justices and Evereskan tomb guardians sometimes cooperate—but more often compete—for the glory of bringing tomb defilers to justice. This has, on occasion, led to open conflict between individuals, and at least one remarkable friendship.

Tylore Beneshare was a ranger who was recruited into the Eldreth Veluuthra and eventually began her training as a justice. Her political and historical advisor was Ganethra Elderwand, a tomb guardian with whom she spent many an argumentative hour while sharing the responsibility of guarding a three-thousand-year-old tomb north of Evereska. While Tylore was on a mission to ambush a Zhentarim trade caravan in the Anauroch, human adventurers from Waterdeep broke into the tomb. Their wizard, a member of the Arcane Brotherhood, summoned a demon that nearly killed Ganethra.

When Ganethra healed, he set out alone to restore his honor, recover the artifacts stolen from the tomb, and punish the thieves. Tylore arrived a month after Ganethra left but was able to track



*Danna,
a justice of weald and woe*

him by the trail of bodies he had left behind. Finally, she caught up with Ganethra outside the wizard's tower at the edge of the Ardeep Forest, where she convinced him to give up his insane plan to infiltrate the tower and slay the wizard in his conjuring chamber. Instead, they lay in wait on the road leading to the tower, and when the wizard's wife rode past accompanied by her bodyguard, Tylore dropped her from the saddle with a single arrow, while Ganethra battled and slew the bodyguard. Tylore then restrained one of the horses, and they slung both bodies across the saddle and sent it on its way.

In a rage, the wizard stormed from his tower and descended on the forest with his servants. But long had the Eldreth Veluuthra cell of the Ardeep sought a chance to eliminate this human wizard and regain the treasures he had stolen from the elven ruins in their forest; coordinating with them, Tylore set up an ambush in which all but one of the wizard's servants was slain. Sorely wounded, the wizard teleported to safety, only to discover his tower already occupied by the Eldreth Veluuthra. Hunted through the halls he had once considered his stronghold, he was finally slain in his conjuring chamber by Ganethra.

NPC REACTIONS

Because they strongly believe that the end justifies the means and will gladly slay innocents if doing so strikes a blow against a hated enemy, justices are often reviled within normal elven culture. They are a political liability of the worst kind. Nevertheless, they are an effective weapon, and one not to be tossed aside lightly. Elaborate measures are used to maintain plausible deniability.

The enemies of the elves are the enemies of the justices. Therefore, they have many enemies, both good and evil. Where one elf might see a competitor or an adversary, a justice sees an enemy to be destroyed.

Justices in the game

Because of their inherent racist attitude, justices affiliated with the Eldreth Veluuthra might be difficult to work into a group of PCs that includes humans. Some greater mission must be involved. Anywhere that elven interests are at stake is a good place to insert a justice into the campaign.

Adaptation: Justices fit fairly well into other game worlds, but you might need to design an organization that both motivates them and gives them support. They would swiftly be hunted down and destroyed by their fellow elves without some sort of political protection.

Encounters: The justices of weald and woe are swift, silent bringers of death to all who would subvert elven culture—especially humans. Justices are implacable foes driven by an almost fanatic desire to crush those deemed to be an enemy of the people, using whatever means are necessary to do so.

ATCHOCH'T (EL 11)

A former druid ambushes soldiers who clear-cut his sacred grove to build their siege engines.

Atchoch't: Male wild elf druid 8/justice of weald and woe 3; CR 11; Medium humanoid; HD 11d8+11; hp 75; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +11 ranged (1d8+3/×3, +1 composite longbow) or +11 melee (1d6+2/18-20, masterwork scimitar); Full Atk +11/+6 ranged (1d8+3/×3, +1 composite longbow) or +11/+6 melee (1d6+2/18-20, masterwork scimitar); SA sneak attack +1d6, spells; SQ animal companion (Large viper), animal companion benefits, resist nature's lure, trackless step, wild empathy +7 (+3 magical beasts), wild shape 3/day (8 hours, Medium or Large creatures), woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +11*, Ref +8*, Will +8*; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 9.

*+4 on saves against spell-like abilities of fey.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Craft (bowmaking) +5, Disguise +6, Handle Animal +6, Hide +10, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Search +10, Spot +11, Survival +12; Natural Spell, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot^{III}, Track, Woodwise^{III}.

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan, Druidic, Damaran.

Animal Companion (Ex): Atchoch't has a Large viper as an animal companion. Its abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Animal Companion Benefits (Ex): Link, share spells. PH 36.

Typical Druid Spells Prepared (caster level 8th): 0—*detect magic* (2), *guidance* (2), *purify food and drink*, *resistance*; 1st—*camouflage*^{III}, *enrage animals** (DC 13), *entangle* (DC 13), *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*heat metal*, *resist energy*, *summon swarm*, *warp wood*; 3rd—*meld into stone*, *poison* (+10 melee touch, DC 15), *sleet storm*; 4th—*cure serious wounds*, *spike stones* (DC 16).

Justice Spells Known (3 per day; caster level 3rd). 1st—*faerie fire*, *longstrider*, *woodwisp arrow*.

*New spell described on page 37.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, +1 amulet of natural armor, ring of protection +1, cloak of elvenkind, boots of elvenkind, +1 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus), masterwork scimitar, +1 human bane arrow, scroll of barkskin, scroll of tree shape.

Saess'rr: Large viper animal companion; CR —; Large animal; HD 5d8; hp 22; Init +8; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk or Full Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA poison; SQ evasion, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +9, Listen +5, Spot +6, Swim +8; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

Tricks: Attack, come, down, fetch, guard.

Poison (Ex): Bite; Fort DC 11 negates; initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con.

Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save.

DANNAE OF THE GOLDEN FROND (EL 18)

Dannae guards the Border Forest against Zhent rangers and Harper scouts alike. She relies on her owl companion to spy on interlopers from above.

Night Mask Deathbringer

"The winds of change have blown into Westgate, and I am like a whisper on that wind. The city does as I bid, as my masters bid, but all it feels is my cool kiss gently guiding its withered will."

—Emuin Nightshade

The deathbringers are the phantoms of Westgate, able to walk among mortal men during the light of day but possessed of some of undeath's most ghastly powers. They are not truly undead beings, but hybrids bred to go where the masters of the Night Masks cannot tread. As a deathbringer, you stalk the shadows of Westgate and beyond in search of ways to empower yourself and your guild. You have tasted the kiss of death, and the fear it brought you never quite leaves the back of your mind.

Becoming a Night Mask Deathbringer

Night Mask deathbringers are highly trained members of the Westgate thieves' guild who have caught the favorable attention of the vampires in charge of the organization. They undergo a gruesome ceremony involving the drinking of their own blood from the veins of a vampire lord, which changes them into monsters capable of the most vile and depraved acts. Rogues have the easiest time qualifying for this prestige class; other classes generally must stray from their primary training to achieve the necessary requirements. Dexterity (for stealth), Wisdom (for perception), and Charisma (for more powerful special abilities) are key abilities for a Night Mask deathbringer.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any evil.
Skills: Hide 8 ranks, Knowledge (local) 3 ranks, Move Silently 8 ranks.
Feat: Great Fortitude.
Special: Evasion and uncanny dodge class features.

class features

As they increase in level, Night Mask deathbringers gain more of the powers their undead masters possess, increasing their deadliness and skill.

Creature of Darkness (Ex): Animals can sense the death in you, causing them to fear your presence. As a result, all animals except for bats, rats, and wolves have their initial attitudes moved down one category when you first approach them. In addition, you take a -2 penalty on all Ride checks due to the beast's inherent nervousness at your presence.

Hesitating Stare (Su): Deathbringers can force their opponents to confront their own mortality with but a glance. This ability can be activated once per day at any time, even when you are surprised. You cast a glance at any foe within 30 feet, who must

Danna of the Golden Frond: Female wood elf ranger 6/rogue 5/justice of weald and woe 7; CR 18; Medium humanoid; HD 13d8+5d6; hp 104; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +14/+6; Grp +17; Atk +23 ranged (1d8+4/19-20/x3, *oathbow*) or +17 melee (1d6+3/19-20, +1 *short sword*); Full Atk +23/+15 ranged (1d8+4/19-20/x3, *oathbow*) or +17/+9 melee (1d6+3/19-20, +1 *short sword*); SA sneak attack +4d6, favored enemy drow +4, favored enemy humans +2, improved combat style (archery), poison use, steady hand, spells; SQ animal companion (owl), animal companion benefits, endurance, evasion, trackless step, trapfinding, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +8 (+4 magical beasts), woodland stride; AL CN; SV Fort +14, Ref +17, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Concentration +10, Craft (bow-making) +10, Handle Animal +10, Heal +8, Hide +13, Knowledge (geography) +11, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Search +10, Spot +11, Survival +13, Use Magic Device +10; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved Critical (longbow), Manyshot^{II}, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot^{II}, Track^{II}, Weapon Focus (longbow).

Animal Companion (Ex): Danna has an owl as an animal companion. Its abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Animal Companion Benefits (Ex): Link, share spells. PH 36.

Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save.

Typical Ranger Spells Prepared (caster level 3rd). 1st—*animal messenger*, *entangle* (DC 12)

Justice Spells Known (3/3/2 per day; caster level 7th): 1st—*camouflage*^{III}, *longstrider*, *pass without trace*, *woodwisp arrow*^{II}; 2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*, *spellbreaker arrow*^{II}, *tree shape*; 3rd—*arrowburst*^{II}, *serpent arrow*^{II}

*New spells described in Chapter 2.

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan.

Possessions: +4 studded leather armor, lesser bracers of archery, gloves of Dexterity +4, ring of protection +2, ring of invisibility (11 charges), *oathbow*, +1 *short sword*.

Zoud: Owl animal companion; CR —; Tiny animal; HD 3d8, hp 13; Init +7; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp -8; Atk or Full Atk +8 melee (1d4-2, talons); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +6 (+14 in shadowy illumination); Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

Tricks: Attack, come, defend, down, fetch, guard, seek, stay.

Arrow spells

A number of new spells have come out of the justice training. Designed by the ice lich Lassarwyn, these spells expand upon the justice's already formidable archery portfolio. These spells are listed in the justice of weald and woe spell list (above) and are detailed in Chapter 2.

then make a successful Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your class level + Cha modifier) or be stunned for 1 round. You can use this ability twice per day at 4th level and higher, three times per day at 7th level and higher, and four times per day at 10th level.

Light Sensivity (Ex): In sunlight or bright magical light (such as a *daylight* spell), a deathbringer is dazzled.

Spider Climb (Sp): Starting at 1st level, you can act as if you were under the influence of a *spider climb* spell (caster level equals your deathbringer class level). You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier, minimum one.

Feral Senses: At 2nd level, you gain low-light vision—the ability to see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, or similar conditions of poor illumination. You retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

At 7th level, you gain darkvision out to 60 feet.

Speak with Creatures of the Night (Ex): When you reach 3rd level, you can speak with rats, bats, and wolves as if you were under the influence of a *speak with animals* spell. This ability does nothing to affect the attitude of such creatures.

Ghost Step (Su): Once per day starting at 3rd level, you can make yourself invisible for 1 round. This is a swift action (something you can do as a free action once per round) that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. You can use this ability twice per day at 6th level and higher, and three times per day at 9th level and higher.

Lesser Blood Bond (Su): One of the deathbringer's most insidious powers, this ability helps you break down the will of her enemies. To use this ability, a deathbringer of 4th level or higher must get the target to drink three drops of her blood. She can do this by hiding the blood in food or drink, or by punning the target for 1 round and bleeding directly into his mouth. Once this condition has been fulfilled, the deathbringer can cause a *charm person* effect to come over the target by speaking directly to him. The words used are unimportant, only that the deathbringer wills the target to be friendly to him. The caster

level of the effect equals the deathbringer's class level, and the DC to resist the effect equals 10 + the deathbringer's class level + Cha modifier.

You can have a number of outstanding blood bonds, active or not, equal to your Charisma modifier. Should you exceed this limit, the oldest blood bond becomes inactive.

Sneak Attack (Ex): At 4th level and higher, you deal extra damage when you catch a foe flat-footed or flank a foe, as the rogue class feature described on page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*. Sneak-attack dice attained from multiple sources stack.

Improved Evasion (Ex): At 5th level, your pseudo-vampiric celerity grants you supernatural reflexes. You now take no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against area attacks and half damage on a failed save. You do not gain the benefit of this ability if you are helpless.

Slippery Mind (Su): When you attain 6th level, your mind is only partly mortal, allowing you to shrug off mental attacks and compulsions more easily than others. Any time you are affected by an enchantment spell or effect and you fail your saving throw, you can attempt the save again 1 round later at the same DC. You only get one extra chance to succeed per effect.

Greater Blood Bond (Su): This ability, acquired at 10th level, works just like lesser blood bond, except the target comes under the influence of a *dominate person* spell rather than *charm person*.

A deathbringer can have a number of outstanding blood bonds, active or not, equal to her Charisma modifier. Should she exceed this limit, the oldest blood bond becomes inactive.

playing a night mask deathbringer

You are a master of night's dark shadows, a deadly whisper whose passing leaves blood and destruction. Killing and robbing were not enough for you, however; you craved power, and the lords of the Night Masks were willing to share it with you—for a

TABLE 3-3: THE NIGHT MASK DEATHBRINGER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Creature of darkness, hesitating stare 1/day, light sensitivity, <i>spider climb</i>
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Feral senses (low-light vision)
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Speak with creatures of the night, ghost step 1/day
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Hesitating stare 2/day, lesser blood bond, sneak attack +1d6
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Improved evasion
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Slippery mind, ghost step 2/day
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Hesitating stare 3/day, feral senses (darkvision)
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Ghost step 3/day
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Hesitating stare 4/day, greater blood bond

Hit Die: d6.

Class Skills (8 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Craft, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Perform, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Swim, Tumble, Use Magic Device, Use Rope.

price. You must serve their wicked ends, and sacrifice a little of your humanity in the process. You can now come and go as you please, and the secrets of the night are yours to use for whatever purpose stokes the fires of your corrupted mind.

The night is your time; it is when you are at your most confident and most deadly. Still, your masters expect you to carry out missions in daylight as well, something they themselves are incapable of doing without great risk. While the sun is deadly to them, to you it is merely an inconvenience. Still, this minor hindrance is the price of a power that you never could have achieved on your own.

Combat: You prefer to strike from the shadows, where your powers are at their greatest. Setting ambushes is your tactic of choice, using your ability to speak with inconspicuous creatures and climbing where others might fall. Open combat does not serve you well, especially under the brightness of the sun. Your skills are best utilized in quick combat, with your enemy on the ground before he ever knew what hit him. When combat drags out and surprise tactics are no longer on your side, use skills such as Hide and Tumble as well as your ghost step ability to leave combat and prepare another ambush. Leaving your foes bleeding and confused is sometimes better than leaving them dead.

By 4th level you are able to better spring surprise attacks on your foes, using your abilities to become invisible and to see better in conditions of low light. Since your sneak attack damage does not increase at the same rate as a rogue's, you must rely even more on ambush tactics as your level increases. For this purpose, you must improve your Bluff and Hide skills, allowing you to attack from the darkness and then retreat there again, even after you have exhausted your uses of ghost step for the day.

At higher levels you can use your hesitating stare to stun opponents, making them vulnerable to your deadly sneak attacks. Your slippery mind and improved evasion abilities allow you to remain in close combat for longer than you could previously, and your ability to quietly slip out of combat when things turn against you has peaked. You are still not a combat master, but you can hold your own against almost any single opponent, and you have the tools to leave multiple foes scratching their heads or grasping their bloodied throats.

Advancement: Deathbringers are recruited from among the Night Masks' most shadowy and ambitious operatives. Taking such rogues into their inner circle accomplishes two goals for the vampires: It keeps the ambitious close to them where they can monitor any treacherous plans, and it gives them loyal opera-

tives who can operate above ground during the daylight hours. Occasionally a prospect from outside the guild is turned into a deathbringer. On at least one occasion a rogue who managed to pierce the vampires' inner sanctum was captured and, rather than facing a long, torturous death, agreed to become an agent of the Night Masks.

To become inducted into the deathbringer clan is to know fear and pain as you have never experienced it. The vampires have a ritual that involves bloodletting, mental domination, and phantasms from the deepest part of the subconscious. Once this ritual has been completed, a piece of the deathbringer's mortality has been replaced with the horror of living death. While this experience does not make her an undead creature, she has to live with a measure of the suffering such creatures face.

Once the ritual is complete, the deathbringer is now officially a part of the guild's highest order. While no special privileges are granted because of this, deathbringers do hold greater weight in the eyes of the guild's leaders. Most Night Mask operatives will defer to a deathbringer in matters of guild business, and they are often trusted with the most delicate and lucrative jobs. Unless they are on a mission for one of their vampire lords, deathbringers are granted no rights to petition them for aid or advice. Sometimes the vampires instruct more experienced deathbringers on how to use their newfound abilities, but most of the time they assume their creations

are smart enough to figure things out on their own.

Resources: Night Mask deathbringers work in service to the guild, and they will ask for help whenever necessary. A particularly powerful enemy or dangerous situation might bring a swarm of deathbringers down upon it, usually spelling doom for whoever has warranted such attention. Information flows freely between the deathbringers, and there is no inherent competition for the attention of their masters. Of course, some deathbringers are more ambitious than others, but personal rivalries are more often the cause of such conflicts than ambition.

You should seek magic items that increase both your stealth and speed. A ring of jumping allows you to prowl the rooftops, and shadow armor makes you effectively invisible against the darkness of night. Charisma-enhancing items make some of your special abilities even more effective, as well as facilitating access to those you wish to see drink your blood.



Lucia Calefar, a Night Mask deathbringer

Night Mask Deathbringers in the World

Night Mask deathbringers make terrible foes for any group of PCs, because deathbringers can sow seeds of distrust between even the most stalwart companions. Any characters who are active and successful in or near the city of Westgate will eventually run across a deathbringer, whether they know it or not. Westgate is the deathbringers' city, and they want to know about any potential threats or allies that come inside its walls. A deathbringer can even act as a character's first introduction to the Night Masks guild, and potentially bring him inside to work for the guild. If the PCs are looking for a contact in Westgate's underworld, they could not do much better than one of Orbakh's pseudo-vampiric minions (for more information on Orbakh, see page 41 of *Lords of Darkness*).

Organization: The deathbringers are a special arm of the Night Masks thieves' guild. Most of the time they are left to their own devices, using their extraordinary powers to further the assets and position of the guild. Occasionally, the vampires at the center of the guild's power structure command one or more deathbringers to see to an important bit of guild business. Daytime meetings and ambushes are typical of the missions to be assigned, as are those with more far-reaching goals such as the exploration of a ruin, or contact with an ally outside Westgate or along the Dragon Coast.

The deathbringers are like a plague across Westgate, one that often extends across the Dragonmere into Sembia, and south into Turmish and Amn. Its individual agents have spread out across the lands that interest the Night Masks and their masters. One deathbringer, a sorcerer/rogue named Ciodaru Arexis, has risen to such power that he now commands the respect of all the others. Little do they know that Ciodaru is actually a disguised illithid, working under a special arrangement with Orbakh. Although he is bestowed with no more power than any other deathbringer, his knowledge of the city's power structures and the intrigues he has woven throughout them means that nothing goes on in the city without his knowledge.

Ciodaru has control of the Purple Lady Festhall, the closest thing to a central meeting hall the guild maintains. A complex underneath the inn leads to a temple of Talona, where victims, kidnapped from parties at the festhall, are taken for experimentation with new diseases and poisons. The priests of the temple provide Ciodaru with an elixir that dulls the horror permeating the minds of all those who have undergone the deathbringer transformation; his success is partly attributable to the mental clarity he gets from the elixir, so no one outside of himself, the inn's owner, and the temple priests knows of this secret arrangement.

Westgate has a reputation as a city where anything can be bought for a price. This atmosphere lends itself extremely well to the Night Masks' business concerns, and even more so for its most shadowy operatives—the deathbringers. Deathbringers are active day and night, looking for new opportunities to bring wealth and power to the guild. During the day, most of their activities include scouting locations and talking to their contacts in order to stay current with the new faces in town.

Everything changes in Westgate at night. The smartest law-abiding citizens stay off the streets, where robbers and worse lurk

in every shadow. Deathbringers swarm from their hidden holes and hideaways as soon as the sun falls, ready to implement their plans and attack their enemies from the shadows. The "phantoms of Westgate" are rarely out to simply rob someone of their purse—they stalk likely targets for a blood bond and investigate their background; they track powerful adventurers who have come into town without "registering" with the guild; and they assassinate merchants and nobles who have proven troublesome to their undead masters.

Of course, the deathbringers are not without their enemies in Westgate and beyond. Chief among them are the Five Souls of the Dead, a group of Kelemvorites who are committed to rooting out the vampiric lords of the Night Masks. Since Orbakh and the Court of Night Masters rarely venture out into the city, the Five Souls have focused their efforts on the bastard creations known as the deathbringers. The Kelemvorites have already destroyed three deathbringers since coming to Westgate, and they are on the trail of at least two more. Ciodaru has managed to maneuver them into his sphere so that he can keep tabs on them, but until he is ready to confront them outright, he is forced to impede their information gathering as best he can from the shadows.

NPC Reactions

The Night Masks are an accepted, if not welcome, part of the Westgate culture and landscape. In some parts of town, guild members can talk freely about their association without care, while in others such flaunting is looked down upon. One thing is for certain, though—the authorities have long since given up trying to control the guild and its activities. Those who find themselves on the guild's good side welcome its members into their establishments, might give them preferential treatment or minor discounts on goods, and won't betray their confidence for too little coin.

Those who find themselves at odds with the guild quickly find that they must hire mercenaries to guard them and their businesses against guild activities. One might even attract the attention of a deathbringer, at which point all the mercenaries in the world might not be enough protection. Although they do not identify themselves as anything but ordinary guild thieves, deathbringers have an aura about them that clearly differentiates them from other individuals. This leads to stronger reactions in both cases, with guild-friendly NPCs being even friendlier toward deathbringers, and those with reason to fear or loathe the guild reacting strongly in the opposite direction.

Nightmask Deathbringer Lore

Characters with Knowledge (local Westgate) can research the deathbringers or the Night Masks. Investigating a deathbringer by name is certain to pique the guild's curiosity, while trying to find information on the guild itself is certain to warrant a personal visit, possibly from a deathbringer if the inquiring character is powerful or influential. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "The Night Masks have free rein in Westgate. They likely already know more about you than you do about them."

DC 15: "The Night Mask assassins are the greatest in all of Faerûn. I hear they can either kill you or bring you under their control. I'm not sure which one's worse."

DC 20: "There is a group called the Five Souls of the Dead that knows more about the Night Masks than anyone else in the city."

DC 30: A character with this level of success can find a particular deathbringer, and will also learn that the individual is somehow connected to the city's vampire lords.

nightmask deathbringers in the game

The deathbringers could be a thorn in your characters' sides for quite some time before being discovered. If the characters go to Westgate and seek a high-level audience with the Night Masks, a deathbringer would likely be their first contact.

Players who love stealth, assassination, and unusual abilities will be attracted to the deathbringer class for its combination of these elements. The discovery of new abilities at each level should be enough motivation to keep a character loyal to his vampiric masters, even if he must occasionally make personal sacrifices to them.

Adaptation: The deathbringers fit perfectly into their role as elite agents of Westgate's vampire lords. They could be former captured adversaries or specially selected lieutenants.

Encounters: Unless the characters have boldly demanded an audience with the lords of the Night Masks (or otherwise caught their attention), their first encounter with a deathbringer is likely to be short and bloody. If they manage to kill the deathbringer, this act would probably bring the full wrath of the Night Masks upon them very quickly.

LUCIA CALEFAR (EL 8)

Lucia Calefar has been blood bonding the PCs' patron in order to gain information about other nobles in her circle.

Lucia Calefar: Drow rogue 5/Night Mask deathbringer 2; CR 8; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d10+4d6+12, hp 41; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/18-20, +1 rapier) or +9 ranged (1d6/x3, masterwork shortbow); SA hesitating stare 1/day, sneak attack +3d6, spell-like abilities; SQ evasion, darkvision 120 ft., light blindness, spell resistance 18, *spider climb* 3/day, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +9, Climb +7, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +9, Gather Information +11, Hide +12, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +8, Search +6, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +6, Tumble +12, Use Rope +8; Dirty Rat*, Great Fortitude, Iron Will.

*New feat described on page 20.

Languages: Chondathan, Drow Sign Language, Elven, Undercommon.

Hesitating Stare (Su): DC 14; see page 53.

Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level 7th.

Possessions: +2 leather armor, +1 rapier, masterwork shortbow, 20 arrows, *potion of eagle's splendor*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

CIODARU AREXIS (EL 21)

Ciodaru Arexis has decided that the characters pose a threat to both his secret identity as well as the guild itself. It is time he looked into the matter personally.

Ciodaru Arexis: Mind flayer rogue 4/sorcerer 4/Night Mask deathbringer 5; CR 21; Medium aberration; HD 8d8+9d6+4d4+21; hp 119; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +14; Grp +15; Atk +20 melee (1d6+2, +1 rapier of wounding) or +19 melee (1d4+1, tentacle) or +22 ranged (1d6+4 plus 1d6 cold, +2 frost composite shortbow (+1) with +1 arrows); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d6+2, +1 rapier of wounding) or +19 melee (1d4+1, 4 tentacles) or +22/+17/+12 ranged (1d6+4 plus 1d6 cold, +2 frost composite shortbow with +1 arrows); SA improved grab, extract, hesitating glare 2/day, lesser blood bond, *mind blast*, *psionics*, sneak attack +3d6; SQ creature of darkness, evasion, improved evasion, ghost step 1/day, light sensitivity, low-light vision, spell resistance 38, *spider climb* 4/day, telepathy 100 ft., uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +16, Will +15; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Bluff +15, Climb +7, Concentration +15, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +16 (+18 acting), Escape Artist +14, Forgery +11, Gather Information +15, Hide +16, Intimidate +15, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (local) +16, Listen +15, Move Silently +16, Profession (innkeeper) +9, Sense Motive +14, Sleight of Hand +12, Spellcraft +14, Spot +15, Tumble +15, Use Magic Device +13; Combat Casting, Deceitful, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Strong Mind, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Abyssal, Chondathan, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Undercommon.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/4 per day; caster level 4th): 0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 15), *disguise self*, *magic missile*; 2nd—*invisibility*.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Ciodaru must hit a Small, Medium, or Large creature with its tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and attaches the tentacle to the opponent's head. A mind flayer can grab a Huge or larger creature, but only if it can somehow reach the foe's head. If it begins its turn with at least one tentacle attached, Ciodaru can try to attach its remaining tentacles with a single grapple check. The opponent can escape with a single successful grapple check or an Escape Artist check, but Ciodaru gets a +2 circumstance bonus for every tentacle that was attached at the beginning of the opponent's turn.

Extract (Ex): A mind flayer that begins its turn with all four tentacles attached and that makes a successful grapple check

automatically extracts the opponent's brain, instantly killing that creature. This power is useless against constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead. It is not instantly fatal to foes with multiple heads, such as ettins and hydras.

Hesitating Stare (Su): DC 16; see page 53.

Lesser Blood Bond (Su): DC 16; see page 54.

Mind Blast (Sp): At will; Will DC 18; all creatures in a 60-ft. cone are stunned for 3d4 rounds.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*charm monster* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *levitate*, *plane shift*, *suggestion* (DC 17). Caster level 8th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Improved Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save and half damage if the save fails.

Possessions: +4 studded leather armor, amulet of proof against detection and location, ring of protection +2, minor cloak of displacement, hat of disguise, +1 rapier of wounding, +2 frost composite shortbow (+1 Str bonus), 20 +1 arrows, gloves of Dexterity +4.

shade hunter

"The return of Netheril can only mean great danger for Faerûn. I must find that which they have come seeking, so that I can use it first."

—Daggerdale Thren, shade hunter

The shade hunter is a breed of adventurer who lives for the thrill of finding lost treasure, defeating ancient traps, and surviving deadly curses laid by the priests of dead gods. Part historian, part loremaster, and part grave robber, these artifact hunters will go anywhere and risk anything to acquire the next big score to add to their hoards. Netherese artifacts have always held a particular fascination for anyone interested in history and ancient arcana, and the return of the Shadovar and the floating City of Shade above Anauroch has created a frenzy of related activity all across Faerûn. The recent damage dealt to Shade's *mythal* by five of Faerûn's most powerful mages has caused the city's leaders to seek out ancient stores of Netherese magic in hopes that something will be able to repair it—and opportunistic treasure hunters have not been far behind them.

becoming a shade hunter

Shade hunters come from all backgrounds, but a love of adventure and history as well as a total disregard for personal safety are traits common to them all. Most hail from the northern regions—the Dalelands, the Western Heartlands, the North, and the Moonsea being most common—around which the ancient empire of Netheril had the most contact and influence. The free-wheeling style of the class, as well as the need for stealth and "technical expertise," best suits rogues and rangers, but occasionally a curious bard will find the lure of undiscovered caches of magic and lore irresistible; other classes find the wide range of skills and knowledge a shade hunter needs to be too demanding. Intelligence (for skill acquisition and spells), Dexterity (for evading traps), and Wisdom (for following tracks) are key abilities for a shade hunter.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any evil.

Skills: Climb +4 ranks, Decipher Script +4 ranks, Disable Device 5 ranks, Jump +4 ranks, Knowledge (dungeoneering) 6 ranks, Knowledge (history) 2 ranks, Search 8 ranks, Speak Language (Netherese), Survival 6 ranks, Use Magic Device 5 ranks.

Feat: Track

Special: Shades as a favored enemy, trapfinding class feature.

class features

Shade hunters have become amazingly adept at navigating the dungeons in which the ancient magic of Netheril is often found. They also develop special techniques for fighting the rightful heirs to this long lost treasure.

Spellcasting: When you take up this class, you gain the ability to cast a number of arcane spells. To cast a spell, you must have an Intelligence score of 10 + the spell's level. Your bonus spells are based on Intelligence, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + your Intelligence bonus. When you get 0 spells per day, you gain only the bonus spells you would be entitled to based on your intelligence score for that spell level. You cast spells just as a sorcerer does.

Upon reaching 6th level, and at every even-numbered level after that, you can choose to learn a new spell in place of one you already know. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged, and it must be at least two levels lower than the highest-level shade hunter spell you can cast.

Trap Sense (Ex): Your expertise with dungeons gives you an intuitive sense that alerts you to danger from traps, providing you with a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps. These bonuses increase by 1 every other level, up to +5 at 9th level. Trap sense bonuses gained from multiple sources stack.

Tricks of the Trade (Ex): The experiences and dangers that you have encountered in your travels begin to coalesce into a practical body of knowledge when you enter the shade hunter class. This knowledge grants you a bonus equal to your class level that can be used each day to augment ability checks, skill checks, or attack rolls. The points of bonus do not need to be applied to the same roll, and you can divide them up however you like throughout the day. You must decide whether or not to use a bonus, and if so how large the bonus will be, before you roll the die.

For example, a 3rd-level shade hunter has a total bonus of +3 to distribute throughout the day. If he finds himself in mortal combat, he could apply the entire bonus to a single attack roll, hoping to fell his enemy. Alternatively, he could apply a +1 bonus to an Open Lock check, then another +1 to a Spot check later that day, and his final +1 bonus to a Strength check to dislodge a coffer from its resting place.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): At 2nd level, you gain low-light vision. If you already have low-light vision, its effective distance is doubled, so you can now see four times as far as a human in conditions of low light.

Sense Ancient Magic (Su): Starting at 2nd level, you can detect the magical aura radiated by items of Netherese creation.

This ability functions like *detect magic*, except that it is always active unless you consciously suppress it, and it can only detect the auras of magic items that have been in the same location for at least one hundred years.

Expert Packer (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, you have learned how to get every last bit of utility out of your backpack, belt, and bandoleer. Reduce the weight of your gear by 10% for purposes of figuring your load.

Sneak Attack (Ex): At 4th level and higher, you deal extra damage when you catch a foe flat-footed or flank a foe, as the rogue class feature described on page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*. Sneak-attack dice attained from multiple sources stack.

Tools of the Trade: By 4th level, you have picked up so many knickknacks and strange tools on your travels that you've lost track of everything you own. Once per day, you can "find" any mundane piece of equipment (other than weapons or armor) worth up to 10 gp per class level somewhere on your person, having forgotten completely about it. When you do so, you must subtract an equivalent amount of gold (or other treasure—gems, jewelry, art, etc.) from your savings. If you do not have enough gold to cover the cost of the item you want, you might not find the item with this ability.

Darkvision (Ex): At 5th level, you gain darkvision out to 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, its effective distance extends by an additional 60 feet instead.

Special Ability (Ex): At 6th level, you can choose one of the following rogue special abilities: defensive roll, unproved evasion, or skill mastery (see *Player's Handbook* page 51).

Locate Ancient Magic (Su): When you reach 7th level, your ability to sense the lost magic of Netheril has grown stronger. You can now locate any magic items that have been in the same location for at least one hundred years as if you had cast a *locate object* spell and were familiar with the items in question. Activating this ability is a standard action, and you can locate multiple auras by concentrating for continuous rounds.

Improved Favored Enemy (Ex): Starting at 8th level, your favored enemy bonuses against shades increase by 2. No other favored enemy bonuses can be increased with this ability.

Blindsight (Ex): At 10th level your ability to function in the deepest, darkest dungeons grants you the ability to sense your surroundings using every available sensory input. You gain blindsight out to 30 feet.

shade hunter spell list

Shade hunters choose their spells from the following list:

1st—*camouflage*^{Unl}, *delay poison*, *detect snares and pits*, *identify*, *jump*, *longstrider*, *pass without trace*, *read magic*, *sure-foot*^{Mag}.

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *cure moderate wounds*, *detect metals and minerals*^{Unl}, *make whole*, *snare*.

3rd—*continual flame*, *daylight*, *locate object*, *neutralize poison*, *obscure object*, *remove disease*.

4th—*commune with nature*, *dispel magic*, *freedom of movement*, *nondetection*, *remove curse*, *stone shape*.

TABLE 3-4: THE SHADE HUNTER

	Base	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Save	
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0		Trap sense +1, tricks of the trade
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0		Low-light vision, sense ancient magic
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1		Trap sense +2, expert packer
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1		Sneak attack +1d6, tools of the trade
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1		Trap sense +3, darkvision 60 ft.
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2		Special ability
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2		Trap sense +4, locate ancient magic
8th	+6	+6	+6	+2		Sneak attack +2d6, improved favored enemy
9th	+6	+6	+6	+3		Trap sense +5
10th	+7	+7	+7	+3		Blindsight 30 ft.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills (8 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Concentration, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Disguise, Gather Information, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Profession, Ride, Search, Spot, Survival, Swim, Tumble, Use Magic Device, Use Rope.

SHADE HUNTER SPELLS PER DAY

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	0	—	—	—
2nd	1	—	—	—
3rd	2	0	—	—
4th	3	1	—	—
5th	3	2	0	—
6th	3	3	1	—
7th	3	3	2	0
8th	3	3	3	1
9th	3	3	3	2
10th	3	3	3	3

SHADE HUNTER SPELLS KNOWN

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	2 ¹	—	—	—
2nd	3	—	—	—
3rd	3	2 ¹	—	—
4th	4	3	—	—
5th	4	3	2 ²	—
6th	4	4	3	—
7th	4	4	3	2 ¹
8th	4	4	4	3
9th	4	4	4	3
10th	4	4	4	4

¹ Provided the character has sufficient Intelligence to have a bonus spell of this level.

playing a shade hunter

You can't wait for the next big score! The joy that some people feel at the birth of a first child or the kiss of a new bride is yours only when you uncover a stash of Netherese gold or ancient magic. Even research can be exciting when it's leading you to the "X" on the treasure map, and you'll gladly travel across the continent to hunt down a parchment or tome that has information you need. The only thing you like better than learning about the things you are passionate about is actually utilizing what you know in the field. You love the smell of oiled locks and old poison on rusty spikes, and you love the look on your enemies' faces as you snatch the prize right out from under them. Whatever loot you manage to pry from the cold, dead fingers of its former Netherese owner is added to your hoard, especially if it is an item that can help you on your next foray.

Your adventures cause you to cross paths with shades and other beings from the floating city as well as treasure hunters of all stripes. You are sometimes willing to work with others as long as you benefit from the transaction, but you worry that revealing too much information might lose you a prize you have so long sought. Still, your constant run-ins with powerful shades have taught you the wisdom of sharing combat techniques and lore about your common enemy with other shade hunters. Silverymoon, Llorikh, and Dagger Falls are popular sites to meet and trade with other treasure hunters, the first for its amazing historical and arcane resources, and the latter two for their proximity to the majority of ancient Netherese lands. The lands in between are referred to by your colleagues as either the ancient lands or the shadow triangle, depending on their disposition.

Combat: Exploring inevitably brings you face to face with some of the deadliest traps and monsters on the planet—but you're a researcher and seeker first, and a fighter second. You are at your best when attacking from an ambush, which means you must be ready for your enemies when they come. Keen senses help you, but preparation is the key to your survival. You have researched the areas into which you travel, and you always pack a surprise or two for the region's deadliest denizens. When sneaking and ambush don't work, you are still fairly proficient with bow and blade, at least enough to cover your retreat or to find the right method of attack.

When you travel without companions, it's best to hire some outside muscle to help carry the spoils of your search as well as help you stay alive. Your sneak attack ability makes it that much more effective for you to fight in a group, and such tactics help spread out the damage your foes can cause. As an inveterate traveler and explorer, you have run across a wide variety of weapons and tools created to help defend oneself from harm. Quirky items such as thunderstones and tanglefoot bags can provide not-so-obvious solutions to tough problems, including creatures that are determined to keep a Netherese hoard intact for another thousand years. You find a new use for an old item just about every time you enter a dungeon, and cataloging these tricks has helped you survive your dangerous occupation.

Your fighting abilities suffer the most for your studies, and the more knowledgeable you become about Netherese history and the dungeons where it can be found, the less formidable you

are with your sword. Against incredibly powerful foes (except for shades, which you excel at fighting) it is even more important to strike first from the shadows and flee before suffering retaliation. You've accumulated quite a bag of tricks, and you shouldn't be afraid to use its contents to escape from a desperate situation. Traveling with allies at this point becomes almost a necessity—unless you have enough gold to hire the most loyal followers money can buy.

Advancement: Scholars and adventurers from all across Faerûn travel to the lands surrounding Anauroch to research and seek out the ancient mysteries of Netheril. Anyone who grew up in those regions, however, has heard the local tales and legends of the fallen Netherese almost from the time that they are born. It is not hard for the ancient empire to get under one's skin, with this fascination—or obsession—perhaps even leading to a career devoted to unearthing its secrets. Some take the path of scholar, attending the finest schools of Waterdeep and Silverymoon, while others set out at the first opportunity to carve adventure from the remnants of a dead society. Those who do quickly find that they are not alone in their pursuit of Netheril's artifacts and legacy.

At some point in time, every shade hunter is drawn to leave his books to experience firsthand the majesty of Netheril—inevitably leading to confrontations with shades and other explorers who are seeking the same things. The Shadovar are particularly possessive over what they consider their rightful legacy, and will attempt to destroy anyone who stands in their way. This fact leads many treasure hunters to practice techniques to help them combat the shades and their mighty powers, the pursuit of which is not far off from their normal studies. Most shade hunters acquire and commission strange tools and equipment based on their experiences in the field, but no matter how much a shade hunter can learn from books and teachers, Netheril's trapmakers and arcanists still have a few surprises left for those who would seek their ancient knowledge.

It can be difficult for a shade hunter to limit his studies to the essentials, since he finds so many skills and talents necessary for survival. His tricks of the trade ability allows him to spread his skill points around a little more than a dedicated rogue or ranger, because he has a pool of available bonus points to make up for a deficiency in ranks. Since he relies on skills as an integral part of his activities, even combat, it can be a good idea to use feats to bolster these skills. Feats that grant bonuses to multiple skills are best, for the reasons stated above. Feats that help him avoid combat and damage, such as Dodge and Mobility, are almost always preferable to those that increase his combat capabilities.

Resources: Resourcefulness is a hallmark of shade hunters, and they seem to have contacts in every city from Waterdeep to Hillsfar. They can sometimes get information or advice from fellow shade hunters, or from local rangers who don't mind seeing the Shadovar take a hit. Real information about possible hoards, Shadovar dig sites, and other related info are guarded by shade hunters, however, and will rarely if ever be traded or given up without significant persuasion. It is considered good etiquette to share general tips about dungeoneering, however. New and useful tools are described or displayed, and might even be loaned for

copying from time to time. Techniques for climbing, bypassing traps, and stalking monsters are also good conversation between shade hunters, even ones that consider themselves rivals.

With their focus on lost magic, it is no wonder that shade hunters employ quite a bit of magic themselves. Items that aid stealth such as *cloaks of elvenkind* and *rings of invisibility* are popular, as are those that allow for a quick getaway in times of trouble. *Boots of striding and springing* are almost an essential tool, allowing for quick movement and providing the ability to jump over chasms, pit traps, and other obstacles.

shade hunters in the world

Shade hunters travel the northern reaches of Faerûn in search of artifacts and lore from the ancient civilization of Netheril. They regularly interact with remnants of the most magical society the world has ever seen, and often spread this knowledge, intentionally or not, to Faerûn's living mages. They provide a convenient foil to the shades, who are now scouring their ancestral lands for magic that will help them reestablish the Netherese empire and make the lands inhabitable again. Although they might be doing the countries of Faerûn a favor by denying power to the shades, their motives fall well short of being altruistic. Most shade hunters believe that the Shadovar have returned for a purpose, and they want to find out why so they can wield the power first.

Organization: Shade hunters are a diverse and independent lot. When they are doing research or training in a city, they are likely to help one another and pass along information not directly related to a recent find. There is a camaraderie between them born of their mutual fascination with history, Netherese lore, and the thrill of the hunt. They tend to frequent the same haunts in cities across Faerûn, from libraries in Silverymoon to taverns in Waterdeep and brothels and thieves' guilds in Mulmaster. They hope to pick up some tidbit of information from fellow shade hunters—even if they aren't forthcoming about their recent activities, a glimpse of a book paged through or map examined might provide valuable clues. As the nights wear on, they gather to drink and share stories and lore. Even bitter rivals engage in these sorts of meets, although their storytelling is often competitive or meant to dredge up the failures and embarrassments their rivals have suffered in the past.

Aside from doing research and swapping stories in taverns, shade hunters busy themselves preparing for the inevitable journeys that will, they hope, lead them to the riches of Netheril. If other shade hunters or treasure seekers know a shade hunter is preparing to leave, that individual must often take precautions against being followed. A favorite tactic of the half-elf Cantius Valer is to hire a lookalike to leave town the day before he sets out, causing would-be trackers to head in the opposite direction while he leaves town undetected, usually under cover of night.

Once a shade hunter sets out, he doesn't turn back for any reason other than to save his hide. He will stay in the field for as long as necessary, turning over every stone in search of the secret hoard he knows is there.

When he finds a hoard that has already been claimed or runs into a shade dig site, a shade hunter acts proactively to recover the treasure he believes is rightly his. He will use guerrilla tactics against a dig site, attempting to disrupt the operation enough to drive the shades away. If fresh tracks lead away from a site, a shade hunter will follow them and ambush those who beat him to the punch. As in all situations, however, should things turn sour, retreat is an easy option.



Loughlin Hale, a shade hunter

npc reactions

It's hard to miss a group of adventurers coming into town—they spend gold like water, usually make a mess of the place, and have a penchant for uncovering trouble where there was none before. Shade hunters are no different, although they tend to look for trouble outside town rather than in the middle of it. Still, they are a sight to see, with their overstuffed backpacks and jangling bandoleers, and they always bring interesting tales and items to delight children and tavern patrons alike.

Shade hunters are often seen as aloof and distracted because they are often lost in thought about a recent exploit or future endeavor. They are often excellent storytellers, however, and have picked up a millennium's worth of legends to recount.

Shades, obviously, have a very strong dislike of shade hunters. Rival artifact hunters and treasure seekers can be jealous at times, but all such individuals share a kinship that allows them

to overcome petty rivalries quite easily. Merchants and arcanists love shade hunters for the stories and strange objects they bring back from their adventures, but town leaders often fear the evil that such explorers often dredge up in their wake. More than once, a shade hunter has unwittingly unleashed some demon or other trapped terror, only to skip town before he even realizes what devastation he has caused.

shade hunter lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local Anauroch, Dalelands, High Forest, the North, Shadovar, Silver Marches, or Western Heartlands) can research Netheril and the shade hunters. A character with contacts among any adventuring shades can get quite a bit of information, and asking around at libraries and arcane shops can prove fruitful as well. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "Treasure hunters come through here all the time. Give the inn down the road a try; the tavernkeeper used to be one himself."

DC 15: "They don't so much as hate the shades as they want their power. Find a shade dig site, and you'll find a shade hunter lurking nearby."

DC 20: The character hears about a shade hunter that has been in town for some time preparing for a journey, or they are put on the trail of one who left not too long ago.

DC 30: At this point the character gains information about specific shade hunters, shade operatives who might be seeking to assassinate a hunter, or even uncover a hidden cache of equipment, maps, and plans that was left behind by a shade hunter who never returned from his last journey.

shade hunters in the game

Shade hunters can be anywhere you want them, even outside the normal areas of exploration. After all, the sources of ancient Netherese lore are not confined to the northern regions, they are just concentrated there. Shade hunters can be used as an excellent source of knowledge and lore, and might even lead characters to old dungeons that have long since been "cleared of anything of interest." These dungeon experts can play the role of mentor to a rogue, ranger, or even a bard, and can provide specialized equipment from all over the world. Whether used as a mentor, a sage, or a fence, a shade hunter is a fun and intriguing personality to interact with.

Players who enjoy the challenge of dungeons filled with traps and gold will enjoy playing a shade hunter, as will those who crave the power of ancient Netheril. Those who prefer skill use to combat will be well served by the class as well.

Adaptation: Shade hunters could be hunting the descendants and magic of any lost empire in your world.

Encounters: Shade hunters generally shy away from combat unless they are trapped or their enemy has a treasure they covet. When they do fight, they are liable to call upon all sorts of dirty tricks in order to win the day.

LOUGHLIN HALE AND COMPANY (EL 8)

A fledgling shade hunter mistakes the PCs for enemies. Loughlin assures the characters that all will be well if they just hand over the loot. Backing him up are his hawk animal companion and a pair of hired thugs named Garyn and Sogar (use the 3rd-level human fighter statistics presented in Table 4-16 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 117).

Loughlin Hale: Half-elf rogue 2/ranger 4/shade hunter 1; CR 7; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d6+4d8+1d8+14; hp 46; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +9 ranged (1d8+4/x3, +1 composite longbow with +1 arrows); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19-20, masterwork longsword) or +7/+7 ranged (1d8+4/x3, +1 composite longbow with +1 arrows); SA favored enemy shades +2, sneak attack +1d6; SQ animal companion (hawk), animal companion benefits, combat style (archery), evasion, low-light vision, trapfinding, trap sense +2, tricks of the trade +1, wild empathy +4 (+0 magical beasts); AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2, Climb +7, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +7, Disguise +3, Gather Information +7, Jump +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +7, Search +11, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (Netherese), Spot +11, Survival +10 (+12 underground or following tracks), Use Magic Device +7 (+9 with scrolls); Cosmopolitan, Endurance^{II}, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot^{II}, Track^{II}.

Languages: Chondathan, Elven, Netherese.

Animal Companion (Ex): Loughlin has a hawk as an animal companion. Its abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Animal Companion Benefits (Ex): Link, share spells. PH 36.

Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save.

Ranger Spell Prepared (caster level 2nd): 1st—longstrider.

Shade Hunter Spells Known (1 per day; caster level 1st): 1st—detect snares and pits, identify.

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, amulet of natural armor +1, masterwork longsword, +1 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus) with 20 +1 arrows, 2 masterwork daggers, boots of striding and springing, type II bag of holding, potion of spider climb, masterwork thieves' tools, climber's kit, everburning torch, 10 caltrops, vial of acid, 2 thunderstones, tanglefoot bag, flask of oil, 50 ft. of silk rope, 100-gp pearl (material component for identify spell), pouch containing 48 gp.

Spirit: Hawk animal companion; CR —; Tiny animal; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -10; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d4-2, talons); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ low-light vision, tricks; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +14; Weapon Finesse.

Tricks: Attack, come, defend, down, fetch, guard, seek, stay.

RATIK (EL 15)

The krinth Ratic will let nothing stand in his way as he battles time in a race to find a cache of Netherese artifacts that will allow the shades to repair their floating city.

Ratic: Krinth rogue 5/ranger 3/shade hunter 7; CR 15; Medium humanoid (krinth); HD 5d6+3d8+7d8+5; hp 119; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +11; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d4+2 plus 1d6 fire/19–20, +1 flaming dagger) or +19 ranged (1d6+4/x3 plus 1d6 cold, +2 frost composite shortbow with +1 arrows); Full Atk +13/+8/+3 melee (1d4+2 plus 1d6 fire/19–20, +1 flaming dagger) or +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d6+4/x3 plus 1d6 cold, +2 frost composite shortbow with +1 arrows); SA favored enemy shades +2, sneak attack +4d6; SQ combat style (archery), darkvision 120 ft., expert packer, improved evasion, locate ancient magic, low-light vision, sense ancient magic, tools of the trade (70 gp), trapfinding, trap sense +5, tricks of the trade +7, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +4 (+0 magical beasts); AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +18, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climb +10 (+12 with ropes), Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +15, Escape Artist +12 (+14 with ropes), Gather Information +8, Hide +4 (+6 in shadowy conditions), Intimidate +3, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +13, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +15, Search +13, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Netherese), Spot +13, Survival +8 (+10 underground or following tracks), Swim +6, Tumble +11, Use Magic Device +16 (+18 with scrolls), Use Rope +9; Alertness, Dodge, Endurance^{II}, Improved Initiative, Nimble Fingers, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot^{II}, Track^{II}, Weapon Focus (shortbow).

Languages: Chondathan, Drow Sign, Dwarven, Elven, Netherese, Orc, Undercommon.

Improved Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save and half damage if the save fails.

Krinth Traits: +1 bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities with the shadow descriptor; +4 bonus on saving throws against fear effects; cannot become shaken.

Shade Hunter Spells Known (4/4/2 per day; caster level 7th): 1st—*camouflage*^{III}, *identify*, *longstrider*, *pass without trace*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *detect metals and minerals*, *make whole*; 3rd—*locate object*, *obscure object*.

Possessions: +3 slick studded leather armor, +1 flaming dagger, +2 frost composite shortbow (+1 Str bonus) with +0 +1 arrows, ring of protection +1, boots of striding and springing, cloak of resistance +2, bag of holding type IV, ioun stone (clear spindle), wand of cure moderate wounds (24 charges), potion of gaseous form, masterwork thieves' tools, climber's kit, 4 sunrods, vial of acid, vial of antitoxin, 4 smokesticks, 2 tanglefoot bags, 5 tindertwigs, 2 flasks of oil, magnifying glass, grappling hook, 50 ft. of silk rope, 50 ft. of hemp rope, pouch of five pearls (100 gp each; material components for *identify* spells), sack containing 500 gp.

Thayan gladiator

"I've wielded every weapon man and dwarf have invented, but nothing compares to these."

—Elak, minotaur gladiator, while cleaning the gore of his last opponent off his horns

Popular and skillful gladiators fill the arenas of Faerûn from Calimshan to the Dragon Coast, but the brutal Thayan gladiators are the best of the best. Thayans see the misery of humans day in and day out, so they demand more out of their entertainment. The slave pits of the Red Wizards and the tharchions (the civil rulers in Thay) are filled with monsters and humanoids from around the realms—the sharper the claws and the longer the horns, the better. Minotaurs and lizardfolk from the Thayan plateau, yuan-ti from the Jungles of Chult, wemics and gnolls from the Shaar—all of these creatures fight in the arenas of Thay's cities. The greatest and most vicious of these fighters are sometimes pulled out of the pits to serve a Red Wizard or other powerful master; the weak are left to fight and die.

becoming a thayan gladiator

Thayan gladiators are taken from all over Faerûn by slavers who know the captives will fetch a high price on the plateau. Some, however, enter the gladiatorial contests voluntarily, either to avoid work they find frustrating or demeaning or to attempt to win a better life as a Red Wizard's guard or an adventurer. For creatures of a more savage nature, the arena might be the only place where they can revel in their true nature without being killed on the spot for their transgressions. Most gladiators are fighters or barbarians, although a few levels in rogue can grant additional mobility and teach them dirty tricks. Strength (for brutalizing opponents), Dexterity (for avoiding blows), and Constitution (for withstanding assaults) are key abilities for a Thayan gladiator.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Focus (natural weapon).

Special: Must possess at least one natural weapon.

Special: Must undergo a ritual developed by the Zulkir of Transmutation that grants the class its abilities.

class features

Thayan gladiators train to kill quickly and efficiently with their natural weapons.

Improved Natural Attack: When you enter this class, choose one of your natural weapons to gain the benefits of the Improved Natural Attack feat. The natural weapon you choose is affected by the rest of the abilities you gain through advancing in this class.

TABLE 3-5: THE THAYAN GLADIATOR

Level	Base				Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Improved natural attack, study opponent
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Improved critical, natural armor +1
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Stunning critical, silver strike
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Natural weapon focus
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Imbue natural weapon, natural armor +2
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Adamantine strike
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Savage strike
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Natural armor +3, natural weapon mastery
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Magic strike
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Imbue natural weapon

Hit Die: d12.

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Bluff, Climb, Intimidate, Jump, Sense Motive, Spot.

Study Opponent (Ex): You prefer to circle your opponents before engaging them in melee, searching them for weaknesses and noting the way their bodies move. You can study any opponent within 30 feet as a standard action for a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1 round). For each round you study, you gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and AC during the round that you first engage them in melee combat.

Improved Critical: At 2nd level, your improved natural attack gains the benefit of the Improved Critical feat.

Natural Armor: Beginning at 2nd level, your natural armor improves by 1 point to help you withstand the awesome blows of your gladiatorial opponents. At 5th and 8th levels, your natural armor improves by an additional point.

Stunning Critical (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, any time you make a successful critical hit with your chosen natural weapon, your enemy must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15 + your Str modifier) or be stunned for 1 round.

Silver Strike (Ex): At 3rd level, attacks from your chosen natural weapon overcome damage reduction as if they were silvered weapons.

Natural Weapon Focus (Ex): At 4th level, you gain the ability to make an additional strike at a -5 penalty with your chosen natural weapon when you use a full attack action.

Imbue Natural Weapon (Su): At 5th level, your chosen natural weapon gains a special ability as if it were a magic weapon. Choose one special ability from the following list and apply it to your natural weapon(s): flaming, frost, ghost touch, shock, or thundering.

At 10th level, the ritual you underwent upon becoming a Thayan gladiator grants you a final power from the following list to apply to your chosen natural weapon: anarchic*, axiomatic*,

disruption, flaming burst, icy burst, shocking burst, speed**, unholy, or wounding.

*In order to choose one of these, the Thayan gladiator's alignment must match the appropriate ability (the character must be chaotic to choose anarchic or lawful to choose axiomatic).

**The effect of this ability stacks with the additional attack gained from the natural weapon focus ability (see above).

Adamantine Strike (Ex): At 6th level, attacks from your chosen natural weapon overcome damage reduction as if they were adamantine weapons.

Savage Strike (Ex): At 7th level, the critical multiplier for your chosen natural weapon increases by one. Thus, if you had a critical multiplier of $\times 2$, it would become $\times 3$; if it was already $\times 3$, it becomes $\times 4$.

Natural Weapon Mastery (Ex): Starting at 8th level, the extra attack you gain from natural weapon focus is at your highest base attack bonus.

Magic Strike (Ex): At 9th level and higher, attacks from your chosen natural weapon overcome damage reduction as if they were magic weapons.

playing a thayan gladiator

You have become a finely honed killing machine, spraying the blood of your opponents across the dirt floors of arenas from Eltabbar to Surthay. Not surprisingly, you want to escape slavery—it chafes at you as roughly as the collar they place around your neck—but as long as you are someone else's property, you might as well enjoy it as best you can. Occasionally one of your comrades gets his freedom, or as close to it as you could dream, and this hope gives you the strength you need to fend off the vicious creatures they pit you against when Arena Day rolls around.

Your master also uses you as a political and social weapon, since a successful gladiatorial stable can open many doors in Thayan society—and bankrupt rival owners as well. Regardless, the attention is good, and occasionally you are invited to leave the pits and mingle with the men in red. They show you off like a trophy, and marvel at the cold stare that you give them as they analyze your flesh and bone. Losing in the pits means death, and that is a fate you are not ready to accept.

Your ultimate goal is escape, or at least to be set free from the pits to once again taste the open air. The most successful gladiators become the personal guard of the red-clad wizards and scheming bureaucrats who own the fighting stables. You have learned to either love or hate the one who owns you, and while the latter emotion might be more satisfying, it is the former that leads to freedom. You look up at the minotaur guardian in the Red Wizard's box, as he looks down on the pits where he once fought, and you dream that one day it could be you up there in his place.

Combat: You cut a more imposing figure on the battlefield than an average member of your race. You are larger, stronger, and faster than most, and your natural weapons have developed into intimidating tools that frighten your opponents. Ranged combat is not your forte, although you are not quick to close

with an enemy that might have an advantage on you. You prefer to circle for a bit first, gauging your opponent's strengths and, more important, his weaknesses. Once you enter combat, you do not break off. You look for the quickest way to get your hands around your opponent's throat, to claw, bite, or gore him until he cannot rise from the arena floor.

You do not always fight alone in the arena, and you can appreciate the benefits of having an ally at your side. If you are a rogue, you should look to maximize your sneak attack opportunities by pouring skill points into Tumble, allowing you to more easily flank opponents when a friend is nearby. Focusing all your attacks on a single opponent allows you to minimize the dangers you face in the arena. Power Attack and Weapon Specialization help you in this regard, while Cleave can grant you extra attacks when you most need them. One thing you have learned in the arena, however, is never to turn your back on your friends; they might just be waiting for the opportunity to settle an old score.

As your skills peak, you are able to make powerful strikes that stun opponents who, because they pose no threat, allow you to focus your attention elsewhere—perhaps at the yuan-ti attempting to turn your flank. Just don't get caught between two enraged opponents, or your fighting days will quickly come to a bloody end.

Advancement: Thayan gladiators are taken from all across Faerûn and brought to the plateau to be used as slaves. They might not make it into the pits directly, being used for physical labor or muscle for a while before being sent to train as a gladiator. In some cases it is the savage nature of a slave that forces his master to keep him in the dungeons. Once there, the gladiator is put in a cage, sometimes with creatures of the same race, depending on their temperament. This is where he stays until his first Arena Day, when the gladiators are armed as their masters see fit and sent out to fight. This day, called the "blooding," is an important one for the gladiators, although most do not know it.

Those who survive their blooding are given their own cells and offered equipment and training facilities. The quality and nature of such boons varies from arena to arena, and owners can provide supplemental equipment to their fighters as they desire. Some owners prefer to fully equip their fighters, provid-

ing whatever weapons and armor they need to win the day on the arena floor. These are the most competitive owners, often politically motivated tharchions or successful merchants with leadership aspirations. They want to see their stable of fighters triumph over all comers, and often wager large amounts of gold, magic, or favors on the outcome of the battles. Gladiators with a generous master are in a tricky situation—the more successful they are, the more lavish the gifts are likely to be, but the chances for freedom under these circumstances diminish with each victory.

Once you start down the path of the Thayan gladiator, there is no turning back. The training you undergo turns your body into a weapon more deadly than any sword, spear, or axe. You can never be disarmed, and you no longer rely on the craftsmanship and magic of others to increase your power. You can enchant your body in ways that no others can—and in a land ruled by powerful wizards, that can make you more valuable than gold.

Resources: As mentioned, a slave's owner often provides him with the necessary tools to be successful in the arenas. This is doubly true for those gladiators who have been withdrawn from the fights to serve their masters elsewhere; a tharchion or Red Wizard using a gladiator as a bodyguard or loyal treasure seeker has every reason to make sure such servants are well equipped.

Nearly any mundane item will be readily available to you should you require it, and magical goods can be procured with little trouble. Thay is a land of magicians and merchants, brimming with anything an adventurer might need.

Your natural weaponry is sufficient to overcome almost any enemy, so when you seek out magic items you should look for protective items such as magical armor or *amulets of natural armor*. A *cloak of displacement* or *ring of blur* is a good investment that can keep you safe from enemies with even more fearsome physical attacks than your own, although you don't encounter such foes very often. There is generally little time for potions in your line of work, but having a healing potion or two handy for times when arena medics can't get to you will be to your advantage.



Grogan Dal, a Thayan gladiator

Thayan gladiators in the world

Thayan gladiators are among the most fearsome bodyguards and adventurers in Faerûn. They have been conditioned to serve their masters faithfully and to enjoy the art of combat to an almost sadistic point. When not fighting in the pits of Thay, they can be found accompanying Red Wizards and other important Thayan luminaries both inside their country as well as on trips to cities far and wide. When a Red Wizard is assigned to a distant enclave, he often takes some or all of his gladiators, for personal safety and to present an intimidating front to any who would think of attacking the enclave.

Organization: Gladiatorial contests are among the most popular entertainments in Thay. The downtrodden population never passes up a chance to watch even more aggrieved souls battle each other in the pits. The games also offer those with less power than a zulkir and less influence than a tharchion an opportunity to compete in the politics of Thay. An apprentice red wizard or merchant can actually elevate his status by building a successful stable of fighters and then wagering on the outcome of the fights. Of course, the tharchions still have an advantage in these dealings—they control the nature of each fight, and can introduce elements to tip the advantage in their favor. Such underhanded tactics are a time-honored tradition in Thay, and no competitor begrudges his host these little games.

Gladiators who are incredibly successful, or who show a determined will above and beyond their fellows, are often chosen by the zulkirs to be the recipients of magical experiments designed to improve their prowess inside the arena. Their strong bodies and weak minds are a perfect combination for the arcane rituals performed by the Red Wizards. Indeed, some of the rituals created ages ago by Druxus Rhym, the zulkir of Transmutation, to bestow upon the first Thayan gladiator his amazing powers, are still in use. Ever since that time, the most successful gladiatorial stables have paid for their most promising fighters to undergo the ritual that will (hopefully) allow them to grow into fearsome beasts.

When they are first captured, potential gladiators are beaten, told they will be killed, and generally mistreated. Those that are not shaken by this initiation are the most apt to survive. Once he has proven himself in the arena, however, things change quite rapidly—he is moved to a private cell and given food, water, and the opportunity to bathe and dress his wounds. Most gladiatorial stables have their own healers, and while many of these are not clerics, their skills keep the gladiators fresh and healthy for the next fight. Gladiators that do not show signs of rebelliousness are often granted access to weapons and armor as well. In their down time, the gladiators that aren't caged up mill about underneath the arena, either training or spending leisure time with cards, dice, and other games. Friendships among gladiators are rare, however, since they could be pitted against one another at any time.

One enterprising merchant named Varouk Pital uses the arena as a method to train treasure hunters, who he sends out after rumored artifacts and valuables. He treats his gladiators well, so

that when he offers them their freedom they will work for him with no hard feelings. So far his gambit has been successful, and he hasn't had to defend himself against a grudge-holding slave. His mercantile interests have more than doubled since he started participating in the games, and this bounty is well defended by his stable of former gladiators. That's not to say he hasn't lost any valuables along the way—some of his fighters never return, and entire groups have been lost to traps and monsters while searching for lost gold.

NPC reactions

The common folk of Thay love to either cheer or jeer the Thayan gladiators. On the one hand, they are seemingly in even a worse position than the craftsmen and laborers that fill the stands. The gladiators are fighting for their lives on an almost daily basis, and most of them are beasts to begin with. On the other hand, gladiators are a source of amusement for those who rarely find any joy in their everyday lives. Some of the gladiators and stables decorate themselves and their equipment with bright colors, feathers, or other distinctive garb, allowing spectators to wager on their favorite team or fighters.

When they are encountered outside the arena—a rarity unless they are free—gladiators are typically greeted by awe and fear. Sometimes a stable will be paraded through town on its way into the arena, and on the way out again if they were particularly victorious. During these parades the crowd often throws either rotten fruit or tokens of respect at the gladiators, who are either chained together or visible in barred cages atop horse-drawn carts. A rival stable might attempt to assassinate gladiators during these parades; when this happens, the streets are littered with the bodies of those who were caught in the storm of swords, claws, and blood.

Thayan gladiator lore

Characters with Knowledge (local Thay) can research the Thayan gladiators and the arenas they fight in. They can get basic information of the fights from fans by combing the streets and taverns, while more detailed information will have to come from a gladiator or the owner of a stable. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "The gladiators are the most privileged (poorest) class of slaves in Thay. They get treated the best (worst), have the most (least) freedom, and often (never) win their freedom."

DC 15: "There is more than meets the eye to the gladiators. Their owners use them to settle feuds, curry favor, and gain the upper hand in the constant political maneuverings that are a part of the daily life of Thay."

DC 20: The character learns of a secret entrance to the arena dungeons, or learns the location of an upcoming secret meeting between free gladiators.

DC 30: A character who tracks down this much information about the local gladiatorial scene could learn of a plot by the local tharchion to kill a hated rival's prized gladiator, a planned

breakout that could cause the deaths of dozens of innocents, or the secret identity of a Harper agent that has infiltrated the ranks of a red wizard's stable.

Thayan gladiators in the game

The characters could be visiting a Thayan city on Arena Day, or be there to see a parade of gladiators come into or leave the city. The characters might be contacted by one of a gladiator's comrades, who needs help to spring the fighter from the dungeons, or an escaped gladiator might look to join up with a party that can successfully smuggle him out of Thay before he is tracked down.

Players who like monstrous characters will particularly enjoy this class, since it allows them to take their character's natural advantages and make them more powerful and interesting. The ability to add weapon qualities to natural attacks offers the chance to make a unique PC that will be remembered long after the campaign is over.

Adaptation: Any world with monstrous characters and an oppressive society with gladiatorial games could have developed the rituals to make their fighters more impressive and exciting. It helps if the society in question can tolerate free monstrous humanoids wandering the streets and serving as bodyguards and enforcers.

Encounters: Thayan gladiators are not trusting, and they intimidate others to get what they want. Meeting a band of stalwart adventurers that refuse to take any lip from the gladiator might be enough to provoke combat—or a respectful interest.

ESSPECH (EL 8)

A lizardfolk Thayan gladiator named Esspech escorts his master across town, while the PCs track a map that the merchant has on his person.

Esspech: Male lizardfolk barbarian 5/Thayan gladiator 1; CR 7; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6d12+9; hp 63; Int +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d6+2, claw) or +7 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d4+1, bite) or +7 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA rage 2/day, study opponent +1; SQ hold breath, trap sense +1, improved uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +9, Sense Motive +1, Survival +4, Swim +7, Improved Natural Attack (claw)¹, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw).

Language: Draconic.

Rage (Ex): +4 to Str, +4 to Con, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC for up to 6 rounds.

Study Opponent (Ex): See page 64.

Hold Breath (Ex): Esspech can hold his breath for 52 rounds before he risks drowning.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Cannot be flanked and can be sneak attacked only by a character with at least twelve rogue levels.

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, gloves of mighty fists +1 (acts as amulet of mighty fists +1), potion of cure serious wounds, potion of blur.

GROGAN DAL (EL 20)

An escaped gladiator named Grogan Dal decides that he doesn't want the party spreading news of his whereabouts.

Grogan Dal: Minotaur fighter 6/Thayan gladiator 10; CR 20; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6d10+10d12+91; hp 232; Int +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 12, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +22; Grp +32; Atk +31 melee (1d12+14 plus 1d6 electricity/x3, +3 shocking cold iron greataxe) or +30 melee (2d6+10 plus 1d6 electricity/19-20/x3, gore); Full Atk +31/+26/+21/+16 melee (1d12+14 plus 1d6 electricity/x3, +3 shocking cold iron greataxe) and +28 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d6 electricity/19-20/x3, gore) or +30/+30/+25/+20/+15 melee (2d6+10 plus 1d6 electricity/19-20/x3, gore); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA adamantite strike, magic strike, natural weapon mastery, powerful charge 6d6+9 plus 1d6 electricity, savage strike, silver strike, study opponent +1, stunning critical; SQ darkvision 60 ft., imbue natural weapon (shock, shocking burst), natural cunning, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +3, Jump +10, Listen +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Spot +7; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (gore), Improved Natural Weapon (gore), Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus (gore), Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Focus (gore), Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Language: Giant.

Powerful Charge (Ex): When Grogan charges, his gore attack deals 6d6+9 points of damage plus 1d6 points of electricity damage.

Study Opponent (Ex): See page 64.

Natural Cunning (Ex): Immune to maze spells, cannot get lost, and cannot be caught flat-footed.

Possessions: +2 breastplate of electricity resistance, +3 shocking cold iron greataxe, helmet of mighty horns +2 (acts as amulet of mighty fists +2), gauntlets of minotaur power (special gauntlets that provide a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength), ring of protection +1, amulet of protection from arrows (1/day, CL 7th), 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of displacement, potion of mirror image, potion of invisibility.

vengeance knight

"You've crossed my employers, and I'm here to make you pay."

—Kade Steele of Athkatla, a vengeance knight

Vengeance knights roam the Lands of Intrigue in search of those who have committed acts of treachery against their employers, the Knights of the Shield. As a vengeance knight, you

are a master of steel, as comfortable in your heavy plate armor as others are in courtly vestments or adventuring clothes. The sword is your weapon of choice, and you use it well to intimidate and eliminate the enemies of the Knights. Vengeance knights often wear fearsome helmets or emblazon their armor with symbols that strike fear into the hearts of their enemies before steel is even drawn.

becoming a vengeance knight

Vengeance knights are specially trained warriors who have pledged their service to the Knights of the Shield, a group of politicians and merchants with influence in governments from Athkatla to Calimport. They are a special breed of enforcers used by the organization to cow their enemies into compliance. Fighters most often become vengeance knights, but blackguards and former paladins also make good fits because of their heavy armor use, horsemanship, and martial prowess. Strength (for melee combat), Constitution (for staying power), and Charisma (for intimidation) are key abilities for a vengeance knight.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Lawful evil, lawful neutral, or neutral evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Intimidate 6 ranks, Ride 4 ranks, Sense Motive 2 ranks.

Feats: Iron Will, Weapon Focus (any sword).

Special: Proficiency with heavy armor and heavy shields.

class features

As they increase in level, vengeance knights become more and more effective in the use of their armor and in dealing damage to those who have hurt them.

Armor Training (Ex): As a vengeance knight, you always wear the heaviest armor available to you, and thus you learn to wear it more effectively through training. Your armor check penalty imposed by heavy armor and shields for all skills except Swim is reduced by 1, and you can don your armor as if you had help (although you still require a servant to help you don half-plate or full plate).

At 6th level, your armor check penalty for armor is reduced by 3, and you can make a DC 15 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued from sleeping in your armor. In addition, you take only half the normal movement penalty for wearing heavy armor.

At 10th level, you have truly mastered the art of wearing heavy armor. You can now sleep in your armor without penalty, and your armor check penalties for armor are reduced by 5. In addition, you can don half-plate or plate mail without assistance, although it takes twice the indicated time.

Bringer of Vengeance (Ex): As an agent for the Knights of the Shield, you are often called upon to avenge some slight or to send a message to an enemy of the organization. Whenever you have a specific target, you gain the indicated bonus on Intimidate, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks when using these skills

against your target. In addition, you gain the indicated bonus on all attack rolls and damage rolls against the target.

Counterstrike (Ex): Vengeance knights visit pain upon those who would hurt them. As a result, you gain the indicated bonus on all melee attack rolls and damage rolls against any creature that damaged you in the previous round. This bonus stacks with that from your bringer of vengeance ability.

Improved Shield Bash: At 2nd level, you gain the Improved Shield Bash feat, even if you do not meet the prerequisites.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd and 9th levels, you can choose a bonus feat from the fighter's bonus feat list.

Arcane Backlash (Su): Any time you successfully save against any arcane spell when you are the spell's only target, the original caster takes the indicated amount of nonlethal damage as you lash the energies of his failed spell back at him.

playing a vengeance knight

You were a cruel warrior before, but the Knights of the Shield have taught you to control and focus your cruelty toward their own ends. When you walk into a new town, you know that you are the most dangerous person there. Other people are there simply to give you information and get out of your way. You relish your reputation as a juggernaut, and you will never stop until your job is done.

The Knights of the Shield (see page 150 of *Lords of Darkness* for more information on this organization) employ as many vengeance knights as possible at any one time. Vengeance knights are stationed throughout Tethyr, Amn, and Calimshan so that their masters' revenge can be carried out swiftly, and in some cases by more than one agent. Recruits are gathered from the Knights' pool of informants and enforcers, a few of whom

TABLE 3-6: THE VENGEANCE KNIGHT

	Base				
	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Armor training, bringer of vengeance +1
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Counterstrike +1, Improved Shield Bash
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus feat
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Arcane backlash 1d6
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Bringer of vengeance +2
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Improved armor training
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Arcane backlash 2d6
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Counterstrike +2
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Bonus feat, bringer of vengeance +3
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Arcane backlash 3d6, superior armor training

Hit Die: d10.

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Craft, Gather Information, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (local), Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Spot.

are granted access deeper within the organization by virtue of their talent and temperament. The individual members of the Knights of the Shield each have in their control a small number of vengeance knights, who are sometimes used for purposes outside the purview of the group as a whole. This is not to say that all such knights are not available to the whole membership; the relationship is more like that of a mentor and a student than a master and a servant.

Combat: Vengeance knights are masters of melee combat, using their single-mindedness to harry an opponent until he is down before moving on to the next one. Your comfort and mobility in heavy armor gives you a defensive advantage over your foes, and your awesome blows can take down many foes with a single stroke. If you can engage your enemies on horseback, all the better, since your improved ability to ride in heavy armor makes it easier to utilize the bonus you receive against grounded enemies. Many vengeance knights focus on feats such as Power Attack and Cleave to better improve their melee power, while others focus on mounted feats such as Mounted Combat and Ride-By Attack. Vengeance knights who bear a shield often use feats such as Improved Shield Bash and Shield Charge^{EW} to give them a surprising weapon in their arsenal should they ever find themselves without their favorite weapon.

As you gain levels and your opponents get tougher, you must focus on feats that maximize your damage potential, such as Power Critical^{EW} and Spirited Charge. Great Cleave is useful for taking down multiple weaker foes, but feats such as Improved Sunder will help you get rid of the most powerful foes first, a task you relish. Since you deal maximum damage to opponents that strike you, it is essential that you are able to take hits.

It's more advantageous to square off against a single opponent rather than many, even though doing that often pits you against the most dangerous foes on the battlefield.

Things are the same for you at higher levels. You should continue to increase your damage potential with feats such as Improved Critical. Acquiring magic items that improve your Will save is important to maximize your arcane backlash ability, and magic armor is a must. The more powers you can bestow upon your armor, the more feared and unstoppable you will become.

Advancement: Vengeance knights are drawn from among the most capable warriors that work for the Knights of the Shield. Most often these individuals do not know for whom they truly work—the Knights do not always wish their motivations and plans to be traced back to them. Regardless, an invitation to become a vengeance knight is one not to be taken lightly. The Knights offer a chance for a character to become larger than life, a

sanctioned bully with the power and resources to force weaker beings to do his bidding.

The initial offer generally consists of a place to live and train in the techniques of heavy armor and devastating melee combat. Several recruits often train together, living in a common area that has all manner of equipment and facilities available for their

use. During this time, the Knights also gauge the recruits' psychological makeup and their willingness to serve.

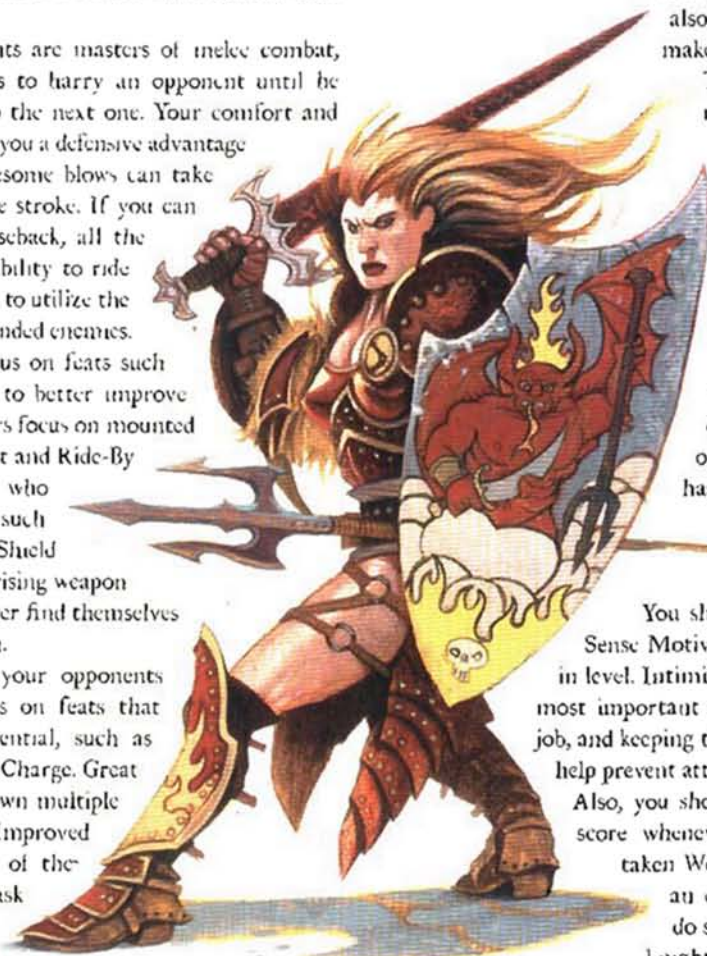
They feed them information and misinformation that serves to confuse the identities of their employers and their true motivations. This is done so that the vengeance knights come around to seeing their employers in a favorable light and their cause as just; this makes it much easier to inspire the hatred and zealotry necessary to create single-minded instruments of terror. Once a vengeance knight has been properly prepared, he is sent out into Faerûn as the voice and presence of the Knights of the Shield.

You should keep your Intimidate and Sense Motive skills polished as you advance in level. Intimidating a foe or informant is the most important aspect of a vengeance knight's job, and keeping the local population in check can help prevent attempts to get rid of the character. Also, you should try to raise your Strength score whenever possible. If you have not taken Weapon Specialization, it is worth an extra level of fighter or two to do so before entering the vengeance knight class.

Resources: Vengeance knights are arrogant fighters, and they don't like help.

When a vengeance knight is on a mission for the Knights of the Shield, he considers it his personal duty to intimidate, shake down, or murder his target. If another vengeance knight is sent for the same purpose, the two might openly clash. A vengeance knight might bring his friends along for support, but he insists on doing the killing himself. That said, vengeance knights working the same territory (both stationed in Darromar, for instance) will assist each other with information or specialized gear for missions on which they do not conflict.

A vengeance knight's sword and armor are his most prized possessions. They allow him to carry out his duties in the most brutal and direct fashion, and are the core of his combat capability. Since a vengeance knight must never flinch from confrontation, he should focus on purchasing enhancement bonuses and special qualities for his armor as quickly as possible. Spell and energy resistances are good for neutralizing enemy spellcasters, while



Cordelia Flametongue, a vengeance knight

fortification provides protection against the lucky shots of his inferior opponents. Shields can similarly be upgraded, but focusing on shield-specific enhancements such as arrow deflection is a better idea.

vengeance knights in the world

The vengeance knights are a prestigious arm of the Knights of the Shield, for whom each knight works solely. They are not so much a group as a conglomeration of individuals with similar training who perform missions for individual members of the larger organization. The Knights of the Shield are a clandestine group with mercantile and political interests all around the lands of Amn, Calimshan, and Tethyr. Individual members take "ownership" of a vengeance knight, whom they can then dispatch at their whim to cajole stubborn merchants or eliminate particularly troublesome enemies. While the Knights of the Shield are subtle in their machinations, their vengeance knights take great pride in being forthright and direct when carrying out their duties.

Organization: Every vengeance knight is linked to a particular member of the Knights of the Shield, known as his patron. A patron has little authority over another member's vengeance knight, and cannot call him away from his duties, or even force him to obey commands. A patron might "loan" his vengeance knight to another patron for a short period of time in exchange for another favor. Vengeance knights are often played against one another as proxies in internal power plays within the Knights of the Shield. One might be manipulated into embarrassing his patron, a situation that often leads to the death of the vengeance knight in order for the patron to save face.

Patrons use their vengeance knights for a variety of purposes. The most common use is the shakedown of a politically troublesome enemy, usually either a popular but unaffiliated candidate or an out-of-control ally. Merchants who do not play by the Knights' rules are also often targeted, although this turn of events can lead to larger issues if the Runden or Shadow Thieves have business with the individual. Sometimes a public assassination or severe beating can be an effective tool, even if the target has nothing to do with the issue at hand.

Although every vengeance knight serves a patron, he is not required to always be at his patron's beck and call. Most vengeance knights are released into an area that coincides with their patron's interests, and then left to their own devices until they are needed.

Vengeance knights are powerful enough that they often hire themselves out to other wealthy patrons, although their allegiance always lies first with the Knights of the Shield. Some find a group of allies with complementary skills to adventure with, taking treasure from humanoid strongholds or exploring ancient catacombs and abandoned ruins. Not all vengeance knights are active in this way, however. At least one is known to reside in a villa in Riatavin, where he indulges in a variety of pleasures in between assignments. He is a popular guest among the city's

younger nobles, most of whom are far removed from the trade and politics that make up the knight's unpleasant business.

This vengeance knight, Korben Slade, is known as The Rigar, a nickname derived from a popular leisure game played in Amn, of which Korben is a master. The Rigar was already an experienced adventurer when he was offered a position within the Knights of the Shield. His past earnings were enough to set him up in relative luxury while he awaited assignments, and his stipend as a vengeance knight covers some of his more exotic expenses. His villa features all manner of exotic creatures from around Faerûn, as well as several monsters he collected during his adventuring days. He sometimes uses these monsters to intimidate those who have displeased his patron.

As stated, The Rigar prefers to spend his time among the young nobles of the city. The fact that his business sometimes puts him at odds with the area's older merchants and politicians makes him wary of forming friendships among that group. His parties are always well stocked with the finest food and drink, and he even invites an associate of his to bring the pleasures of Sharras to the gatherings.

The young nobles, in turn, look up to The Rigar and constantly question him about his adventures. He embellishes his tales enough to keep his audience interested, and never seems to run out of fodder for his stories. A quick tour of the more exotic monsters in his villa confirms his more outlandish yarns, and the monsters' keeper, a wily, one-eyed half-orc named Crill who used to travel with The Rigar, throws in his own reminiscences from time to time.

Korben Slade is a powerfully built man; his arms are as big as an ogre's, and he stands almost six and a half feet tall. He wears only half-plate armor when called to duty, a personal touch that adds to his mystique. His black-bladed longsword only leaves its sheath when blood is going to be spilled, a last resort in The Rigar's mind. He knows that his presence is tolerated in Riatavin partially because he keeps the young nobles out of trouble, so he prefers to conduct his business through intimidation rather than bloodshed.

Some of the other vengeance knights look upon The Rigar in disgust, believing him to be an indolent who sullies their ranks with his hedonistic lifestyle and aversion to bloodshed. None of the other knights have taken action against him—if for no other reason than that he is among the most powerful of them—but words have flown on more than one occasion, and Slade's patron has been questioned by other members of the Knights of the Shield from time to time. While no formal code binds the knights, The Rigar's death would provoke action by his patron, leading to the death of whoever perpetrated the act.

npc reactions

When a vengeance knight appears, everyone knows something bad is going to happen. Even those who are not familiar with the knight's line of work cannot ignore his battle gear and grim determination. Easily cowed members of the local populace will be immediately friendly to the knight, while those with whom the knight might have business will be indifferent or even hostile

as they try to keep the knight at bay. Savvy tavernkeepers and merchants know that they can freely overcharge a vengeance knight, whose single-minded drive makes no price unpayable, and no price hike likely noticed.

Local authorities are rarely happy to see a vengeance knight show up in their jurisdiction. It's bad enough when adventurers come blowing through, bringing trouble more often than not, but a vengeance knight makes trouble that doesn't end when he leaves. Since the knights target successful merchants and politicians, the stir a visit causes tends to linger for days or even weeks, and can mean the loss of one of a community's most beloved or beneficial citizens.

vengeance knight Lore

Characters with Knowledge (local Ann, Calimshan, or Tethyr) can research the vengeance knights or the Knights of the Shield. An encounter with a vengeance knight is sure to make the characters curious, whether or not they are his intended targets. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: "It is an unwise man who crosses the Knights of the Shield."

DC 15: "The Knights of the Shield have specialized enforcers, called vengeance knights, who wreak havoc upon their foes."

DC 20: "Each vengeance knight has a patron within the Knights of the Shield. The easiest way to get to a knight might be through his patron, and vice versa."

DC 30: A character with this level of contacts can find a particular vengeance knight, and will also know the knight's patron within the larger organization.

vengeance knights in the game

A vengeance knight can enter the game either during one of his missions or as a foreboding character present in a new location. If on a mission, the knight could enter a domain familiar to the characters, perhaps being sighted at their favorite inn.

The chance to become a vengeance knight should appeal to players who like to be a part of larger organizations, as well as those who like to throw their muscle around. A vengeance knight's duties to his patron should only occasionally interfere with the goals of the character's party, but they can serve as excellent tools for the DM to provide adventure hooks that interest the other characters as well.

Adaptation: Any group could employ specially trained enforcers. The class is especially appropriate for political and mercantile groups, but could also include thieves' and wizards' guilds, slavers, or even brutal governments.

Encounters: The appearance of a vengeance knight could signal trouble for the PCs, or it could simply be a chance encounter as the knight moves on toward another unlucky soul. Vengeance knights are not shy about gathering information, so it is quite likely that the PCs will become involved, in one way or another.

ROGE DANON (EL 6)

Roge Danon is on his way to find one of the town's wealthier merchants, when he stops in to the local alehouse to gather information and satisfy his thirst. Angry after a couple drinks, he picks a fight with one of the characters.

Roge Danon: Male human fighter 5/vengeance knight 1; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 48; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5/19-20, masterwork longsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+5/19-20, masterwork longsword); SA bringer of vengeance +1; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Ride +9, Sense Motive +5; Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Language: Chondathan.

Bringer of Vengeance (Ex): See page 68.

Possessions: masterwork half-plate, masterwork heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, *potion of cure light wounds*, 84 gp.

CORDELIA FLAMETONGUE (EL 14)

Cordelia Flametongue has been sent to kill the PCs' employer, and she will not hesitate to go through the PCs to get to him.

Cordelia Flametongue: Human fighter 6/vengeance knight 8; CR 14; Medium humanoid; HD 14d10+56; hp 141; Init +1; Spd 25 ft.; AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +14; Grp +17; Atk +18 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 flaming trident) or +15 ranged (1d8+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow with +1 arrow); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 flaming trident) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow with +1 arrow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with trident); SA bringer of vengeance +2, counterstrike +2; SQ arcane backlash 2d6, resistance to fire 5; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +5, Knowledge (local) +8, Ride +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Spot +3, Swim -1; Improved Critical (trident), Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Skewer Foe, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialization (trident).

*New feat described on page 22.

Languages: Alzhedo, Chondathan.

Bringer of Vengeance (Ex): See page 68.

Counterstrike (Ex): See page 68.

Arcane Backlash (Su): See page 68.

Possessions: *Hellsteel* (+3 full plate; see page 41 for a full description), +1 heavy steel shield, +1 flaming trident, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 +1 arrows, *amulet of health* +2, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 58 gp.



EVIL ORGANIZATIONS

Evil is often experienced randomly, like weeds sprouting up between the cracks of a civilized society. In some places, however, evil is carefully cultivated, nurtured, and able to do great harm. Evil organizations are often looking for new recruits: innocents they can corrupt, or powerful characters who can further their goals.

cult of the dragon

The Cult of the Dragon is a fellowship of men and women across Faerûn who believe the prophecies of their founder, Sammaster, a crazed archmage and fallen Chosen of Mystra. He revealed through the translation of obscure prophecies that the fate of all the nations of Faerûn was to be ruled by undead dragons. Starting from the time of his discovery of this prophetic vision, Sammaster gathered to him necromancers and others who could assist in preparing for their version of Faerûn's future. Their first goal was the creation of a dracolich, or undead dragon, a task they first accomplished in 902 DR. The rituals and components necessary to create a dracolich were transcribed in the *Tome of the Dragon*, a holy relic that is now used by the cult's many cells to raise their own dracolich allies.

The cult is now spread out across Faerûn, with cells in places as disparate as Amn, the Western Heartlands, and Sembia. Its leaders are known as The Wearers of Purple, in recognition of the ceremonial robes they wear. The cult's cells are independent of one another for the most part, and each has a rare, scribed copy of the *Tome of the Dragon* that it guards to the last member. Each cell cultivates relationships with local dragons in the hope that one day the dragon will be tempted to undergo the ceremony

that will give it eternal life and power beyond imagining. Until that time, it engages in a number of illegal activities in order to fund its research and recruiting. Often, living dragons aid a cell in these endeavors for a share of any treasure—and to bask in the reverence the cult's members pay them. Even if it never achieves its ultimate goal of a world ruled by cult-created dracoliches, a Cult of the Dragon cell can often mean misery for its law-abiding neighbors.

Most of those outside the cult believe its members, or at the very least its leaders, to be insane. The idea of creating dracoliches so that they can rule the world is outside the realm of comprehension for most people, although the cult's successes are undeniable. A few groups, such as the Harpers, understand that as crazy as the cult's goal might be, their methods and activities have dire consequences for the world.

Areas of influence

The Cult of the Dragon is as widespread now as it has ever been, aided by the apocalyptic happenings of the past twenty years. One thing is for certain, though—more and more dracoliches are being reported across Faerûn. The cult is also pursuing a new goal—the construction of a major fortress from which the cult's activities can proceed without interruption. The recent uncovering of the Well of Dragons, a legendary dragon graveyard, has agitated the cult's members and caused an upsurge in activity across the continent. The fortress will give the cult its first serious base of operations, but its construction has been delayed by dragon attacks and poor planning. One thing on which all can agree is that should the group complete construction of this fortress, it will become a fearsome power in the Western Heartlands region and beyond.

Aside from the Well of Dragons, several other powerful cult cells have either created a dracolich already or are well on their way to it. The Sembian cell is perhaps the most well established; it has produced many of the cult's leaders, and established the group's tradition of wearing purple robes. A troubled cell in



*A moon elf Harper spies down on a
Cult of the Dragon ceremony*

Westgate whose refusal to join forces with the Night Masks has caused a feud that leaves it eternally weakened and unprepared to complete the rite of undeath. This cell's weakness has caused it to lose the interest of the true dragons it once courted, and so it has been forced to turn to dragon turtles from the Dragonmere as possible candidates for lichdom.

REGIONS

The following regions have cells with enough resources and leadership to be strong threats to their neighbors. Many other cells are spread throughout Faerûn, but these are the most dangerous and organized.

Aglarond: The Cult of the Dragon has a long history of strife with the Red Wizards, who seek its knowledge for themselves. Any cells that were in Thay long ago joined together and relocated to the western edge of the Dragonjaw Mountains, where they have easy access to the Sea of Fallen Stars, but find themselves hampered, ironically enough, by the copper dragons that live there.

The Dragon Coast: As mentioned, recent fighting with the Night Masks in Westgate has weakened this cell, but it is still dangerous because of its alliance with several of the dragon turtles that roam the nearby waters. Should the cell create a new rite for use on dragon turtles, that would lead to the unleashing of even more dangerous creatures upon the world.

Sembia: The members of this cell, the oldest and most powerful of the cult, believe they hold a sort of stewardship over the rest of the organization's cells. They concern themselves not only with the cult's ultimate goal of creating dracoliches, but also with aiding other cells when they can and overseeing construction of the Well of Dragons. While they do not have any direct control over most of the cells, their oversight does make each cell more efficient and sustainable.

Western Heartlands: Two factions are at work in this region—the cell that has existed in the region for decades, which discovered the Well of Dragons, and the taskmasters and laborers sent by the Sembian cell to oversee the construction of this all-important fortress. The original cell has strong relationships with many of the dragons that live in the Forest of Wyrms, and has even made overtures (and generous offerings) to Ringreemeralxoth, a green dragon and the self-styled ruler of the Snakewood in northeast Amn. The members of this cell somewhat resent not being put in charge of the fortress's construction, but trust in the words of their founder Sammaster, who preaches that "All shall be one when the dragons rule the world."

Joining the cult of the dragon

The cult's recruiting efforts are scattershot at best; they direct most of their energy toward criminal endeavors and maintaining relationship with the local wyrms. Those in charge of the organization's criminal branches realize they need fresh recruits to replace those killed in action or taken prisoner, but they

usually recruit under the guise of an outlaw band rather than a cult. In the past, cult activities have been severely disrupted by the Harpers and other enemies, who pose as new recruits to gain access to the group's inner workings. Despite these troubles, the cult has a very lax policy on welcoming new recruits. It believes that anyone wise (or crazy) enough to follow the words of Sammaster should be allowed to share in his glory.

Recruits come from all areas, but regions with more active criminal networks account for the bulk of new members. The Sembian cell actively seeks raw, inexperienced recruits who are then sent to cells throughout Faerûn. They look for those with nothing to keep them tied to a single location, and who are weak-willed enough to be indoctrinated and sent on their way. More experienced recruits usually stay with the Sembian cell, increasing its power; the other cells are left to their own methods to recruit more experienced members. One advantage of joining the Cult of the Dragon is that advancement and status are tied to one's abilities—the recent ascendance of cult member Vargo Kent (see page 117) to proprietorship of the Well of Dragons is one such example.

Joining the Cult of the Dragon requires only that one find a cell, or one of its front organizations, and petition its leader. The group will ask for a demonstration of abilities and ask some general questions meant to gauge the person's character. If these two trials go well, the character will be invited back for harsher questioning to make sure he is not a spy—if a cleric is available, this questioning might take place within a *zone of truth*. The second round of questioning might be, and often is, skipped in favor of just indoctrinating the new member and getting him or her active in the cult's endeavors. Sammaster prophesied that the enemies of the cult would become known to them and be crushed in the jaws of dragons, so most of the cult's leaders just trust in this, and are happy to use traitors in the meantime.

The cult needs wizards and clerics who can aid in the ritual outlined in the *Tome of the Dragon*, but warriors and even rogues are necessary for the day-to-day operations of the group. Most of its members are inexperienced and looking for a place in the world, but sometimes adventurers and powerful spellcasters will come to the cult to fulfill their own ambitions. Many of the cult's cells (particularly desperate ones, such as the group in Westgate) will accept just about any prospective member who comes along. Those who would infiltrate dragons' lairs to make new contacts for the cult are especially welcomed, as are those rare dragon hunters who target the good-aligned dragons standing in the way of the cult's success.

costs and benefits of membership

Once you join the Cult of the Dragon, it becomes your life. With few exceptions, cell members live in the same area, work together toward the cult's goals, and interact with those outside the cult only when they need something. The cult's cells remain

somewhat secretive in this regard, and thus a new member must leave most of his old life behind him forever. All of a member's effort goes toward the advancement of the cult's goals, whether it be the creation of weapons, the preparation of arcane rituals, or the defense of the cell and its membership.

Exceptions are granted to adventuring members, who are given far more leeway in exchange for their silence as to who they work for and what their goals are. These members usually move from cell to cell, finding adventure on their travels and aiding any cell in need of muscle or magic. These adventuring members get to keep whatever treasure and magic they feel is necessary, but must pass on lore and unused magic and treasure to whatever cell they make contact with next. Complete loyalty is unusual for these adventuring bands, which often refuse to aid a cell in trouble—but the cult as a whole rarely pays attention to who is doing what and where. It is usually much too focused on its own far-reaching concerns to hold a grudge against someone who has not hurt the cult directly.

Becoming a member of the Cult of the Dragon has different benefits, each depending on the strength and skills of the new recruit. Wizards are granted access to necromantic lore gathered over the past five centuries that nonmembers might never gain access to; just to be able to study the *Tome of the Dragon* fulfills the lifelong quest of many new members. In addition, a cult wizard attempting to attract a draconic cohort gains a +2 bonus on his Leadership score for that purpose, and cult wizards wishing to have a draconic familiar act as if they are two levels higher for this purpose. Clerics who join most often do so at the behest of their gods for one reason or another, or to minister to their faithful. The most common religions found within the cult are those dedicated to Bane, Shar, Talos, Talona, and Velsharoon. Other faiths, sometimes represented by only a single cleric, include those of Cyric, Gargauth, Malar, and Tiamat.

The cult offers little besides protection and kinship to those without the abilities necessary to bring undeath to a dragon. It is not particularly well organized, nor does it have its own access to weapons or equipment. The best it can offer is some limited protection from dragons in the area, a place to sleep and food to eat, and a steady supply of work, whether it be in the construction of the Well of Dragons, taking part in one of the group's many criminal endeavors, or protecting cult leaders and sites of importance.

Acting within the cult of the dragon

Adventurers who take advantage of being under the auspices of the Cult of the Dragon have far more freedom than they might enjoy within another organization. They usually join because they have similar interests to those of the cult, and so their adventures are often in line with the cult's goals. A group dedicated to seeing undead dragons rule the world might go searching for draconic artifacts, seek audiences with powerful dragons in order to draw

them to the cult's teachings, or be used as a strike force to terrorize or obliterate the cult's enemies. The Cult of the Dragon is at a crossroads right now, and it has become more proactive in defending its interests, particularly the Well of Dragons and the fortress under construction there.

Acting outside the cult of the dragon

Being affiliated with the Cult of the Dragon is not a black mark against a character in most evil parties. The other members might see the cultist as a little deranged, but as long as he proves valuable to the party, there will probably be little prejudice. Of course, he might always keep his affiliation secret, especially if he believes that something he is looking for might be in conflict with the party's goals. A zealous member might also look to recruit a group of adventurers, especially if he thinks bringing them into the organization might increase his ranking and status within it.

cults of the moon

The Cults of the Moon is the collective name for several lycanthrope-worshipping tribal groups found in various areas of Faerûn. Malar (along with Shar, who enjoys the perversion of the moon's power that lycanthropes represent) subtly guides these groups in their worship, although he does not involve himself directly with their day-to-day affairs. He also compels the lycanthropes that are worshiped by the cults to accept the fealty of these groups and to use their devotion to spread evil in the world. The lycanthropes, for their part, are generally happy to have servants around. Some of them would just as soon eat all the pesky beings or sacrifice them to the Hunt without Malar's influence, however. The cults believe that the lycanthropes favor them (by not eating them, mostly) and that one day they will lead the vanguard in the war on civilization that will tear down Faerûn's cities and establish the rule of the wild across the continent.

Three main cult tribes exist in Faerûn, with smaller ones expanding in other areas or joining up with the larger groups for increased protection and power. The largest tribe is found in the Silver Marches, north of Silvermoon near the Cold Wood. This group of totemic barbarians draws its membership primarily from the Uthgardt tribes that roam the icy plains and cold forests of the region. Its leader, Chazzar Ne, a human druid with ties to the Gray Wolf Uthgardt tribe, believes that the lycanthropes are sent by Malar to defend the North against the orcs that constantly ravage the region's natural resources.

A tribe of wild elf and drow cultists in the forest of Cormanthor has taken to worshipping the lycanthropes in that wood as a means of survival. As the sect grows in power, however, there are rumblings among the ranks that survival is not enough of an incentive to continue paying tribute to the shapechangers. Their leader, Kaedthis, has recently taken on an advisor, Anasta Sarth, who is a cleric of Kiaransalee. Sarth is fueling this dis-

content in a bid to turn the entire cult over to the worship of the Revenancer.

The only other sect of any size can be found in the jungles of Chult, under the leadership of a sorcerer who worships a werebat tribe found in the northern Mistcliff Mountains. He believes that these creatures are the guardians of night, and that without them the planet would burn under the heat of a never-ending sun.

A pack of lycanthropes means trouble for nearby civilized settlements, but the growth of a cult that worships these beasts is even worse news. The sects attract disaffected citizens of these towns and villages, who then infiltrate and spy on the townsfolk. The Cormanthor sect is perfectly suited to this type of information gathering, since the drow are naturally treacherous beings. One day soon, Anasta Sarth will unleash these savage cultists and their shapechanging idols on the drow, who she then hopes to raise into an army of powerful undead.

In the North, Chazzar Ne has even more grandiose plans. She wishes to bring the Uthgardt under her command so that they can swarm north with the lycanthropes to eradicate the orc threat forever. Little does she know that the lycanthropes have no such plans, even if she does succeed in uniting enough barbarians under her banner. The People of the Black Blood worry that she might become too powerful, and have considered hunting her down in order to stop her plans.

The sorcerer-led Chultan sect is isolated from other human settlements; it has enough to worry about between dinosaur attacks and warding off the goblin attacks that plague its isolated settlement.

Areas of influence

The Cults of the Moon are a fractured group of sects that all have similar goals and direction, thanks to the prodding of Malar and his allies. Each sect has a strong leader that brings together those under him to worship nearby lycanthropes (and it is always a particular group of lycanthropes, not the race in general). The three largest groups are a sort of trial run for Malar, and their success (or failure) will determine how much energy he puts into directing the formation of more sects across Faerûn.

The sect in the Silver Marches operates out of a semipermanent tent town on the plains in between the forests of the Night Trees. Their leader, the druid Chazzar Ne (see page 119), was drawn away from her former mentor by Malar's promise of power. Chazzar's sect is not hostile toward her former mentor and his allies.

The drow and wild elves in Cormanthor have a settlement northeast of Essembra, two miles north of the River Duathamper and within striking distance of the Halfaxe Trail. They work with a tribe of weretigers that haunts the woods, coordinating hunts and attacks on any drow patrols from the other settlements. Kaedthis has recently become interested in the ruins of Myrth Drannor, believing that with the blessings of Kiaransalee and Malar—and the muscle of the lycanthropes—she can retake the city and bend the *mythal* to her will.

REGIONS

Cults of the Moon sects are active in the following regions, with further expansion possible anywhere lycanthropes.

Chult: The tribal village at the base of the Mistcliffs has little contact with the outside world, but the werebats are only

Illustration by William O'Connor



A Black Blood cultist leaves a sacrifice for a pack of werewolves

beginning to understand the gift that Malar has given them. With a little prodding, the colony might look for a new haunt in one of the forts that dot the Chultan coastline.

The Dalelands: The Cormanthor drow are often targeted by this Kiaransalee-worshipping sect. The cultists have avoided attacking any of the human-populated Dale cities, figuring that the other drow are already stirring up enough attention as it is. Kaedthis is worried that too much violence will bring down a concerted effort against all drow in the forest, especially on the heels of the recent war against the phaerimm.

The Silver Marches: The Uthgardt tribesmen under Chazzar Ne seek to eradicate the ores of the North. While the civilized folk of the Silver Marches might agree with this goal, they cannot abide by the barbarians' alliance with the evil People of the Black Blood.

joining the cults of the moon

The Cults of the Moon are always accepting new members, and they are rarely suspicious of those who want to join. After all, who can deny the awesome power of the werebeasts? Most of those who join are barbarians or outcasts—people who cannot or do not function in civilized society. Druids sometimes join, especially those looking for a deeper insight into their animal being, and evil rangers are sometimes drawn to the group as well. The psychological condition of less powerful converts is usually shaky at best; they are simply looking for a place to belong, or are so frightened of the world that they feel the need to be protected by beings greater than themselves. The mere thought of being eaten by a werebeast is enough to cow them into doing anything the sect's leader desires.

While the Chultan sect rarely recruits from outside its tribe, the Cormanthor and Silver Marches sects actively recruit from their respective local populations—drow and wild elves in the forest, and disaffected or dominated Uthgardt barbarians on the cold plains. They generally recruit survivors of a lycanthrope attack or targeted individuals that they have hunted down. Sometimes an entire village or tribe will be assimilated into a sect, especially if it is from a culture in which power and leadership are synonymous. Powerful adversaries are not recruited—they cannot be trusted with the sect's secrets—but some do come to the group through various means. The most obvious example of this is the cleric Anasta Sarth, who joined with the Cormanthor sect in order to bring them under the sway of her patron goddess.

Procreation remains the cult's most effective means of growing its population.

costs and benefits of membership

The primary benefit to joining a Cults of the Moon sect is survival. Anyone not affiliated with the cult that wanders into lycanthrope-controlled territory is liable to be hunted down and torn to bits, and

even those towns and villages that are well established but within reach of the shapechangers are in constant danger. The cult sees a membership boost in the days leading up to the High Hunts, and for a few weeks afterward. Some members gain a thrill by being in the presence of powerful lycanthropes, and others are enthralled by the charismatic and willful leaders of these cults.

Another benefit for ambitious members is access to the Black Blood cultist prestige class (see page 44). Some barbarians are especially attracted to these wild savages once they have seen one in action. They might lack the shapechanging ability of a lycanthrope or druid, but they can combine the best of both worlds to make themselves harbingers of destruction when they rage. Cult members become accustomed to the presence of lycanthropes, and are granted a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks when dealing with these creatures. Any character with the Leadership feat treats a lycanthrope as one level lower when choosing it as a cohort.

There are costs associated with membership, however. The People of the Black Blood take their worship of Malar seriously, and even if a sect is not strictly an instrument of the Beastlord, it is expected to take part in his rituals as fervently as if it were. Tribe members grow more and more uncomfortable in civilization the longer they stay with the cult, taking a -1 penalty on all Charisma-related checks when inside a town, city, fortification, or other construct of civilization. Finally, powerful applicants to the tribe are often required to hunt down a good-aligned creature—with a CR at least equal to the character's—and offer it as a blood sacrifice to the lycanthropes.

Acting within the cults of the moon

Cultists can often be found hunting through the forests of Faerûn, seeking wild tribes to subjugate, lycanthropes to recruit as allies, or discovering new lairs for staging raids on civilization. A group might be a tribal assemblage, or applicants sent on a mission to prove their worth. Such missions can often take months or even years to complete—all the better for a cult's leader, who gets potential rivals out of the way for a long period and gains power and status through their actions. Groups of cultists sometimes accompany a pack of lycanthropes on a mission to intimidate or destroy new settlements that threaten to encroach upon tribal lands.

Acting outside the cults of the moon

Characters who were either reared in one of the sects or who were converted later in life have quite a bit of opportunity to adventure. All three of the sects' leaders have need of information from outside the boundaries of the tribal lands. The lycanthropes, too, like to keep up with goings-on, and might demand that a human or elf enter the civilized lands to gather news and procure supplies.

While treasure does not motivate any of the sects' leaders, they are always searching for hidden bases and lairs within the civilized lands, and they often send out adventuring groups to search for such locations. Individuals from the tribe might seek out others to assist them who know more about local legends and geography. Once their association is no longer beneficial, the order member might bring these associates into his tribal lands where his kinsman or the lycanthropes can enjoy slaughtering them during the High Hunt.

The Eldreth Veluuthra

The Eldreth Veluuthra is a group of fanatical elf supremacists who have vowed to remove the human scourge from the face of Faerûn. It views humanity as a blight upon the land, little better than an infestation of vermin in dire need of a genocidal housecleaning. Its members operate throughout Faerûn, particularly in ancient elf homelands as well as in those forests largely abandoned during the Elven Retreat, including Ardeep, the Border Forest, the Chondalwood, Cormanthor, the High Forest, the Moonwood, the Neverwinter Woods, and the Winterwood. Wherever human civilization threatens elf interests, the Eldreth Veluuthra works to slow or halt human encroachment—by any means necessary.

The Eldreth Veluuthra was formed in 262 DR, a year after the founding of Myth Drannor. In that year, five leading elf houses declared that they could not support the coronal's liberal attitude toward humans, nor could they allow the continued encroachment of humans into ancestral elf lands. Rather than battle fellow elves, the five houses departed Myth Drannor and began to catalogue the crimes of humans against both nature and the land they inhabited.

However, the organization did not formally organize until the Weeping War (711–714 DR) and the destruction of Myth Drannor. Naming themselves the Eldreth Veluuthra (Victorious Blade of the People), they began to plan to strike a definitive blow. In 757 DR, a series of murderous raids set the stage for their protracted battle to end the human infestation of Faerûn.

Although they consider themselves to be true to the most traditional and honored elven ideals, most elves are embarrassed by the Eldreth Veluuthra and would prefer to see the organization disappear. And it would have, long ago, if it did not enjoy secret support at the very highest levels of elf society. The Eldreth Veluuthra is reasonably well-funded considering its secretive and destructive ways, and there is no shortage of elves who publicly espouse cooperation between the races while privately funneling money, goods, magic and weapons to the local cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra.

Attitude

The Eldreth Veluuthra is considered evil because of its methods, but the individual members of the organization do not consider

themselves evil. If anything, they think of themselves as the caretakers of all that is good in the world. They are constantly surrounded by evil enemies who would like nothing better than to remove the last vestiges of elfdom from the face of Faerûn. If only the other elves would wake up and see their peril, the threat might be averted. Unfortunately, far too many of their kin have been deceived by humanity over the centuries, and it therefore falls upon the Eldreth Veluuthra to act to save those who are not even aware of their danger.

Because the Eldreth Veluuthra considers itself to be a group dedicated to the cause of good, its members continue to worship the traditional elven pantheon. The gods of the elves do not, however, reciprocate these feelings. Therefore, no clerics of the good-aligned elven pantheon are members of the Eldreth Veluuthra, and no member of the Eldreth Veluuthra would dare worship a nonelf or evil deity. The members are certain that one of their gods (most likely Corellon Larethian) will eventually recognize the merit of their position. For many years, they were forced to rely upon whatever healing potions they could purchase, find or steal. But of late, they have learned (through the instruction of the druid ice lich, Lossarwyn) to tap directly into the divine power of nature itself, granting power to druids and rangers.

organization

The Eldreth Veluuthra is made up of small cells of like-minded individual elves. Usually, most of the members of a cell are blood relatives, further assuring the group's secrecy and the loyalty of its members. Each cell is virtually autonomous, acting on its own designs without interference from other groups so long as those actions further the large-scale goals of the Eldreth Veluuthra.

regions of influence

In addition to haunting ancient forests and ruined elf homelands, cells of the Eldreth Veluuthra can be found nearly anywhere large populations of elves are found.

Ardeep Forest: Despite its relatively small size, this forest is home to two cells of the Eldreth Veluuthra. One focuses on guarding the ruins of Phalorn, making sure adventurers from Waterdeep have as difficult a time as possible. The other cell spends most of its time stalking drow worshipers of Eilistraee, who sometimes visit the Dancing Dell and the sacred rock known as the Ladystone. The two cells rarely cooperate. The guiding council of the Eldreth Veluuthra, the Vel'Nikeryma (or Blade Lords), sometimes dispatches agents to explore the House of Stone, a dwarf- and elf-built ruin on the edge of the Ardeep, in search of magic and treasure.

The Border Forest: The Eldreth Veluuthra has found allies among the fey of this region. Long harried by the Zhents, the fey creatures of the Border Forest have become hostile to all intruders. Despite its comparatively small size, the forest offers

numerous opportunities to further the organization's goals, so two cells operate within its confines. One cell concentrates on ambushing Zhentarim agents, while the other raids along the Daggerdale border. The two cells find many opportunities to cooperate, since neither is large enough to make significant headway on its own.

The Chondalwood: This is one of the few areas where the organization has made significant progress. The Chondalwood is filled with races sympathetic to its cause, from the centaurs and satyrs that roam the forest to the ghostwise halflings lurking in the woodland's heart. The wild elves native to this forest provide safe haven for Eldreth Veluuthra operatives and sometimes join its larger raiding parties.

Cormanthor: The elf homeland of Cormanthor is the site of one of the organization's greatest setbacks. After the Elven Court of Myth Drannor was abandoned during the Elven Retreat, the Eldreth Veluuthra laid plans to set up a base and begin to reclaim the entire forest. But before the group could complete its move, it was driven out by the invading drow of House Jaelre. Since then, any Eldreth Veluuthra operating in the area have adopted the tactic of disguising themselves as drow while attacking human travelers and settlements, thus setting the stage for escalating reprisals between these two hated groups.

The heart of the elf realm in Cormanthor, Sembholme, is home to numerous elves, including several agents of the Eldreth Veluuthra who strive to gain supporters within its leading houses. There are also cells operating around Bristar and Moonrise Hill in Deepingdale, as well as near the Tangled Trees. The Vale of Lost Voices is an area sacred to the Eldreth Veluuthra.

Evereska: Surrounded by a ring of twelve impassible hills and protected by a powerful *mythal*, this ancient city is home to some of the noblest elf families in all Faerûn. It is also home to a powerful cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra. Like other cells operating within elf strongholds, the members here spend most of their time quietly seeking support, advocating the organization's goals and spreading its propaganda, all the while sending donated treasure and supplies out to support the cells operating in the Graycloak Hills.

Evermeet: A loose cell of spies who report directly to the Vel'Nikeryma operates on the isle of Evermeet. While the cell's primary purpose is to gather information, it also works to garner support for the Eldreth Veluuthra among the high families of the sun elves. The organization enjoys more support among the most influential sun elves than anyone would dare to admit or even believe.

Graycloak Hills: The Eldreth Veluuthra enjoys some of its strongest support among the moon elves inhabiting these hills near Evereska. Membership in the Eldreth Veluuthra is almost openly tolerated here, because the threat from Anauroch and the City of Shade seems too great to exclude any ally, even unsavory ones. One cell has dedicated itself to hunting down a band of human adventurers who have been ransacking elven tombs in the area.

The Gray Forest: Centuries ago, the moon elves of the Gray Forest were driven out by hobgoblins. However, a small cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra continues to operate here, sometimes attacking the hobgoblins and sometimes alerting them to the encroachment of humans into their territory.

The High Forest: This is one of the largest woodlands in Faerûn and home to several cells of the Eldreth Veluuthra. They are kept busy fighting human encroachment as well as keeping close watch on Hellgate Keep; one member of the Vel'Nikeryma was recently slain by the demonfey of that area, and her replacement on the council now leads the northern cell of the High Forest. The organization has made an uneasy alliance with the great treant leader Turlang, and it has working arrangements with the forest's centaurs and wild elves. The Vel'Nikeryma is anxious to learn more about the human settlement called Olostin's Hold, since the humans there live in an almost elven harmony with nature.

Within the High Forest lies a region known as the Dire Wood, where an outer ring of massive albino oaks surrounds an inner ring of blackened, petrified trees. Inside these rings lies a region of hills that seems to stretch far beyond its encompassing trees. The Dire Wood is home to numerous aberrations, as well as Lossarwyn, a druid lich who some believe is responsible for the "wizard weather" that sometimes erupts from this area. The Eldreth Veluuthra is actively courting Lossarwyn (see page 83), since he shares many of its goals and motivations.

The Methwood: Talindra Amalith of the Vel'Nikeryma leads a cell within the Methwood. Like her, the members of this cell are wild elves who have suffered many cruelties at the hands of human adventurers.

The Misty Forest: In the past, the Misty Forest section of the caravan route to Daggerford, Secomber, and Boareskyr Bridge was a place where travelers could let down their guard—but not for much longer. A cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra recently began operating in this area, scouting out promising ambush sites and setting up a secret base from which to raid. Though it has not yet made its first attack, it is only a matter of time before this happens.

The Moonwood: This region is home to numerous lycanthropes, some of whom are members of the Eldreth Veluuthra. The only formal cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra in these woods is often harried by the more populous and better organized People of the Black Blood.

The Neverwinter Woods: The Eldreth Veluuthra claims that the forbidding reputation owned by this mysterious forest is due in no small part to the activities of one of the oldest and largest cells in the organization. Several other smaller cells also operate in the area.

Urlingwood: This strange forest is the proverbial and literal "eastern front" of the organization. Cell leaders and other members who draw too much attention to the organization, who needlessly risk their members' lives, who cannot be trusted with secrets, or who commit any other crime not serious enough

to warrant execution, are sent to Urlingwood in the country of Rashemen. Thus, the Urlingwood cell is filled with miscreants and fanatics; they are charged with driving the witches from the wood, a hopeless task if ever there was one.

The Wealdath: Two independent cells operate in the Wealdath, each drawn from the two surviving local tribes of elves—the Suldusk and the Elmanesse. Both groups are mostly concerned with protecting their tribal areas from human encroachment. Despite numerous failures, the Vel'Nikeryma continues to send adventuring parties into the heart of the Wealdath in an effort to retake the ancient elf necropolis of Myth Rhynn and restore its ancient *mythal*.

The Winterwood: This forest hosts the only cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra made up almost entirely of green elves. Considered backward and undisciplined by many other members of the organization, the Winterwood cell rarely takes aggressive action against humans, preferring to maintain the borders and punish intruders. Instead, members spend much of their time devising ways to drive Foilsunder, an old male green dragon, from their woods.

Leadership

Each cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra chooses its own leader. Characters wishing to obtain leadership roles within the organization would do well to either acquire the leadership of an existing cell or form their own cell in a new area. Unlike in other evil organizations, members of the Eldreth Veluuthra do not normally rise to positions of leadership through the elimination of rivals. The murder of fellow elves is contrary to the ultimate goal of the destruction of humanity. However, sometimes a leader might be proven to be incompetent—or worse, in league with the enemy—and unwilling to relinquish control. At those rare times, a cell leader might be eliminated, but only with the approval of the Vel'Nikeryma.

Although the structure of the Eldreth Veluuthra is cellular, the organization is guided by a council called the Vel'Nikeryma. At one time, the Vel'Nikeryma was made up of the leaders of the original five families, but all but one of these have long since been replaced as the fortunes of individuals and families wax and wane. Today, the council members are chosen by vote from among the strongest and most senior leaders of individual cells. The Vel'Nikeryma collects and analyzes intelligence gathered from across Faerûn in order to set the long-range goals of the organization. They rarely interfere with the actions of individual cells unless those actions threaten the exposure of a larger goal. Occasionally, individual members of the organization could be asked by the council to undertake a specific mission or quest.

The current members of the Vel'Nikeryma are described below.

Talindra Amalith (CN female wild elf barbarian 15) leads the Methwood cell of the Eldreth Veluuthra. Of late, she has divided her time between the Methwood and recruiting among the wild elves of the Chondalwood.

Saeval Calaudra (NE male moon elf rogue 8/assassin 5) operates across the length and breadth of Faerûn, lending his special skills to support the activities of any cell that needs him. He serves as the voice of the Vel'Nikeryma to those who might never otherwise encounter the leadership of the organization. Calaudra is the youngest member of the Vel'Nikeryma.

Torynnar Rhaevaern (NE male sun elf lich [baelnorn^{M60}] wizard 15/archmage 4) is the only surviving member of the original founders of the Eldreth Veluuthra. His wisdom is sought for all important decisions concerning the society. He has begun to suspect an outside influence is at work within the organization, especially among the Cormanthor cells, but he is not yet ready to speak his mind to the full council. Although uncertain as to its source, Torynnar last felt such a power during the fall of Myth Drannor.

Eldaerneth Spellstalker (CE male sun elf enchanter 7/rogue 8) is also a member of the Night Masks, a powerful thieves' guild operating in Westgate. While the Night Masks are not aware that he is also a senior member of the Eldreth Veluuthra, neither is Eldaerneth cognizant of the vampiric nature of the Night Masks leadership. He plays a most dangerous game, using his position in the thieves' guild to funnel information back to the Vel'Nikeryma. Although the Eldreth Veluuthra and the Night Masks have vastly different agendas, it is likely that his employers in Westgate would not look kindly on this deception.

Bhyrindar "Silverhart" Tellynnan (CE male moon elf werewolf fighter 9/sorcerer 1/arcane archer 5) is one of the newest, brashest and most popular members of the organization. He leads a cell operating in the north part of the High Forest. The organization's failure to gain the full cooperation of Lossarwyn of the Dire Wood and the treant lord Turlang are largely due to Bhyrindar's impatience with these two ancient creatures.

Recruiting

Obviously, to become a member of the Eldreth Veluuthra, one must be an elf. Only true elves need apply. This means that drow are forbidden, as are any half-elf combinations. The majority of members have historically come from sun elf communities, though recruitment among wild elves has been growing of late, especially in the Chondalwood. Moon elves fill out the ranks, along with the occasional green elf or sea elf.

Among the sun elves and moon elves, membership is largely drawn from two distinct social strata: young, poor, disenfranchised elves, and those of old, wealthy families. Wealthy elves make attractive members because they bring with them the social connections necessary to expand the organization's influence and legitimacy within elf society. At the same time, the organization needs strong, angry, motivated young people to do the dirty work of killing humans and stopping the spread of human culture into elf territory. Wild elves and, to a lesser degree, green elves make up many of the shock troops and specialists vital to the organization's goals.

Allies

The Eldreth Veluuthra has few public allies. The majority of elves would rather pretend the extremist organization doesn't even exist. It enjoys most of its limited support among the sun elves, with agents and members reaching to the highest levels of society. The other elf races also provide support, though not to the degree of the sun elves. It is only through the influence of the organization's powerful secret allies that the elves have not suppressed the Eldreth Veluuthra completely.

Members of the Eldreth Veluuthra get along with sylvan creatures—especially centaurs, satyrs, and the more aggressive fey—who share their opinion of humanity. They have sometimes been willing to form brief alliances with evil humanoid races to accomplish a common goal, such as wiping out a human settlement, but more commonly they work covertly to instigate bloodshed between humans and their evil neighbors.

enemies

The Eldreth Veluuthra has many enemies, especially among the humans it so desperately wants to destroy. The Harpers have, on more than one occasion, thwarted the organization's plans—so members of the Eldreth Veluuthra take special delight in setting ambushes for anyone associated with that organization. They also lay traps for human rangers who dare to enter their woodlands, since rangers usually presage the arrival of human settlements. Their relationship with human druids is nearly as violent, although some members of the organization are opposed to attacking humans who are so obviously trying to live up to the elven ideal.

The organization also targets races that it views as elven abominations, such as any of the half-elf crossbreeds. A number of voices within the organization have argued in favor of ending the war against the drow, but this is unlikely to happen—most of the members hate dark elves nearly as much as they hate humans.

Although technically evil, the Eldreth Veluuthra also wars against the more traditional foes of the elves—orcs, goblinoids, gnolls, beholders, and evil dragons. In dire circumstances, elf leaders have been known to recruit the Eldreth Veluuthra to help stem some growing evil. The organization's members have skills and talents that, when combined with their willingness to take on unsavory assignments, make them valuable allies against the elves' most ruthless foes.

In a nutshell, the Eldreth Veluuthra hates nearly everyone who is not an elf, and so it is constantly surrounded by enemies.

joining the eldreth veluuthra

You can't just join the Eldreth Veluuthra. You have to be invited, and those who seem too eager are rarely asked to join. You don't find the Eldreth Veluuthra, it finds you.

Because of the secret nature of the organization, outsiders who wish to join the Eldreth Veluuthra will be recruited only after a period of observation. What attracts the attention of the Eldreth Veluuthra is an individual's actions and deeds, not talk. Because the organization has suffered significantly at the hands of such organizations as the Harpers, those who seem too eager to find a local Eldreth Veluuthra agent are intentionally led astray and sometimes captured and questioned. Individuals who show promise are watched, both normally and magically, to ascertain



Three members of the Eldreth Veluuthra communicate silently and secretly in a crowded marketplace

their sincerity. Sometimes, a candidate might be surreptitiously questioned by an agent posing as a barkeep or fellow traveler. Only after the leader of the local cell is satisfied as to her intentions will she be approached by a member and invited to join.

The vast majority of members of the Eldreth Veluuthra are recruited by family members who are already deeply and sometimes secretly involved in the organization. Often, as much as ninety percent of any cell will be made up of siblings, parents, children, aunts, uncles and cousins of the cell leader. In this way, the organization assures the secrecy and loyalty of its members. Outsiders recruited into a cell sometimes have a hard time gaining the trust of family members, and are often given assignments independent of the cell's regular activities until they have proven their loyalty.

costs and benefits of membership

Entry into the Eldreth Veluuthra requires a vow of secrecy that not only binds you to never reveal what you know, but also requires you to punish those who break their vow. The vow is binding for life, even for those no longer active within the organization.

Because of the loose structure of the organization, individual cells have their own rules about the duties required of their members. Few cells adopt a purely militaristic organization with strict rules of obedience or members living and working together on a constant basis; that would attract far too much attention. Most members lead independent lives, having professional and familial duties outside the organization. A few adventuring company-style cells have formed, but these usually short-lived, due to the high attrition rates common to these activities. In general, individuals belonging to a particular cell are expected to participate in important operations, unless they are already employed in another operation or working directly with the Vel'Nikeryma; low-level members might be asked to take on specific duties or smaller operations.

Once members have earned the trust of their superiors, they might request agent status from the Vel'Nikeryma, which allows them to operate in nearly any area in which the organization might have a stake. Since humans and drow are their main enemies, this area includes almost all of Faerûn, both aboveground and below. Agents of the Vel'Nikeryma are expected to always act in accordance with the long-range goals of the organization and to regularly pass along information to their superiors. Adventuring agents are also expected to contribute a reasonable portion of their treasure and winnings to the nearest cell. Although they are not required to, they are also expected to occasionally take on missions from the Vel'Nikeryma.

In exchange, adventuring agents learn universal pass codes and secret symbols and handshakes that allow them to be recognized by the leaders of any recognized cell anywhere in Faerûn. Since these secret pass codes change frequently, agents are expected to

check in with the local cell when entering its area. As agents, they have access to weapons, armor, equipment repair, fresh mounts, rest, food and water, safe haven, and healing (magical or otherwise, if available). The cell leader might require a task of an agent if the item is particularly valuable or rare, or if the agent spends more than a tenday enjoying the cell's hospitality.

Acting within the Eldreth veluuthra

An adventuring band or cell within the Eldreth Veluuthra could be composed of pureblood elves and their sylvan allies, such as centaurs, satyrs, and fey. Half-elves, no matter how sympathetic they are to the cause, are never accepted into the group. If the adventuring party is within an area under the control of another cell, it is expected to clear its mission with the leaders of the local cell before beginning, since attacking a powerful local human merchant (for example) might cause more harm than good to those members of the organization who have to live in the area after the adventurers have had their fun. Those who neglect to keep their superiors informed of their activities risk receiving a transfer to the Urlingwood.

Acting outside the Eldreth veluuthra

Individual members of the Eldreth Veluuthra are free (and sometimes encouraged) to act on their own, sometimes joining unaffiliated adventuring companies or even other organizations, but only after they have proven their trustworthiness by serving within the organization for a period of time. As freelance agents, they are expected to keep secret their association with the Eldreth Veluuthra, and to pass along any information that might be of interest to the organization. When in the company of others, they may not associate with members of the Eldreth Veluuthra or take outsiders to any of the organization's hideouts, safe houses, or weapons caches. They are also expected to make a reasonable attempt to notify the leader of a local cell before acting in her area. Understandably, this is not always possible, so freelance agents of the Eldreth Veluuthra are expected to wear in a visible manner the group's secret markers (which might be a piece of jewelry, a special style of cloak or boots, or the like) so that they can easily be identified by other members of the organization.

classes

The members of several character classes are highly prized and vigorously recruited by the Eldreth Veluuthra. Others have no place within the organization.

Barbarians: Barbarians are welcome recruits in wilderness regions, unwelcome in civilized areas. The organization does not

actively recruit barbarians except in those regions dominated by wild elves (such as the High Forest, the Chondalwood, and the Methwood). Because of their chaotic nature, barbarians are usually required to undergo a longer period of service to prove their trustworthiness.

Bards: Bards are prized as freelance agents. After a brief proving period, they are swiftly placed into unaffiliated positions as agents, spies and recruiters.

Clerics: There are no clerics in the Eldreth Veluuthra, since the good-aligned elven pantheon does not allow for clerics of evil alignment.

Druids: As a class devoted to protecting the elven woodlands from human encroachment, druids are accorded special honor within the Eldreth Veluuthra, both for their close association with nature and for their healing magic.

Fighters: Fighters are valuable members of the organization but are not especially targeted for recruitment except when some large-scale action is imminent, or if a fighter is a specialist in some unique or exotic weapon.

Monks: Because a monk's first loyalty is to her monastic order, monks are rarely recruited. Some believe that they cannot be trusted. Exceptions to the rule exist, such as outcast monks, but like barbarians, they are required to undergo a longer period of service to prove their trustworthiness.

Paladins: Because of the unavailability of good-aligned divine magic, there are no paladins in the Eldreth Veluuthra.

Rangers: The warriors of the woodlands are the most commonly recruited character class. Rangers are the backbone of the Eldreth Veluuthra.

Rogues: Rogues and thieves are recruited as spies and professional treasure finders. Some thieves within the organization specialize in robbing other elves. The Eldreth Veluuthra believes that all elves should donate to the cause, whether or not they agree with it.

Sorcerers and Wizards: These two character classes are heavily recruited in all regions. Magic is essential to the group's success.

In addition to the standard classes, the Eldreth Veluuthra also recruits and/or trains in the following prestige classes:

Arcane Archer: This prestige class provides vital arcane specialists within any military strike force.

Assassin: Assassins fill an essential role in the organization. The Eldreth Veluuthra always trains its own assassins and never hires an assassin from other organization.

Evereskan Tomb Guardian: Members of the Eldreth Veluuthra are particularly suited to this prestige class dedicated to the protection of elven tombs.

Hierophant: These archdruids offer an additional level of magical power and wilderness knowledge to the organization's activities.

Justice of Weald and Woe: This prestige class originated within the Eldreth Veluuthra and remains one of its most carefully

guarded secrets. Justices of weald and woe are called upon for the organization's most dangerous and vital operations.

Adventures

Current or prospective members of the Eldreth Veluuthra can find adventure in many places, and not all of them need involve attacking human homesteads. They might be asked by a member of the Vel'Nikeryma to perform some task, such as:

- Search for portals in the Cloak Wood south of Baldur's Gate (low-level).
- Hunt down a band of adventurers who have been raiding ancient moon elf tombs in the Graycloak Hills (mid-level).
- Drive the human druid Pheszelan from the Forgotten Forest in the Western Heartlands (high-level).

Lossarwyn the Ice Lich

In addition to being a druid lich, Lossarwyn has a strong affinity for cold and ice. He became an undead creature and was trapped inside a glacier for several centuries before being freed. Now, his aura and his touch are as cold as the glacier that once held him.

Lossarwyn the Ice Lich: Lich druid 18/hierophant 1; CR 23; Medium undead; HD 19d12; hp 152; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +13; Grp +16; Atk +17 melee (1d6+3, staff) or +17 melee (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis, touch); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+3, staff) or +17 melee (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis, touch); SA fear aura, paralysis, spell-like ability (*contagion* 2/day); SQ damage reduction 15/bludgeoning and magic, immunities, a thousand faces (as *alter self*, at will), trackless step, +4 turn resistance, vulnerability to fire, wild shape 6/day (elemental 2/day), woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +14*, Ref +7*, Will +18*; Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 15.

*+4 on saves against spell-like abilities of fey.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +30, Heal +25, Hide +18, Knowledge (nature) +25, Knowledge (druid religion) +22, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +22, Spot +8, Survival +10; Improved Initiative, Magical Aptitude, Natural Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spellcasting Prodigy^{FRCS}, Spell Penetration, Strong Soul^{FRCS}.

Typical Druid Spells Prepared (caster level 19th): 0—*detect magic* (2), *guidance* (2), *putrefy food and drink*, *resistance*; 1st—*camouflage*^{Und}, *enrage animals** (DC 15), *entangle* (DC 15), *jump*, *longstrider*, *obscuring mist*, *endure energy* (fire); 2nd—*fog cloud*, *heat metal*, *resist energy* (fire), *summon swarm*, *tree shape*, *warp wood*; 3rd—*meld into stone*, *poison* (+17 melee touch, DC 17), *sleet storm*, *wind wall*; 4th—*blight* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *ice storm*, *land womb*^{Mus} (DC 18), *spike stones*, *unholy beast*; 5th—*mass contagion*^{Rac} (DC 19), *call lightning storm* (DC 19), *stoneskin*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*;

6th—*antilife shell*, *greater dispel magic*, *move earth*, *transport via plants*; 7th—*barm* (DC 21), *mark of the unfaithful*, *true seeing*; 8th—*finger of death* (DC 22), *repel metal or stone*, *whirlwind* (DC 22); 9th—*anathema*, *storm of vengeance* (DC 23).

*New spell described in Chapter 2.

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan, Druidic.

Possessions: *amulet of natural armor* +3, *ring of protection* +3, *wand of baleful polymorph* (30 charges), *staff of necromancy*, *divine scroll of elemental swarm*, *wall of thorns*, and *wall of ice*.

COMBAT

Lossarwyn's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Fear Aura (Su): Lossarwyn is shrouded in a dreadful aura of deadly cold and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at the lich must succeed on a DC 21 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell from a 20th-level sorcerer. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by Lossarwyn's aura for 24 hours.

Paralysis (Su): Any living creature struck by Lossarwyn's touch attack must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save or be permanently paralyzed. In addition, the victim's body temperature drops to that of the surrounding environment. *Remove paralysis* or any spell that can remove a curse

can free the victim (see the *bestow curse* spell description, page 203 of the *Player's Handbook*). The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralyzed by Lossarwyn seems dead and cold, though a DC 20 Spot check or a DC 15 Heal check reveals that the victim is still alive.

Spell-Like Ability: As a hierophant, Lossarwyn has chosen to give up one 3rd-level spell slot in exchange for being able to use, as a spell-like ability, *contagion* twice per day.

Immunities (Ex): Lossarwyn is immune to cold, electricity, poison, polymorph (though he can use polymorph effects on himself), and mind-affecting spells and abilities.

Wild Shape (Ex): Lossarwyn can change himself into any animal of Tiny to Huge size six times per day. He can also change himself into a Small, Medium or Large elemental twice per day. Because he is undead, normal animals avoid him even while he is in an animal shape.

BACKGROUND

In ancient times, Lossarwyn was one of the most powerful elf druids of Cormanthor. As humans began to encroach upon the forests, he was one of the strongest voices for war against them. But when the elves of Cormanthor signed the Dalelands Pact, he despaired for the future of the wild places. He saw humanity as a disease to be eradicated, and gradually came to realize that humans have remarkable resilience against nearly every hardship—except disease. Thus began his long downfall as he sought a plague that would destroy humankind once and for all.

He began to travel from land to land, going wherever there was rumor of plague, using his vast knowledge of alchemy and healing to cure the sick. For those he saved, he seemed a gift from heaven and won wide renown for his medical expertise. What he couldn't heal through natural means was cured through the divine intervention of the cadre of priests who followed him like disciples. They came from many faiths and many lands to join this strange elf druid who seemed to have forsaken his forests to help mankind. For all his fame,

Lossarwyn seemed to resent each success, yet his dark moods and relentless spirit only attracted more followers. Some whispered that all was not as it seemed with the great physician, that at times he disappeared for days or weeks. Others said his renown was ill-deserved, since his most difficult patients tended to disappear.

His mission to eradicate humanity continued, despite all the human lives he had saved. Lossarwyn was searching for a plague that had no cure. Whenever he came across a disease that seemed especially virulent, he would whisk away its victim for a detailed study, research that often ended the life of the one he had ostensibly come to heal. Many diseases seemed promising, but most had the drawback of difficulty of transmission. It seemed that magical assistance was needed, which led Lossarwyn to study necromancy, thus renouncing the deepest strictures of his faith.

After many years, just when he seemed on the verge of discovery, his goal of loosing a plague upon mankind was finally uncovered by a jealous rival, and he was revealed to his fellow



Lossarwyn the ice lich

druids. They declared his crimes unforgivable, and they prescribed a secret death by assassination for Lossarwyn rather than allow the general public to learn of his plots. But Lossarwyn fled rather than face punishment and was pursued by three of the most powerful druids of that time. They chased him north into the frozen lands and at last cornered him in glacial cavern. A magical battle ensued, and Lossarwyn died and was frozen into the heart of the glacier, lost forever (or so it seemed). But as he breathed his last, Lossarwyn made a pact with darker forces that resulted in his being cursed with undeath. In their malice, those dark powers did nothing to free him, and so Lossarwyn remained frozen in the ice for many centuries.

At last there came a summer warmer than any in memory. The glacier receded, freeing Lossarwyn. Fearing the long memory of the elves of Cormanthor (and unaware of the destruction of Myth Drannor), he traveled west until he came to Amn, and there he fell in league with a cabal of dark spellcasters called the Twisted Rune. His unusual status and powers allowed him to rise swiftly in the cabal, and all the while he continued his dark research, more determined than ever to destroy humanity. When at last he approached a priest of Myrkul with his plan, thinking he would find a sympathetic ear, he was again betrayed—this time by the Twisted Rune. Again Lossarwyn fled, seeking refuge in the High Forest, but his enemies soon caught up with him at the Dire Wood. His druid powers made him a formidable opponent even against the combined might of the Twisted Rune, so rather than fight him, the spellcasters trapped him with a powerful *maze* spell. He is able to roam the Dire Wood at will, but cannot find his way out.

Recently, agents of the Eldreth Veluuthra heard rumors of Lossarwyn, one of their most ancient and revered heroes, and they sought him out in the Dire Wood. Although they have not yet managed to establish a formal alliance with the druid lich, he did agree to train several members in exchange for their aid in freeing him from the Dire Wood. He has taught them his method of drawing upon the divine power of nature, freeing them of the need to call upon a deity for their spells. The addition of Lossarwyn to the Eldreth Veluuthra would significantly increase the organization's power and prestige, and although he has not yet been freed from his leafy prison, he remains an extremely important figure in the organization's future plans.

Monks of the Dark Moon

The Monks of the Dark Moon are a sect of sorcerer-monks who have dedicated themselves body, mind, and soul to Shar, the Lady of Loss. The monks are her assassins, her enforcers, and her shadowy agents. Their training is diverse, as are their skills, and their devotion to their Lady is absolute. The organization's leaders have direct contact with their goddess, and are not subject to the authority or will of her clergy. The monks are a completely

independent organization, giving Shar an incredible range of talents to call on in times of need.

This sect of Sharrans is relatively new to Faerûn. Shar chose her most trusted mortal servant, Alorgoth, The Bringer of Doom, to recruit and train the first wave of monks, who set out from their secret lair around three years ago. Training has since come under the purview of a group of Sharrans representing almost every facet of her worship—three priests tend to the monks' spiritual development, four monks and an assassin oversee their martial training, and a powerful sorcerer whose mastery over the Shadow Weave is unrivaled instructs recruits in the most dangerous of Shar's gifts. This group has just finished training its second class of monks, and is now fanning out across the continent to recruit more dark hearts into service.

Most Faerûnians are blissfully ignorant of the existence of this group, but Shar's enemies know only too well of its increasing reach and power. Since the first wave of students reached the culmination of their training, Shar has wielded them with brutal efficiency—and with little regard for their lives. Monks of the Dark Moon have sacked a temple of Chauntea in Purskul, assassinated the leading priest of Loviatar in Cormyr, and turned a holy site of Selûne into an unholy node of evil arcane energy. The fact that the Monks of the Dark Moon keep their existence, whereabouts, and identities secret is the only thing that has kept them from becoming one of the most feared organizations in Faerûn.

Areas of influence

The Monks of the Dark Moon began their existence in an imposing stone monolith in the city of Purskul, the first shrine dedicated solely to Shar's new strike force. The shrine's existence is known to all, but what goes on within its walls is one of the order's most guarded secrets. Those who enter the shrine to train either become faithful servants of the Lady of Loss or end up serving as living training dummies for those within. Even most clerics of Shar refuse to enter the shrine, for its deadly reputation is most well known among their ranks.

The monks have since spread across Faerûn, establishing other shrines and safe havens wherever they go. A shrine beneath the northwestern foothills of the Sword Mountains serves as a meeting place and training ground for order members who operate in the northern Sword Coast. A desecrated shrine to Selûne on the southern edge of Cormanthor now operates as an evil node and hideout for Dark Moon monks in Cormanthor and the Moonsea. Sembian and Cormyrian recruits are taken to a mountain base at the summit of one of the Thunder Peaks; the mountain refuge is guarded by a clan of manticores that have been swayed to the dark goddess's cause. Yet these are not the most remote training grounds that the monks have founded: Deep in the Calim Desert, where the worst magical storms blow, is a buried series of tunnels scoured out of a hill by the blasting sands of this tormented land. The most stoic and doughty of the Monks of the Dark Moon

come from this monastery, which takes an individual of unusual constitution and willpower to even reach.

REGIONS

The following regions are prime recruiting spots for the Monks of the Dark Moon; even though many of them overlap with a number of the Sharran religious cells, the operations of the two groups are almost wholly independent.

Amn: The Monks of the Dark Moon began in Purskul, and that city is still home to the group's most holy monastery. Amn and the surrounding regions continue to be hotbeds of recruitment for both the Monks of the Dark Moon as well as their Sharran comrades.

Calimshan: Although the elite of the great city of Calimport are too lazy and pampered to undergo the rites of the Monks of the Dark Moon, the city's lower classes are inured against the hot sun and other brutal conditions of their native land. They have learned enough of the ways of the rich to be jealous and vengeful, however, which plays right into the hands of Shar's teachings.

Cormanthor and the Moonsea: The Monks of the Dark Moon are relative newcomers to this region, but the reemergence of the dark elves and the chaos created by the absence of Lolth have given Shar hope that she might recruit some of the drow into her service.

Sembia: The Sembian monks work more closely with the clergy of the region than any other, and the Sharran infiltration of the Sembian noble houses is a great aid in recruiting new monks.

Sword Coast: The monks here enforce Shar's will along the coast from Waterdeep to Luskan. They do not travel too far into

the North or the Silver Marches, because Selune's influence radiates too strongly from Silvermoon for them to be effective.

Joining the monks of the dark moon

The Monks of the Dark Moon take on a new slate of recruits at each monastery every fourteen months. The hopefuls are drawn from those who are already indoctrinated into Shar's mysteries, and even then, only those who show incredible devotion to her ideals are admitted. The rigorous training and vile acts that all recruits must perform weed out most of the order's enemies; the faithful of Shar guard their secrets better than anyone else in Faerûn.

The first principle is that any new recruit must be a young adult. Children are not drafted, because their capacity to understand the evil to which they are dedicating their lives has not yet fully developed. Those with sorcerous talents might be watched and guided from an early age, but full recruitment does not take place until they have reached maturity. Recruits must be among the strongest in their faith, but under no circumstances can they have taken the oath of priesthood. Shar commands that her priests and monks be separate, so both can carry out her will without complication. Finally, recruits must have demonstrated the potential to develop sorcerous abilities. This last was the most stringent requirement that Shar handed down to Alorgoth, and many recruits have fallen under the sacrificial knife for lying about such potential.

The Monks of the Dark Moon do not accept any member who does not undergo their training. The year-long training does not

Illustration by Lucio Parrillo



Monks of the Dark Moon do battle with a contingent of Selûnite clerics

always produce powerful members, though, and some graduates have not yet mastered their martial or arcane abilities enough to harness them on any level. A character who was already a monk or a sorcerer could be invited to join as long as he fulfilled the three principles, and his training would focus on the aspect of the training that he lacked. Likewise, green candidates will often show aptitude for one class or the other, but not both, and so leave the monastery with only rudimentary skills as a monk or sorcerer. The training can certainly have been undertaken before a character picks up his first class level.

costs and benefits of membership

In order to join the Monks of the Dark Moon, an applicant must completely devote himself to Shar in every facet of life. It takes fourteen months of one's life simply to undergo the trials and training provided by the order, and after that, a lifetime of dedicated service looms. The members of the order are not trained for treasure hunting, but any treasure they do happen upon is considered a part of the organization rather than the individual's property. That said, the order's leaders are not unfair in the distribution of such bounties, and they recognize that the finder is often most benefited by it.

Members gain the protection of Shar and her worshipers wherever they go. A Monk of the Dark Moon who identifies himself to a Sharran cell will be treated very graciously, since no follower of the Lady of Loss wants to risk hampering someone who might be on a personal mission from the goddess.

The order also teaches all members the *lesser shadow tentacle*^{LD} and *greater shadow tentacle*^{LD} spells when they reach the appropriate caster level. These spells are gifts from Shar, and do not take up the character's normal spell slots. The Monks of the Dark Moon are taught to fight alongside their brothers and sisters, and so any time two of them fight side by side, each gains a +1 circumstance bonus on both Armor Class and attack rolls. These bonuses disappear if an individual moves to a square that is not adjacent to a Dark Brother or Dark Sister, as the monks call their peers.

Acting within the monks of the dark moon

Sometimes a job is too big for one agent to complete, such as the sacking of the temple to Chauntea in Purskul and the assassination of all its priests. Shar does not hesitate to assign the right number of individuals to a job, even if it means combining the forces of her clerics with those of her monks. She has shown this wisdom in the recent pairing of the accomplished Monk of the Dark Moon, Alori (see page 121), with the priest Damian Krale (see page 115) in the Western Heartlands. A trained Sharran monk can make an excellent support character for a

group composed of priests, warriors, and rogues dedicated to the Lady of Loss.

Acting outside the monks of the dark moon

A Monk of the Dark Moon would have a hard time acting in a group that was not made up of others of his order or at least those of the Sharran faith. He might disguise himself and hide his true motives in order to travel less conspicuously, or he might even join the group of someone he was tracking in order to gain an edge when the time came to strike. A Monk of the Dark Moon might need something a group of PCs has—perhaps a key to the dungeon in which he can find a holy relic, or some other target that he has been instructed to destroy.

sharran cells

Shar's worship is one of the fastest growing evils in Faerûn, and her clergy and worshipers threaten the stability of many of the regions in which they have taken hold. The church of Shar is composed of cells that act independently of one another, often without knowledge of the other cells. In fact, the secretive nature of these cells often means that the identities of a cell's members are known only to that cell's leader. The primary goal of every cell is to bring as many Faerûnians under Shar's influence as possible, so that eventually their dark mistress can win her eternal war against her sister, Selûne. To this end, the worshipers of Shar spread themselves throughout the populated areas of the continent, searching for weak minds into which they can sow thoughts of meaninglessness and revenge.

Shar's influence is felt in every region of Faerûn, from urban cells that play upon the fears and jealousies of the wealthy, to rural groups, to the wandering Monks of the Dark Moon, who bring pain to all who oppose her. Everyday citizens know little about the cells in their area, often not even realizing that the Lady of Loss is represented nearby. The church only contacts those it wishes to corrupt or those it thinks can be useful in some way. The Sharrans prefer to go about their dark business in secret, with as little interference as possible. If locals did know what the cells were up to—ritual sacrifices, the propagation of murder and revenge, and the establishment of cults that undermine local religions—it would not be long before they sought the aid of adventurers to protect them from the church.

Areas of influence

Because of the secretive nature of the church of Shar, its worshipers have no centralized base of operations. The Temple of Old Night, the largest temple to Shar in Faerûn, can be found in Calimport. This temple in the desert is the closest thing to a rallying point Shar's clergy has, and hundreds make a pilgrimage



The leader of a Sharran cell lures a gullible noble into her clutches

to the site each year to gain their Lady's guidance. The temple also makes for a convenient place to gather useful contacts, to spread information that can be disseminated to the clergy at large, and to cool one's heels during times of trouble within a particular cell or after defeat at the hands of opponents.

The Western Heartlands have seen quite a bit of Sharran activity of late, leading many to suspect that the Mistress of the Night has big plans for the region. Rumors are spreading of a grand new temple being built in a secret location, although all efforts to find such a place have ended in failure. Aside from a few tidbits reported here and there by adventurers and spies representing the clergy of Selûne, information about the Sharrans' intentions has been sparse. In truth, a strong priest has become a unifying force for the clergy in the region, backed by a clan of monks who are not affiliated with the Dark Moon sect. All the cells in the region have fallen under his sway, although they are still not unified as a whole. Selûne has commanded followers from Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep to go to the Western Heartlands and determine the nature of Shar's new threat.

Sembia has always been a haven for Shar's clergy, who find the intrigues and greed of the city fertile ground for the goddess's temptations. The recent chaos in Cormyr has attracted the attention of some of these clergy, who have sent underlings into the region to establish footholds among the bickering noble families. This act has only served to intensify the strife within the region, and at least one noble family has fallen so completely under Shar's influence that its manor houses now feature dark dungeons in which blood sacrifices take place several times a month.

REGIONS

Sharran cells are active throughout Faerûn, but the following regions have seen increased activity of late or are bastions of the Dark Goddess's power.

Calimshan: The site of the largest temple to Shar in the Realms, Calimport has long been a favored destination for pilgrims devoted to the Lady of Loss. Even more than in Sembia, the intrigues and delicate social customs of Calimshan lend themselves well to the corrupting influence of Shar. Her priests sow mistrust between those of the same social status, and manufacture slights that are sure to infuriate the most respected merchants and those of noble title.

Cormyr and Sembia: Shar's network of clergy spreads throughout these two regions, playing off the greed and jealousies of their noble families. It is well known that the Sharrans have their claws in the intrigues of the merchants of Sembia, but so far their activities in Cormyr remain out of sight.

The Great Rift: Shar's insidious message has taken root in an unlikely place—the tunnels beneath the Great Rift. The Mistress of the Night counts caverns and the Underdark among her portfolio ever since she killed Ibrandul during the Time of Troubles, and though she is not known as a patron of the dwarves, she has captured the minds and spirits of one dissatisfied group of gold dwarves in the region. Their leader, Darger Ironmoot, is an ousted prince who has vowed revenge on his family. In the absence of a strong military following, he has turned to Shar's teachings to find a way to wreak havoc on those who cast him aside.

Shade: Shar has once again taken an interest in the slave race known as the krinths, and has dispatched one of her most trusted priests to infiltrate the City of Shade. So far he has had little success finding those willing to listen to Shar's promises, but he is clandestinely aiding the city's growing krinths underground movement.

The Western Heartlands: Rumors of strange happenings connected to the priesthood of Shar have been coming out of Daggerdale and Iriaebor for the past few months. All investigations into these rumors have come up empty-handed, yet the stories of a secret temple and a Sharran plot still spread. A strong leader has emerged to influence the actions of all the cells in the region toward a common goal, but just what that goal is remains to be seen.

Joining a sharran cell

The clergy of Shar is always looking for new recruits, not just to fill the ranks of the priesthood but also to act as followers, contacts, and spies. Recruiting is an ongoing process wherever a cell operates. Because of the nature of Shar's worship, open recruiting is impossible in most places in Faerûn. Most of the work is done face to face, individual by individual. Sometimes the conversion of a new member is a long, slow process; other times it occurs quickly, through the promise of forbidden knowledge and power over others that the recruit finds too enticing to ignore. This type of rapid recruiting has the additional advantage of maintaining secrecy about the cell. Since an individual likely never has access to more than one member of a cell before he is inducted into the group, no recruiting effort puts the entire group at risk.

Becoming a member of the church is no easy matter—Shar demands much of her followers, and each is expected to perform vile acts from her day of induction until she meets her end. The secrecy of Shar's church in most areas means that those interested in her teachings usually find it difficult to locate a member of the clergy. Most often, a prospective member is contacted after the church already knows that the individual is open to a dialogue. Those who have recently been slighted, for whom a secret revealed would be devastating, or whose dark hearts would be better bent to Shar's will, all find themselves targets of her servants' advances.

Shar's teachings appeal to people of all races, professions, and social standing. Jealousy and secrets prevail throughout societies everywhere, so Shar has a large base of potential followers to

draw from. She prefers those who are strong enough to take care of themselves, but with a physical or psychological weakness that draws them to seek comfort from others. Users of the Shadow Weave are considered particularly attractive recruits, as are warriors who have proven unfazed after committing heinous atrocities. Untrained followers are recruited when the possibility exists that they could grow useful to a cell, either by developing martial or magical abilities, becoming devout priests, or by providing a useful contact in a city or surrounding region.

costs and benefits of membership

Shar is desperate to gain followers of late, so much so that she is willing to accept anyone who can prove his or her commitment to her evil principles. Those who wish to merely worship Shar must simply declare their affiliation, as with any other god. For those who want to work with a local cell, or perhaps even become a priest, the price is much higher. Once an individual has been contacted, seduced, and made ready to join, he must commit an act of great evil in Shar's name. This act almost always involves violence against the petitioner's close friends or family. Such acts are much easier to persuade a new member to perform when the individual has been recruited based on the revelation of an unfaithful lover or backstabbing family member.

The most immediate benefit to joining a Sharran cell is protection against the cell's depredations. Although becoming a mere worshiper does not assure an individual of full protection, such an individual is unlikely to be the target of an abduction or murder in Shar's name. Becoming a Sharran devotee opens a number of avenues for personal growth to those with the ambition to pursue them. First, the secrets of the Shadow Weave are only safely learned by one loyal to Shar. Renegade Shadow Weave users are watched or hunted by Shar's priests for daring to defile her unholy gift to the world. Second, a person who works his way up in the ranks of the Sharran clergy or becomes particularly useful to the cell or the goddess herself gains access to secrets unknown to most. Since the cells work independently, such a person has great freedom to pursue his own agenda and to call upon the resources and members of the cell toward that end.

Acting within a sharran cell

An adventuring party dedicated to Shar is almost always led by a charismatic priest who interprets the Lady's will and directs the group accordingly. Missions that such a group might undertake are varied, from the assassination of an important Selûnite priest and his entourage, to the recovery of an artifact that channels the power of the Shadow Weave. Such a group might work with a cell, be independent (this is often the case if one or more members are of the Dark Moon sect of monks), or be a cell unto themselves.

Acting outside a sharran cell

If a single member of an adventuring party is a Sharran devotee, his companions might not know it—even if they have adventured with him for years or known him their entire lives. Since Shar's faithful thrive on secrets, it would not do for a Sharran working with others to reveal his true identity and motives. The character must be charismatic without being a leader, subtly shifting the party's goals and movements to benefit his cell. He might suggest an out-of-the-way destination when it's time for the party to replenish their gear, so that he can make contact with another cell member or quietly exterminate a local devotee of Selune. If the party is close to discovering a Sharran cell or a Shadow Weave node (see page 98), the character might contrive some way to steer them in another direction. Whatever his motivations, a Sharran in a party of nonbelievers lives a life of lies, trickery, and deception.

The unworthy of Ilsensine

This relatively new cult worships the illithid goddess Ilsensine and is directed in that worship by an outcast mind flayer cleric named Qooql (see page 116 for statistics and other details). The cult resides in a series of winding caverns beneath the Giant Run Mountains, south of Trader's Road along the Dragon Coast. The cult is made up of Qooql, his stone giant cohort, a tribe of grimlocks that have come to revere him, and a clan of shield dwarves who have been *charmed* for so long they now believe that Qooql is their only hope in the world.

The shield dwarves act as emissaries to the outside world, often traveling to nearby cities to pick up information, gather supplies, and spread rumors that benefit Qooql and the cult. The grimlocks, on the other hand, are Qooql's muscle. They protect the cult's caverns from incursions from the Underdark, as well as the occasional adventuring band or curious interloper from above. Although Qooql has just in the past few months consolidated his power and finalized control over these two groups, the mind flayer already has big plans for the surrounding region.

Qooql first made his way toward the surface from the mind flayer city of Oryndoll, where he had made a pilgrimage to seek out the wisdom handed down by the avatars of Ilsensine, who had twice made an appearance in that city. For reasons known only to it, the city's elder brain rejected Qooql, and he was not allowed to enter the city. Believing this to be a test, the mind flayer lurked at the edges of Oryndoll for weeks. Finally he made another attempt to enter, only to be repelled by a force of thralls. Unable enter the city and suspecting an alliance of false priests was arrayed against him, he turned away from the city and headed toward the surface, where he encountered a band of stone giants from the village of Cairnheim.

He successfully *charmed* the leader of the band and asked for an audience with his chieftain, whom Qooql also thought he could manipulate. The chieftain, however, turned out to be a crafty

stone giant lich called The Dodkong, which spelled trouble for the illithid priest. Realizing the mind flayer had *charmed* one of his greatest hunters, the Dodkong ordered Qooql to be destroyed. The illithid managed to convince his *charmed* ally that the Dodkong was insane and meant to kill them both, and the two fled the caves of the stone giants as quickly as they could. Qooql wandered for a few more weeks before running into an ambush prepared by a tribe of grimlocks. Qooql used his *mind blast* on the ambushers, but rather than killing them he granted them "amnesty" and followed them back to their lair after *charming* all but one of the party, which he consumed after the rest had set out. The grimlocks in the lair were surprised that the mind flayer had not destroyed their comrades, and were doubly impressed that he seemed to be speaking with them as though he regarded them as something other than slaves. It did not take long for Qooql to turn this favorable attitude to his advantage, and the grimlock tribe soon became his servants.

The next group to come under his sway was the Ironhand clan of shield dwarves, who lived in a settlement built partly upon and partly underneath the mountains. The dwarves proved quite resistant to Qooql's *charm* power at first, and their reaction almost led to a war between them and Qooql's grimlock servants. The mind flayer eventually wore them down and had the entire clan *charmed*. He convinced the dwarves that he was not evil, and that he had come to the surface in order to seek redemption from a world that had turned its back on him.

Now, Qooql has the dwarves working under the assumption that they are building an army strong enough to drive the Dodkong from the mountains and rid the region of giants forever. The dwarves, naturally inclined to be sympathetic toward that goal, have allowed themselves to be turned into Qooql's servants. They now act as his eyes and ears in the world above, often traveling to cities as far away as Iriaebor and Westgate for information and supplies.

Areas of influence

The Unworthy of Ilsensine works out of an ever-expanding network of caverns and tunnels in the northern part of the Giant Run Mountains. Qooql has not attempted to expand his network beyond this secret, easily defended position, for fear of bringing unwanted attention to his work. The shield dwarf clan has suffered some attrition in its numbers, but the grimlock tribe has nearly doubled in size under the supervision and control of the mind flayer. Even though the Dodkong sometimes sends forces underground to root out his enemies, Qooql is content to live there until he can make a serious play for control of one of the cities on the surface.

To this end, Qooql has his eyes set on Westgate, and is firmly entrenched in the politics of the city—at least the part of it that lies outside the purview of the Night Masks. He sends dwarf emissaries (rogues would be a better term) to the city to make overtures and bribes, to search for weaknesses in the city's power structure, and to gain contacts and allies that could benefit him

when the time comes to make his move. He has also recently become interested in Iriaebor, although he has no real plans for the city at the moment.

REGIONS

Qooql is fairly contained in his cavern home beneath the Giant Run Mountains, but he sends more and more agents out with each passing month, and his list of contacts and allies is growing.

Amn: The Giant Run Mountains jut out of the ground in this region, and the dwarves and grimlocks found underneath these mountains might have some experience with the customs and culture of the Unworthy of Ilsensine.

Dragon Coast: This region holds the most interest for Qooql, since its reputation and society might allow for a mind flayer to openly rule a city within the area. He has a fairly well-established network of contacts there, and his knowledge of the region's inner workings has grown extensively in the past few months.

The Western Heartlands: While Qooql has little influence in this region, he is almost ready to send out feelers to the city of Iriaebor. He doesn't want to use his shield dwarves for this task, because he fears too much exposure could bring nosy heroes around, but he would not be above *dominating* (or hiring, if it came to it) a group of freelancers to give him the rundown on the city's politics, culture, and power elite.

Joining the unworthy of ilsensine

Qooql's recruiting efforts take place outside the main membership of his cult, as he attempts to establish contacts and independent agents within the city of Westgate. He continues to assimilate smaller groups of grimlocks into the main body of his organization, and is planning for the long term by controlling their breeding. He also encourages a higher than normal reproduction rate among the shield dwarves, often using his psionic abilities to "encourage" pairings and speed along the courtship process. Qooql uses gold to augment his psionics, especially when it comes to outside recruitment. His influence spans the Dragon Coast, including members of several prominent families and guilds. A band of pirates in the Dragonmere is completely controlled by the mind flayer, although no one but the leader is aware of the fact—and even the leader believes their benefactor to be a powerful noble rather than an abomination from the Underdark. Skilled adventurers are of interest to the mind



Shield dwarves and grimlocks, proud to be among the Unworthy of Ilsensine

flayer as well, since they can travel the surface world and bring back information and treasure, items crucial to the success of Qooql's strategies.

Grimlock and shield dwarf characters could start play as members of Qooql's cult, or some contact with the cult could be worked into the character's background. Joining the cult after one's career has already begun usually involves a financial transaction, perhaps a bribe or a payment for services rendered. While Qooql is not above using his *charm monster* ability to gain friends, this is not the optimal way to introduce player characters into his service. Adventurers who show no hesitation to commit immoral and unethical acts might come to his attention if they are in the area, and he always sizes up visitors to the dwarf enclave as possible recruits (willing or unwilling) for his organization.

costs and benefits of membership

Adventurers who join with Qooql can continue their adventuring careers, but must bring him tributes of gold, magic, and information on a semiregular basis. He expects them to provide him with information on the areas in which he is interested, and particularly wants to hear about cities in the surrounding regions in which he has no contacts. Such groups are instructed to make contact with intelligent evil creatures rather than rush in to kill them, so that Qooql might possibly recruit them into his service. This is perhaps the most dangerous task given to those who work for the mind flayer, and has led to the deaths of many adventuring groups at the hands of adversaries.

Working with Qooql does have some benefits, however. Even though he enjoys dominating friends and enemies alike, he is not an unpredictable tyrant—so those who do his bidding can enjoy some measure of security. They are also welcome in the caverns in which he makes his home, which could serve as a safe place to launch adventures from, as well as a haven for allies of Qooql who are on the run from powerful enemies. Although Qooql disapproves of good-aligned creatures being led toward his caverns by disciples who are not careful about hiding their trail, this turn of events would be preferable to having those operatives taken prisoner and perhaps being forced to give away his plans.

The shield dwarves have a variety of mundane goods that are available to Qooql's minions at discounted prices (a 5% discount is standard, and Diplomacy checks to reduce the cost even more are made with a +2 bonus). Small amounts of food and basic lodging might be available for free whenever allies of Qooql are staying in his underground haven. When travel through the Underdark is necessary, Qooql offers a grimlock guide to help make the trip easier (and to keep an eye out for traitors who might sell him out to other mind flayers, or to The Dodkong). Finally, Qooql himself is a repository of lore, both about the Underdark as well as about matters of religion and the arcane, and he will gladly act as a sage and advisor to those under his sway who ask for such aid.

Acting within the unworthy of ilsensine

Qooql is increasingly interested in what is going on outside the Dragon Coast, and he might put together a party of adventurous individuals to seek out information for him. Such a party might be a diverse band brought together for this purpose, or an established group of adventurers ready to sell their skills to a powerful patron. The mind flayer might use one group to bring him lore from the surrounding area, and another to seek out and verify any rumors uncovered by the first party. Qooql is always interested in tales of lost treasure, hidden magic, and ancient terrors that might be brought into his service.

Acting outside the unworthy of ilsensine

Qooql often sends a group of shield dwarves out to find worthy candidates to bring into his network. He has also employed a drow named Tentraan Deil for this specific purpose, although the rogue prefers to track his marks and watch them from afar, rather than mingle with them in order to better judge their skills. Most groups would balk at including a mind flayer's minion in their party, so discretion is often required if one wishes to serve Qooql while traveling with unaffiliated friends. The penalty for being revealed as a mind flayer's tool is usually swift and harsh.

zhentarim

The Zhentarim is a network of merchants, spies, and assassins backed by a large army and led by a Chosen of Bane named Fzoul Chembryl. Also known as the Black Network, the group uses intimidation, treachery, and brute force to establish itself as the foremost mercantile power in every area where it is a significant presence. Although its tactics are questionable, the Zhentarim has established itself as an integral part of the economy across much of the Moonsea region. The Zhents' influence does not stop there, however; they have established strong bases in and around the desert of Anauroch and the Lake of Steam. They also have agents across the North and the Unapproachable East who work tirelessly to turn those regions into bastions of Zhentarim influence.

The Zhents are a normal part of life in the Moonsea, as accepted there as any other mercantile group would be in another region of Faerûn. Of course, their methods and tactics are well known, but they are also fair traders who bring a lot of foreign gold and goods within reach of those in the region who can afford them. Along the Sword Coast, the Zhentarim is seen as a faraway enemy that uses blackmail, extortion, and intimidation to get whatever it wants. Those who travel under the Zhent banner in Waterdeep or Baldur's Gate are likely to raise a few eyebrows and close a few doors, but few citizens in those cities feel overtly threatened by the Black Network. The Lords' Alliance in the North and the

merchant princes of Amn know better, however, and both groups do all they can to stop the expansion of Zhentarim power and interests wherever and whenever they can.

Areas of influence

Because of recent upheavals in the organization as well as the appearance of new threats such as the Shadovar, the Zhents have refocused their efforts on dominating the Moonsea region. They are gathering their forces at both Zhentil Keep and the Citadel of the Raven, which is making Hillsfar and Melvaunt very nervous. While there has been no overtly aggressive sign from either fortress, everyone in the region is beginning to feel the weight of Fzoul's stare.

The city of Mintar on the northwestern shore of the Lake of Steam is the most likely place for such an expansion, since it is ruled by an army of Banites under the control of Fzoul's ally, Teldorn Darkhope. This region, with its many independent cities and ruthless tyrants, has been dubbed by some to be the Moonsea of the South, and soon the Black Network might lend even more credibility to this nickname.

Thesk is another area ripe for Zhentarim expansion, thanks to the massive orc army that the Zhents left in the region after the war against the Tuigan Horde. The orcs have become a part of the Theskan landscape, however, and their loyalty to the Black Network has waned. Fzoul has sent increasing numbers of emissaries of late to attempt to regain control over the orcs, but so far he has succeeded only in reaching tenuous agreements that quickly fall apart. Rumors have been circulating that Fzoul has brought in Manxam the beholder to aid in the orcs' recruitment, and some of Fzoul's most trusted assassins and enforcers have been called away to the east as well.

REGIONS

The following regions have a significant Zhentarim presence, or have attracted the attention of Zhent agents and recruiters as possible locations for expanding the group's influence:

Anauroch: Until the City of Shade reappeared over the desert sands, the Zhents were the most influential group in the desert. They still control trade through the middle of the desert along the Black Road, and the Zhentarim can be found everywhere along its winding path.

The Lake of Steam: The Banite stronghold of Mintar is very friendly to the Black Network, which has begun installing its representatives through the church hierarchy that rules the city. The Zhents are slowly becoming a part of the Mintaran landscape, and it is more and more common nowadays to find soldiers flying the banner of the Zhentarim alongside that of the army of Bane that occupies the city.

The Moonsea: This region is the Zhents' home base, and their numbers and influence here are greater than in any other part of Faerûn. The local population values the trade and military might that the masters of Zhentil Keep bring to the region. The growth of the Zhentarim armies has the common folk wondering

if they will soon march on Melvaunt or Hillsfar in an attempt to solidify their control of the region.

The North and the Silver Marches: The Zhents' infiltration of these regions, outside of their obvious occupation of Llorgh, has been more insidious than in other locations. Retired Zhentarim soldiers have settled in the region, claiming that they have broken ties with the Black Network and now desire a faraway location to live out the rest of their lives. The Lords' Alliance and the people of the regions are skeptical of these claims, however.

Thesk: The Black Network is only just now starting to gain a foothold here, but the Theskans still view the orcs, as well as their perceived Zhentarim masters, with well-founded mistrust and fear.

Joining the Zhentarim

The Zhentarim has slowed its recruiting efforts in recent months to focus on reconsolidating its power in the Moonsea region. The Zhents are still working behind the scenes to regain the loyalty of the orc horde in Thesk, and they would like to expand their trade network into the Lake of Steam region to take better advantage of the incredible opportunities in Calimshan and Amn.

The group is always on the lookout for valuable new recruits. In areas where its soldiers and caravans are common sites—the Moonsea, Anauroch, and parts of the North—the Zhentarim openly recruit new soldiers from the local population. The Zhents prefer those with some experience, but young recruits are often used to make the arduous journey across the desert from Llorgh to Dagger Falls and back.

Joining the Black Network is a simple matter—one simply finds a Zhentarim outpost or force and states his intentions. The character is then directed to a local lieutenant, who questions the prospective recruit in order to gauge his loyalty, talents, and fitness. Those suited to serve as common soldiers are either placed into whatever unit they happen to approach, or are sent to units in need of reinforcement. Those who show evidence of more specialized talents are considered more carefully. Mages and clerics, both among the most valuable and dangerous recruits the Black Network takes in, are often sent to Zhentil Keep so the priests of Bane can further investigate their loyalty. Rogues, druids, and rangers are most often allowed to act independently in the interest of the organization, since their talents and proclivities do not mesh well with the structured nature of the Zhentarim military forces.

If a character wishes to join the organization but is already occupied on a quest of his own, he might still be considered. The Zhentarim use such adventurer-recruits to keep abreast of information not readily available to the organization through its trading network and local contacts. The truth behind legends, news of activity in ruins and other abandoned sites, and the locations of magic artifacts and deposits of natural resources are all valuable pieces of information that the Black Network can use. Those who report such findings back to the leadership can expect to be rewarded, while those who withhold such information can expect to be severely punished if they are found out.

costs and benefits of membership

The Zhentarim require active service from all their members, and complete respect of the authority of those above a character in the chain of command. That said, even low-level characters who wish to join the Zhentarim will not necessarily be pressed into caravan duty or other such mundane tasks. As long as they continue to provide the Black Network with information about the region in which they are active, new members are free to explore and adventure in pursuit of their own goals (assuming they are not at cross-purposes with the organization). There is no real prerequisite for joining, other than a willingness to follow orders—which usually entails committing evil acts.

Membership in the organization has many benefits. A Zhent is automatically under the protection of the entire network, and should be able to call for aid if he is under attack or the interests of the group are in jeopardy. Treachery among the ranks is rare, because loyalty is a key component of the Zhentarim philosophy. A Zhentarim PC can hire allied henchmen and hirelings at a 10% discount from the standard rates (including hazard pay), and the character gains a +4 bonus on Diplomacy checks made to influence a hireling's attitude. A character with the Leadership feat gains a +2 bonus on his Leadership score for the purpose of recruiting cohorts and followers if he draws solely from a pool made up of Zhentarim forces or loyalists.

Zhentarim PCs can also requisition equipment at discounted rates if they are within Zhent-controlled territory or are dealing with affiliated merchants or caravans. In such a case, mundane equipment

procured from the Black Network carries a standard discount of 5%, and Diplomacy checks made by a Zhent character to lower the price of magic items or special equipment gain a +2 bonus.

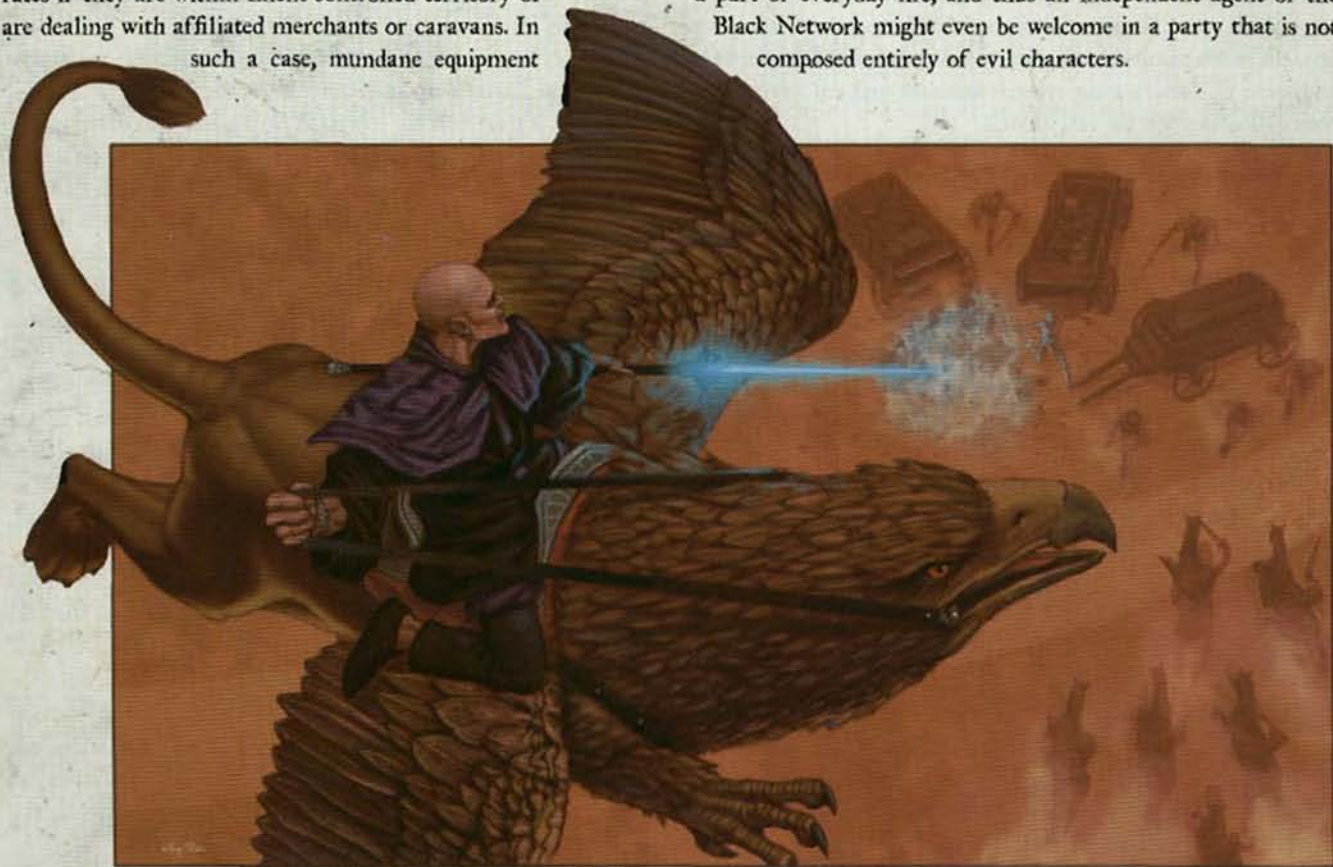
Acting within the zhentarim

A group of adventurers might be put together by the Zhentarim in order to further the organization's goals in nontraditional ways. The group might be tasked with rooting out priests loyal to Cyricist in the Moonsea region, or beating the Harpers to a rumored artifact or *portal*. Such groups would be well supported with gold, magic items, and the aid of friendly contacts in the area in which they are operating. Individual Zhentarim might be paired up with compatible party members from within the ranks to form these independent adventuring bands, or an entire group of adventurers might be lured into the fold by promises of treasure and authority.

Acting outside the zhentarim

Being a member of the Zhentarim does not make a character unacceptable in an adventuring party—in fact, the member's easier access to high-quality weapons, magic items, and special equipment could be seen as a great benefit. While the entire party cannot abuse the Zhentarim's privileges, he can still bring items into the group that might not normally be available. In the Moonsea and along the Black Road, Zhents are considered a part of everyday life, and thus an independent agent of the Black Network might even be welcome in a party that is not composed entirely of evil characters.

Illustration by Marc Sasso



A Zhentarim wizard mounted on a griffon swoops down on a caravan



EVIL PLACES

Magic and the energy of the planes flow freely throughout the world of Toril. Archmages wield unthinkable powers, and priests of dark gods perform rituals to concentrate evil in their unholy shrines. The direct effects of such power being directed by mortals are obvious to all—but there are more subtle consequences as well. In the labyrinth of darkness and stone beneath the surface of the world, such energies pool to create earth nodes, where powerful magic is trapped in the stone itself. This power waits to be tapped by those sensitive to its presence, but other concentrated sources of power exist as well.

Nodes of pure evil dot the landscape where acts of unspeakable immorality have taken place. Likewise, the newly formed Shadow Weave has minor imperfections that cause its energy to leak onto the Material Plane and infuse the surrounding environment with its corrupt arcane nature. Shrines to evil deities are imbued with the essence of faith itself, translating into boons for those who follow the god and corruption for those who do not. Finally, an insidious form of corruption can be found where elder evils tread. These beings of pure evil leave behind traces of their power that can corrupt for generations those born in the area.

evil nodes

Certain concentrations of evil energy radiate like a beacon to magic-wielding creatures in the area. The power is not visible to the naked eye, but can be detected by those with the appropriate knowledge and sensitivity. Evil spellcasters pay dearly for knowledge of the location of evil nodes, which increase the effectiveness of their spells and allow them to call forth powers above and beyond their normal ability. Evil outsiders and intelligent undead that can cast spells also lair around evil nodes whenever possible—and often fight each other for control of such an area.

Many node locations are already known, especially among those who travel in evil circles, and others have yet to be discovered. Nodes manifest themselves in different ways, from a constant shadowy aura to an area of stale air that seems to assault the lungs of nonevil creatures that come near. Several example nodes and their locations are given below, although many more exist across and underneath Faerûn.

detecting an evil node

The boundaries of an evil node are not visible to the naked eye unless the node itself manifests some visible effect. An evil node can be detected, however; any creature that comes within 30 feet of the outermost layer of an evil node can make a DC 20 Intelligence check, or a DC 20 Spellcraft check if it has the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat. Evil creatures gain a +2 bonus on this check. A successful check of either sort reveals the source and direction of a concentration of evil power. Characters with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat recognize this power as an evil node, though they cannot determine its extent, shape, or class without physically mapping it.

The shape of an evil node is not determined by the surrounding geography. It might extend for some ways underground, into the side of a mountain, or through the waters of a river or lake. In some cases, most of an evil node might be hidden by such a feature, allowing creatures of an appropriate sort to take it over without much disturbance. Evil spellcasters often excavate such areas for their lairs, extending a tower into the air and a dungeon underground in order to fully benefit from the node's area of influence.

evil node class and size

The power of an evil node is determined by its class, a number that normally falls between 1 and 5. The higher the number, the more powerful the evil node. Weak evil nodes are more common than strong ones. The majority of evil nodes are Class 1 or 2; only a few Class 3, 4, and 5 nodes have been discovered. Evil nodes more powerful than Class 5 have not been found, although theoretically they could exist.

Evil nodes of Class 2 or higher diminish in strength as they radiate out from the core. The intensity of a powerful node is measured in layers; a node has as many layers as its class. Thus, a Class 2 evil node has two layers, while a Class 5 evil node has five. The innermost shell has the highest rating, equal to that of the entire node. Each layer beyond the first has a class rating 1 point lower than the layer it surrounds. For example, in a Class 3 node, the innermost Class 3 area is encased in a Class 2 layer, which is surrounded by a Class 1 layer.

The size of an evil node is linked to its class, as shown on Table 5-1.

TABLE 5-1: EVIL NODES

Class	Node DC	Layer Width	Node Diameter
1	10	5 to 30 feet	10 to 60 feet
2	15	10 to 40 feet	40 to 160 feet
3	20	20 to 80 feet	120 to 480 feet
4	25	30 to 120 feet	240 to 960 feet
5	30	40 to 160 feet	400 to 1,600 feet
6+	35+	50 to 200 feet	600 to 2,400 feet

Node DC: This value is the base DC for checks made to harness the node's power (see Evil Node Powers, below).

Layer Width: This value describes the thickness of each layer in the node. For example, a typical Class 3 node might consist of three layers, each 50 feet wide.

Node Diameter: This numerical range represents the overall diameter of the node, from one outermost edge of its Class 1 shell to the exact opposite edge of the same shell.

evil node powers

An evil node's class and the values of its various layers have implications regarding the powers it provides. Except for the bonus the node grants to effective caster level (see below), these powers are available only to a character with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat. A character must be aware of an evil node in order to use any of its powers.

Bonus to Effective Caster Level: Any evil spellcaster (or evil creature with spell-like abilities) can take advantage of this basic feature of an evil node. An evil spellcaster standing within an evil node layer can attempt to add its class to the effective caster level of any spell he casts. To succeed, he must make a successful Intelligence check (DC equal to node's base DC + spell level) while casting the spell. (Making this attempt does not change the spell's casting time.) If the check fails, the spell is simply cast at the character's normal caster level. If the check succeeds, the spellcaster adds the layer's class to his caster level for that spell. A character with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat can attempt a Spellcraft check instead of an Intelligence check, against the same DC, for this purpose.

A spellcaster can choose to use less of a node's power than is available in order to lower the DC for the check. For example, a spellcaster might elect to add only two levels to his effective caster level in the center of a Class 4 node, thereby lowering the DC from 25 + spell level to 15 + spell level.

A bonus to effective caster level has several effects on spells, although some forms of magic benefit more than others. All effects dependent on caster level (such as caster level checks, damage dice, duration, range, and the like) are calculated according to the new caster level. For example, if a 9th-level cleric successfully uses node magic to improve the caster level of a *flame strike* cast in the center of a Class 4 node, the spell deals 13d6 points of damage and has a maximum range of 230 feet because the caster has an effective caster level of 13th (9th-level cleric + Class 4 node). The bonus to effective caster level does not allow a spellcaster to exceed a spell's maximum damage or other fixed limit (if applicable).

A spellcaster using an evil node in this way must make a separate check for each spell he wants to modify.

new node types and node magic feats

Node magic was first introduced in the *Underdark* supplement, with its description of earth nodes. All the node magic feats in that book refer only to earth nodes. With the introduction of evil nodes and Shadow Weave nodes in this book, the roster of node magic feats has been expanded. Now, whenever a character chooses the Node Spellcasting feat, he must attune himself to a specific type of node—earth, evil, or Shadow Weave. Thereafter, any node magic feats he selects apply to that type of node only. It is possible to select Node

Spellcasting more than once, applying it to a different node type each time. In this case, the other node magic feats must also be selected more than once to apply to different types of nodes.

A character with the Node Spellcasting feat gains a +2 bonus on his Intelligence check to detect a node of a type to which he is not attuned.

Revised node magic feats can be found in Chapter 2, beginning on page 25.

Granted Spells: Evil nodes are often tied to a specific theme, such as darkness or undead, and they can grant spells to evil spellcasters who are sensitive to their magic. Every evil node can grant a number of spells equal to its class, with a maximum spell level equal to its class. For example, a Class 4 evil node can grant four spells of 4th level or lower. A character with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat can access any of a node's granted spells that he is high enough in level to cast normally. To make use of a node-granted spell, a character must stand inside the node and attempt a Spellcraft check (against the node's base DC; see Table 5-1).

A character who prepares spells can prepare each of a node's granted spells that he can cast, provided that he does so while within the node. No extra spell slots are granted; these spells must be prepared within the character's normal allotment and in the appropriate spell slots. The character must succeed on a Spellcraft check for each spell so prepared (see above). Failure indicates that the spellcaster cannot prepare that spell or attempt to prepare any other node spells for 24 hours. Once prepared, a node spell is treated like a normal spell prepared by the character. If the spellcaster leaves the node, he can still cast the spells he prepared while there.

A spellcaster who does not prepare spells (such as a sorcerer) cannot use a node-granted spell outside the node. As long as he remains within the node, however, he can use the node-granted spell as if it were one of his spells known at the appropriate spell level. No extra spell slots are granted; these spells must be accounted for within the character's normal allotment. The caster must attempt a Spellcraft check each time he tries to use a node spell in this way; making this attempt does not change the spell's casting time. Failure indicates that he cannot use that spell and may not attempt to use any of the node's spells for 24 hours.

Imprison: A character who is attuned to evil nodes can imprison other creatures inside an evil node indefinitely. Trapped creatures are not visible, may not communicate with the outside world, and cannot affect their environment—in effect, they are in a state of suspended animation. A node can accommodate a number of trapped creatures equal to its class, and no single creature can have more Hit Dice than three times the node's class.

A character attempting to imprison a creature must attempt a Spellcraft check (against the node's base DC) while he and the creature are both standing within the node. The creature must be willing to be imprisoned, whether through *charming*, compulsion, bribery, or agreement. Failure on the check indicates that the creature is not imprisoned, and the character cannot attempt to imprison that creature again for 24 hours. Attempting to imprison a creature requires a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Imprisoned creatures disappear, dispersed within the energy of the node itself. They cannot speak or act, do not require sleep, food, or water, and do not age—essentially, they cease to exist. If a node has reached its imprisonment limit, no one can imprison

new creatures there. A character attempting to imprison a creature instantly knows whether the node is full, although he does not know what creatures are imprisoned there if he is not the one who imprisoned them. Objects and nonintelligent creatures cannot be stored in a node in this fashion.

A character who has imprisoned a creature in an evil node can retrieve the creature from any evil node—not just the one he stored it in—by making a Spellcraft check (against the DC needed to imprison the creature). Success summons the creature wherever the character designates within the area of the node. Attempting to release an imprisoned creature is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

A spellcaster other than the one who trapped the creature can also attempt to retrieve it, but only within the evil node where the creature was originally imprisoned. To retrieve a creature stored by another character, the spellcaster must make a Spellcraft check (DC equal to the node's base DC + the caster level of the character who originally imprisoned the creature). Success indicates that a trapped creature (determined at random, if more than one is imprisoned) appears at a point designated by the character retrieving it.

Mining and Modifications

As noted above, evil creatures and spellcasters might choose to make their lairs within the area of an evil node. Such creatures often modify an evil node or the surrounding geography to better take advantage of its powers or to better defend themselves. A creature might build a tower or an underground fortress within the area of a node, create a temple to an evil deity, or make another physical modification to the node's space.

Customization must be done by the appropriate physical means and takes the same amount of time that such a project normally takes. Ensuring that the node remains magically intact during the process requires a successful Spellcraft check (DC equal to the node's base DC + 10) by an overseeing character with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat when the customization is complete (or after each week of an ongoing customization project). Each failed check permanently reduces the node's class by 1.

example evil node

A renegade fey'ri named Entreya lairs near this evil node, which spoils all of the plant life and water within its area. It can be found on the eastern edge of the High Forest, about seventy-five miles south of the ruins of Hellgate Keep.

HIGH FOREST EVIL NODE

Class: 4

Granted Spells: *ray of enfeeblement*, *shadow spray*^{FRCS}, *ray of exhaustion*, *enervation*

shadow weave nodes

As more and more of Shar's followers manipulate the Shadow Weave toward their vile ends, it has begun to leave traces of its corrupted power across Faerûn. These pools of leaking Shadow Weave magic are known as Shadow Weave nodes. Such nodes are exceedingly rare, but for those Shadow Weave users who know of their existence and location, they are a very powerful tool indeed.

Shadow Weave nodes follow all the rules for evil nodes with regard to detection, utilization, class and size, and modifications, although only Shadow Weave users can benefit from a Shadow Weave node. These nodes do not have the imprisoning ability of an evil node; in addition, their powers are different from those of evil nodes, as described below.

Bonus to Effective Caster Level: Evocation and transmutation spells cannot be modified by a Shadow Weave node, nor can spells with the light descriptor. The Spellcraft DC to increase the caster level of an enchantment, illusion, or necromancy spell cast within a Shadow Weave node is reduced by 4.

Granted Spells: Shadow Weave nodes almost always grant spells from the enchantment, illusion, and necromancy schools, as well as those with the darkness descriptor. They cannot grant evocation or transmutation spells (except those with the darkness descriptor), or those with the light descriptor.

Empowerment: A character with the appropriate Node Spellcasting feat can draw energy from a Shadow Weave node, making him stronger, faster, and more robust. To do so, the character must attempt a Spellcraft check (against the node's base DC) while standing within the node. Failure indicates that the character gains no benefit and may not again attempt empowerment within this node for 24 hours. Success grants the character a bonus to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution equal to the node's class for a period of 1 hour. The character can choose to use the bonus for one ability score or to distribute the bonus among any or all of those ability scores at the time of empowerment. He can choose not to take advantage of the node's full strength in order to lower the DC of the Spellcraft check.

For example, a Sharran priest in a Class 5 Shadow Weave node decides to empower himself before battling a group of adventurers. If he succeeds on his DC 30 Spellcraft check, he can distribute 5 points between his Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores. If he only wants to boost his Constitution by 2 points for some extra hit points, then he could do so by making a DC 15 Spellcraft check (a Class 2 node's base DC).

example shadow weave node

Darger Ironmoot's clan of dwarf worshipers of Shar has built its underground fortress around a Shadow Weave node deep in the Great Rift. The node appears as a fractured rock that continually leaks shadow up into an impenetrable darkness.

GREAT RIFT SHADOW WEAVE NODE

Class: 3

Granted Spells: *silent image, scare, rage, control darkness and shadow**

*New spell described on page 29.

shrines

The gods of Toril play an active role in the day-to-day affairs of the world's inhabitants, and are a force in their lives as much as nature, magic, life, and death. Generations upon generations have spent amazing amounts of money and time building grand temples to venerate these gods, and wars have been fought in their names. But, at its heart, all religion is local, especially for deities whose power is linked to the number and strength of their followers. Not every town has a grand temple, and not every crossroads inn has a cleric of the local gods (of which there are usually many). For these places, a shrine must suffice as a gathering place and focal point for their worship. A shrine can be built and dedicated by a priest, or an existing structure or physical feature could be recognized as a shrine because of its common use in ceremonies conducted by local worshipers. However they come into being, the gods certainly recognize and appreciate these shrines, and the best of them draw more than their fair share of divine attention.

A shrine occasionally serves as a conduit for a minuscule portion of a god's power. While this transformation most often takes place at the hands of a beseeching cleric or lay priest, sometimes a deity takes the initiative to infuse an area personally. Some shrines are naturally created when a god makes a direct impact on an area. Many of the known shrines of Faerûn were created during the Time of Troubles, when the gods walked among mortals and fought terrible battles against one another and the continent's denizens.

shrine appearance

A shrine's location can take practically any physical form, from a carved stone idol, to a natural lake or cavern, to a grove of sacred trees. A shrine's form and location usually represent some aspect of the god's portfolio, but need not do so. Shrines that are centered around an artifact or specific piece of landscape radiate outward, but their size has no bearing on the potency of their effects. In fact, shrines of all sizes exist. Some are no larger than a tangle of vines that can surround a single worshiper, while others might encompass an entire mountaintop.

detecting a shrine

Since most shrines appear mundane, they can be difficult to detect for those who do not know of their existence. Sometimes they manifest minor physical effects connected to their aspect in some way. A virgin grove dedicated to Silvanus might have

a sweet wind blowing through it at all times, while the air in a cave dedicated to Bane might cause all nonbelievers to wheeze and choke. In order to recognize these signs as signifying the presence of a shrine, a character standing within it must make a successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check. If the check result exceeds the DC by 5 or more, he can determine the strongest facet of the god's alignment; for example, a shrine to Mask would radiate chaos, while one dedicated to Loviatar would radiate evil. If the check result exceeds the DC by 10 or more, he can determine which god the shrine is dedicated to.

shrine powers

Shrines are not just places of worship; they contain a small seed of their god's power, granting boons to loyal followers and casting curses on those not of the faith. These benefits for followers can be fleeting insights into history or matters of the arcane, or they can be full-fledged powers that last for a day or more. Whatever the boon, it exists at the whim of the god that provided it, which means that it can be taken away as easily as it was granted.

The energy that radiates from a shrine is ambient—it becomes a part of the location itself. It cannot be used for any purpose other than the benefit of a god's follower, and even then only the most dedicated followers gain the god's favor. A cleric or paladin of the appropriate deity can gain a shrine's benefit whenever he wishes—unless the god has decided to punish him for transgressions against the faith. Followers of a deity are not so lucky, and must make either a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or Charisma check in order to gain the shrine's benefit. Having a priest lead the ritual invoking the shrine's power provides a +4 bonus on this check. A follower can only invoke the powers of a shrine once every 24 hours, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt.

As stated, every shrine has a ritual or other requirement that a follower must perform or fulfill in order to beseech his god's favor. These rituals vary from the sacrifice of gold and jewels to blood rites to a prolonged period of prayer or meditation. Priests of a god automatically know the nature of such rituals, but others must research them or learn them from an appropriate cleric. Researching the ritual for a particular shrine requires a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check or bardic knowledge check.

example shrines

The following shrines are well known to the clergy of their respective gods. A successful DC 25 bardic knowledge check, Knowledge (local) check, or Gather Information check reveals their location as well, although poking around too much is certain to raise the curiosity of nearby clerics of the god in question. Each shrine entry is organized in the same general format, as described below.

SHRINE NAME

A description of the shrine's appearance, location, and guardians (if any) follows the name entry.

Ritual: This section describes the ritual that grants a benefit to followers, and spells out any skill check or ability check, time commitment, or sacrifice that must be made to complete the ritual. These rituals can be performed by anyone, but only those devoted to the god in question can receive a ritual's benefits. All others suffer some baleful effect for having the arrogance to plead to a god that they do not worship.

Ritual Benefit: A description of the benefit conferred to a follower that successfully completes the ritual.

Baleful Effect: Nonfollowers who perform the ritual or otherwise desecrate the shrine suffer the effects described this section. No saving throw is allowed against these effects unless otherwise noted. Secondary curses are often given and usually allow a saving throw of some kind.

Additional Information: Guardian creatures, example encounters, and any other useful information for DMs and players can be found here.

THE VALE OF WHISPERS

The supplicants of Shar value secrets above gold. Many of Shar's faithful spend their entire lives gathering and keeping secrets, using them as currency to increase their standing within the church and to stay in the favor of their goddess. Every secret whispered to a priest or follower of the Lady of Loss is heard by the deity as well, and she stores them all in an unholy shrine known as the Vale of Whispers.

The "vale" is actually a 100-foot-radius, dome-shaped cave created by an overhang of rock at the southern end of the Graypeak Mountains, just northwest of the Marsh of Chelimer. The cave is said to be as old as Faerûn itself, and its floor and ceiling are covered by thousands of needlelike rock formations. In the evening, when the light of the setting sun streams in through the cave's only entrance, these stony teeth give one the impression of walking into the maw of a creature of legendary evil.

It is only after one walks inside that the true nature of the place can be determined. All the whispered secrets of Faerûn make their way here, and they bounce around the cave ceaselessly. A hushed cacophony persists in the cave at all times as whispers echo off the walls and stones. No matter where one stands within the cave, every minute or so a secret will reverberate to precisely his spot, that whisper briefly becoming much louder and clearer than the others. Otherwise he hears only the gurgle of the other secrets as they flow around the room. Animals cannot stand the sound of this incessant whispering and have learned to avoid the cave. It requires a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check or Handle Animal check to coerce a familiar or animal companion (respectively) into the cavern; all other animals will refuse to set foot inside.

Occasionally the secrets seem to take form and flit like shadows around the room. In reality, this disturbance is a flock of ultrapowerful shadows bound by Shar to guard the Vale of

Whispers against faithless intruders. Anyone not of the Sharran faith (or not accompanied by a cleric or follower in good standing) who spends more than a few rounds inside the cavern comes under immediate attack by the shadows. Fighting them is made even more difficult by the preponderance of stalagmites and stalactites, which provide no barrier to the shadows but cause major problems for corporeal creatures trying to target their attackers. Even if the shadows are slain, they reappear within the vale in 2d20 hours.

Vale of Whispers Ritual: The ritual used to invoke the shrine's power is quite simple. A supplicant must find her way to the center of the chamber, where thousands of simultaneous whispers can be clearly heard. She must kneel here and listen to the whispers until she can discern a single secret that repeats itself over and over again. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence check followed by up to 1 hour of meditation. For every 2 points by which her check result exceeds the DC, the time necessary to discern the secret is lessened by 5 minutes. A priest of Shar automatically succeeds at the ritual, although if she fails her Intelligence check she must meditate for the full hour in order to receive the ritual's benefit.

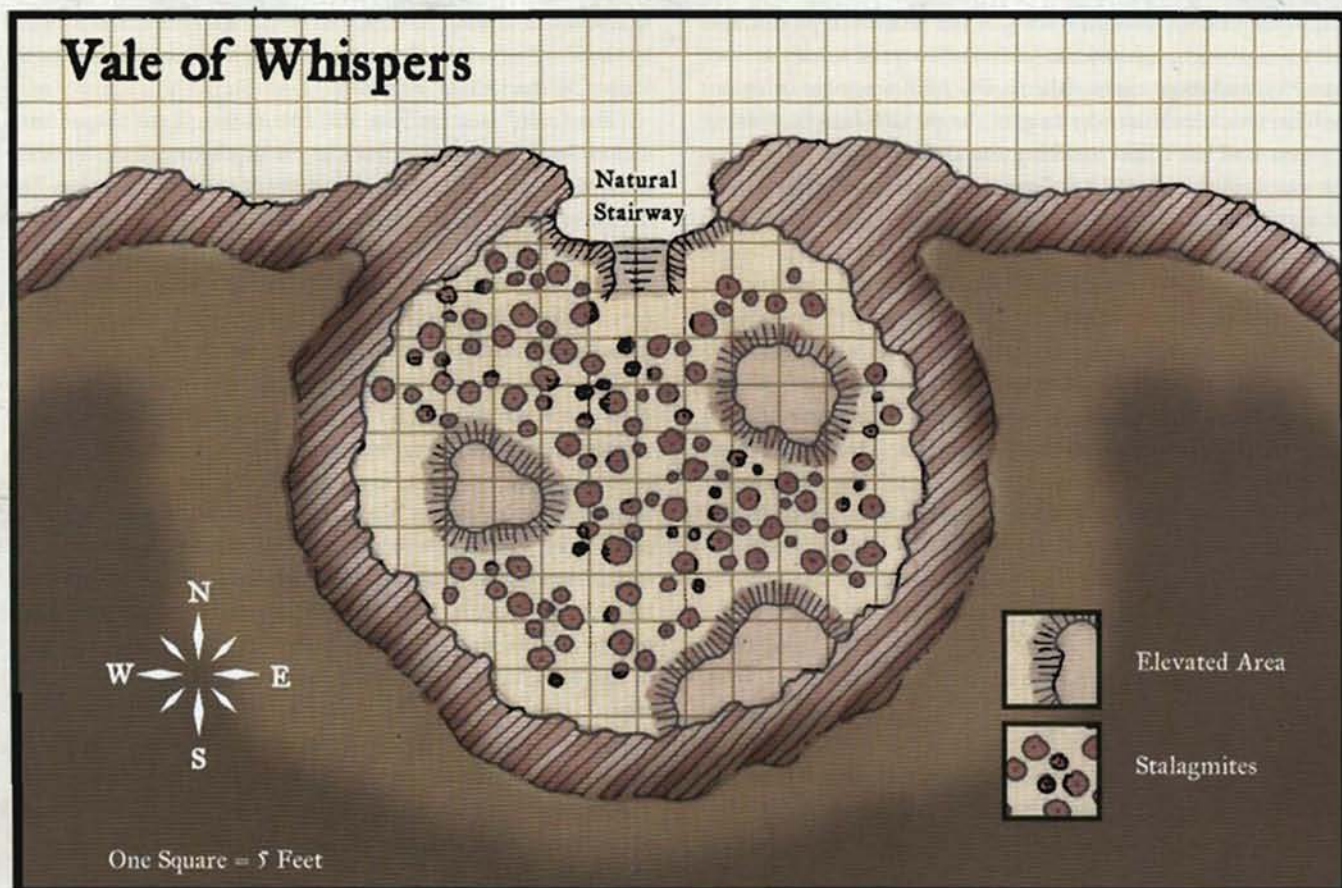
Ritual Benefit: The character gains a +20 circumstance bonus on all Bluff checks related to a single course of action for 24 hours. Thus, if the character was on a campaign to convince a town mayor that each of his staff members was corrupt, the

bonus would apply to all Bluff checks made to sway the mayor. If, during that period, the character used a Bluff check to feint in combat or bypass the mayor's guards, the bonus would not apply.

Baleful Effect: Nonfollowers who attempt the ritual are struck with a powerful curse. They suffer the effect of a *bestow curse* spell that reduces their highest ability score by 6 points for 24 hours. There is no save against this effect, and it cannot be removed by any means short of a *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle* spell.

Clerics of other gods who attempt the ritual, or try to cast a divine spell, or attempt to turn the shrine's shadow guardians suffer even more. Not only are they hit with the above curse, but they must also make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) in order to cast any spell during the next 24 hours, as Shar whispers their darkest fears directly into their minds every time they attempt to draw upon their god's power.

Shadow Guardians (10): CR 8; Large undead (incorporeal); HD 10d12; hp 65; Init +7; Spd fly 50 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp —; Atk or Full Atk +8 melee (2d4 Str, incorporeal touch); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA create spawn, Strength damage; SQ darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +4 turn resistance, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +9; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.



Skills and Feats: Hide +11*, Listen +11, Search +7, Spot +11; Alertness, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative.

Strength Damage (Su): The touch of a shadow guardian deals 2d4 points of Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow guardian dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid reduced to Strength 0 by a shadow guardian becomes a shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds.

Shadow guardians have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Search checks.

*A shadow guardian gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

BLOODY ROCK

At the northern edge of the Far Forest, where hills and crags from the Nether Mountains break through the canopy, lies a deadly shrine to the Beastlord, Malar, where the bones of the unlucky are doomed to lay. The forest around the shrine is densely packed with both trees and animals, and hunting is forbidden in the immediate area. While Malar's followers venerate the hunting of all creatures, this shrine is for the deliberate destruction of sentient creatures only.

Surrounded by thick clusters of tall evergreen trees, this clearing is almost impossible to find unless the precise location and the path to it are known. The surrounding terrain is rocky and hilly, obscuring vision and making travel by horseback impossible. Bloody Rock is a dagger-shaped stone that juts out of the earth to a height of nearly 30 feet. Every edge on the rock is jagged, and any creature that attempts to climb the rock would find its hands and feet sliced by every hold. A dozen standing stones of unknown origin, placed here by the Beastlord himself according to legend, surround the rock. The final feature in the clearing is a curved stone called the Claw, which has a flat area on which victims are laid as well as a sharp, upturned spike of stone where many a sacrifice has met its end.

Not only is hunting around the area forbidden, but the beasts that roam it are considered aspects of Malar himself. The god even sent a Beast of Malar into the area when it became clear that hostile adventurers had come to destroy the shrine. All animals in a 500-foot radius around the shrine are automatically hostile to anyone not of Malar's faith, and they are immune to any magical charms and compulsions that would change this (although they can still be calmed by successful skill checks and other mundane means). Animal companions and familiars are unaffected by this, but trained animals must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be lost to the Beastlord's influence forever.

Bloody Rock Ritual: Clerics and druids of Malar know that a fresh kill is one of the greatest tributes they can pay their master. The ritual of Bloody Rock is the most direct way to offer up such a sacrifice to the Beastlord, although the shrine only accepts sentient beings (living creatures with an Intelligence score of 3

or higher) as proper offerings. The creature is strapped to the Claw and ripped over and over again by the ritual leader, using either his own claws or with a special tool made from the claws of a bear or large predatory cat. As the sacrifice's blood flows downward, it is absorbed into the Claw and disappears. The ritual takes 2 hours to complete, and the leader must make a successful DC 20 Heal check in order to keep the victim alive while slowly draining his blood. If the ritual is properly performed, Bloody Rock begins to bleed as if punctured in several places. The blood is gathered in a special container for the ritual leader to drink, and that act ends the ritual.

Ritual Benefit: Whoever drinks the blood collected from Bloody Rock is protected and revitalized by the elixir. Over the next 24 hours, if the character is injured in combat, he is immediately targeted by a *cure serious wounds* spell. Taking damage from another source, such as a triggered trap or falling from a great height, does not invoke the effect. The spell has a caster level of 20th, and only the ritual leader can benefit from this effect.

Baleful Effect: Any creatures other than the ritual leader that drink the blood (including faithful followers of Malar) suffer no obvious ill effects, although they might detect a slight increase in their heartbeat. In truth, their blood thins and runs quicker for 24 hours, causing all wounds they suffer to bleed for an additional 1 hit point of damage per round until such characters receive magical healing.

A cleric of another faith who attempts the ritual, drinks the blood, or tries to channel divine energy while within the shrine suffers greatly. In addition to being subject to the bleeding effect described above, he must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be hit with internal bleeding as his veins begin to split and burst. The character immediately takes 2 points of Constitution damage, and must make another save each hour to avoid further damage of the same sort. This condition persists until the character dies, makes three consecutive saving throws, or is the target of a *heal* or *miracle* spell.

Sample Encounter (EL 10): Ritual leader (CE werewolf druid 6), 4 acolytes (CE human druid 2), 4 guards (CE human fighter 2).

THE THUNDER ROOM

The worshipers of Bane have grown more cohesive since the god's return and the appointment of Fzoul Chembryl as Bane's infallible mortal representative. They have begun to work more efficiently toward his goals, and their projects continue to become more ambitious. In a fit of religious fervor, a Banite general in Mintar named Daren Timbide (see page 121 for statistics and other details) took over an old government building and built a shrine to his god. He rebuilt the interior of the building to resemble a gladiatorial arena he had once fought in on the Dragon Coast, and he dubbed it the Thunder Room.

The Thunder Room started as nothing more than a place for ritual combat, where slaves, captured monsters, and volunteers

from the Banite army squared off for fun and profit. The crowds grew quickly, and a new level of seating was erected over the roof of the original building. As with all things in the city, the arena quickly attracted the attention of Teldorn Darkhope, the city's ruler, who is also an incredibly powerful priest of Bane. He attended a three-day festival of violence and gore, even opening the event with a ritual sacrifice in the god's name. The reaction was immense, and Bane himself noticed this sudden upswell in the faithfulness of his followers. It did not take long for Teldorn to requisition the use of the arena several days per month for celebrations, invocations, and newly christened holidays. Bane was pleased.

A popular feature of the Thunder Room was the percussion show that opened each event. Heavy-sounding drums pounded out rhythms as cymbals and hollow shells told the stories of Bane's greatest triumphs as well as his resurrection. Teldorn crafted a ritual around these rhythms that involved the severe beating of a cleric devoted to one of the weaker gods. The first time he performed the ritual, he could feel Bane's power surging within him. Fearing that the power Bane had directed to him might be misdirected during one of the many fights, Teldorn directed General Timbide to construct an underground chamber linked to the arena but well outside the area of battle.

That chamber is now complete, and has a ritual beating circle as well as a stage for the fourteen percussionists it requires to beat out the stories of Bane. While everyone who lives in Mintar knows of the Thunder Room, very few know of the secret shrine to Bane built underneath the city. Those who do know of it wish they had never found out, because they are usually the ones being used in the rituals.

Thunder Room Ritual: Fourteen percussionists and a cleric or follower of Bane must be assembled in the shrine beneath Mintar in order to perform this ritual. The musicians are assembled in their staging area, where they perform the Glorious History of Bane the Conqueror, a series of percussive vignettes that tells the story of Bane's rise, fall, and resurrection. During the rites, which take just over 2 hours to complete, the performer of the ritual must ceaselessly beat a prisoner in the center of the circle. While any prisoner will suffice for the ritual to take place, the prisoner must be a cleric of another faith in order for the performer to gain the ritual benefit. The prisoner cleric's level of power does not matter; even the lowliest clergyman will do.

Ritual Benefit: The work of beating an individual for more than two straight hours is not without its rewards. If the victim was a member of the clergy of some other deity, the ritual performer feels the strength of Bane flowing through him, making him better able to strike down the enemies of the Lord of Darkness. The character gains the ability to smite his foes (as the Destruction domain's granted power, but substituting character level for cleric level) a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier (minimum one) for a tenday.

Baleful Effect: It is hard to imagine anyone other than a follower of Bane attempting the Thunder Room ritual, but

should the cleric of another god attempt to cast a spell or channel Bane's divine energy, the deity shows him the folly of his hubris. His arms fill with weakness, and his resolve in combat crumbles. The character is so affected for 24 hours, during which time all damage he causes in melee combat is considered nonlethal damage.

Sample Encounter (EL 11): Ritual performer (LE cleric of Bane 8), 1 lieutenant (LE human fighter 4), 4 soldiers (LE half-orc fighter 3), 14 musicians (N human expert 3).

THE PIT OF MANY COLORS

During the Time of Troubles, Tiamat walked the face of Faerûn alongside most of the other gods. She took advantage of the opportunity to slay Gilgeam, a rival power in the Untheric pantheon. A deep pit opened at the site where Gilgeam's blood was spilled, and Tiamat quickly claimed the site as her own before Gilgeam could "corrupt" it and possibly use it as an avenue for resurrection. She used the pit to hoard the wealth she collected while in mortal form; once swallowed, the loot was transported safely back to her realm. Today, the pit still stands in an abandoned section of the town of Unthalass, and Tiamat's followers and supplicants use the pit to give the spoils of their crusade to their queen.

The pit is a 20-foot-wide hole in the earth shaped vaguely like a falling man. The bottom is filled with reddish-black mud that stays soft no matter what the weather is like. Gems of various colors as well as coins of all types from every nation on the continent can be seen glittering atop the muddy surface, giving the pit its common name. These objects are always present, although their composition changes from time to time. Followers of Tiamat come here to pay her tribute in the form of coins and gems, which they throw into the muddy pit. The treasure immediately sinks into the pit, and what happens to it after that is a matter of theological speculation. Certainly, no one has ever attempted to excavate the pit or dig underneath it to find what would presumably be one of the largest treasure hoards in Faerûn.

The ground on the edges of the pit is treacherous, often sliding down into the pit and taking whoever was standing nearby with it. Despite this erosion, the pit never seems to grow any larger. Parts that slide into the mud are replaced the next time followers approach the pit, and even Tiamat's clerics never know where these mudslides might occur next. Anyone standing in the area of a mudslide must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid falling in as well. If a creature falls into the pit, the mud acts like quicksand with all check DCs increased by 5 (see page 88 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). A cleric of another deity takes 2d6 points of unholy damage per round that he is in contact with the mud.

Pit of Many Colors Ritual: The ritual of the pit requires the sacrifice of treasure and a personal risk by the leader of the ritual. First, an amount of coins and gems with a gold piece value equal to 20 times the petitioner's level must be sacrificed in the name of Tiamat (thrown into the pit, that is). Then the petitioner must walk the entire edge of the pit while chanting to the Dragon Queen. Clerics of Tiamat who sacrifice enough

treasure and are in good standing do not have to worry about falling into the pit, because the goddess protects them from harm. All others must successfully avoid three mudslides in order to complete the ritual. Falling into the pit is either a sign of the goddess's displeasure or the unworthiness of the ritual leader. In either instance, no benefit is gained and the petitioner is at risk of drowning in the quicksand.

Ritual Benefit: A petitioner who gains the favor of the Dragon Queen takes on the aspect of one of her children. The character's physical form changes to resemble a dragon in subtle ways. This effect confers a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks for 24 hours, since the character can manifest her draconic presence. Also, once during the 24-hour period, the character can unleash the breath weapon of the dragon she now resembles. The form and characteristics of this breath weapon are just like those of a half-dragon of the appropriate type (see page 147 of the *Monster Manual*).

Baleful Effect: A nonfollower of Tiamat can attempt the ritual and succeed, although he must sacrifice twice as much treasure (level \times 40 gp) in order to have any chance of succeeding. Those who do not succeed are thrown into the pit as described above, the same fate suffered by followers who fail to please the Dragon Queen.

A cleric of another god who attempts the ritual, casts a spell, or channels divine energy within 20 feet of the pit catches the attention of the Dragon Queen, who sends one of her children (see below) to destroy the offender. The dragon does not attack while the character is in Unthalass, but waits for the offender and those traveling with him to leave the city, at which time it ambushes the group at the first opportunity.

Antasillix: Male juvenile green dragon; CR 8; Large dragon (air); HD 14d12+42; hp 133; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +14; Grp +22; Atk +17 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +17 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +12/+12 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws) and +12/+12 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings) and +12 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon, spells; SQ blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., immunity to acid, magic sleep effects, and paralysis, low-light vision, water breathing; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +18, Search +18, Spellcraft +16, Spot +18; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Flyby Attack, Wingover.

Languages: Chessentan, Draconic, and Untheric.

Breath Weapon (Su): 40-foot cone of corrosive (acid) gas; 8d6 acid; Reflex DC 20 half.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/4 per day, caster level 1st): 0—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *detect magic*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 13), *shield*.

THE STING

In the heart of the artistic city of Cimbar lies a secluded glade that holds one of the city's most painful secrets. Priests of Loviatar, the Maiden of Pain, have truly found a home in this decadent and tolerant city. Many of their rites do not even have to be hidden from the populace at large, and those that do are easily explained away as underground pleasure parties. Everyone is invited to these affairs, and Loviatar has gained a number of converts from this city of artists and free thinkers. Only a special few, however, gain access to the holy shrine known as the Sting.

The Sting is a natural courtyard surrounded by a house used by initiates of Loviatar for purposes of their faith. The courtyard area is composed of soft earth covered completely by grass, and various trees obscure the vision of those within. Four walkways made of stepping stones lead from various mansion doors to the center of the courtyard, where Loviatar can be properly worshiped. At the center stands a misshapen willow tree that has thick leaves and covered with thorns. This is where the faithful make their prayers.

The Tree of Loviatar is not alive, but it is the conduit for Loviatar's power when the ritual is properly conducted. Its leaves are tough and whiplike, and the thorns can be used to cause grievous wounds or painful stings as necessary. Should the tree or worshipers come under attack, the tree will spring to life in defense of the shrine (see below for the tree's statistics). It attacks all nonworshipers mercilessly until it is destroyed or the shrine is free of invaders.

The Sting Ritual: The ritual leader must provide seven objects that have been inside seven different individuals' bodies and caused them pain. These items could be weapons that were used to puncture someone's body, sharp barbs or caltrops that were swallowed and regurgitated, or any number of other things. These items are placed on a special platform carved into the trunk of the Tree of Loviatar, at which time the ritual leader kneels and begins to pray to Loviatar. The tree slowly begins to animate—a limb shakes, a leaf jerks, a root creaks—until the branches are all shaking and the leaves whipping around in a fury. If the goddess is pleased with the offering and prayers, the ritual leader's body will be stung by a hundred shallow cuts from the thorns on the tree's leaves; if the goddess is not pleased, the tree animates and attacks.

Ritual Benefit: The character becomes virtually immune to pain for 24 hours, gaining damage reduction 2/— for the duration of the effect.

Baleful Effect: Should the ritual leader fail to please Loviatar, or a nonaffiliated cleric attempt to cast a spell or channel divine energy within the shrine, the tree animates and attacks. Clerics of Loviatar are not immune to the tree's attacks, but the tree will not kill such a character. It will attack for a few rounds to teach the errant cleric a lesson, and then drop him to the ground, bleeding and properly chastised.

Tree of Loviatar: CR 14; Huge construct; HD 26d10+40; hp 181; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +19; Grp +36; Atk +26 melee (1d8+9, thorny whip); Full Atk +26 melee (1d8+9, 8 thorny whips); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA frenzy, improved grab; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, low-light vision, resistance to cold 20, electricity 20, and fire 20, spell resistance 25; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 28, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: —

Frenzy (Ex): The Tree of Loviatar can fly into a frenzy, striking all creatures in reach with 2d4 thorny whips. Doing so strains the tree, however, causing it to be inactive for 1 round after such an attack. It can maintain its hold on grappled creatures during its down time, but does not deal damage to them.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the Tree of Loviatar must hit with a thorny whip attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The tree has dozens of thorny whips, so it can grapple as many creatures as it likes and still make full attacks against nongrappled opponents.

other evil sites

Places where evil gathers attract player characters of all alignments. There's always something or someone interesting to be discovered, destroyed, or redeemed.

the caves of cwuvain

Location: This cavern system can be used as the location of a great treasure, guarded by the undead spirit in area 7. The elven history of the spirit lends itself to a forested region such as the Dales or the Chondalwood.

The entrance to the cave is low and framed by the gnarled roots of an ancient oak tree. At its mouth, the cave floor is strewn with leaves and forest debris, and it shows the signs of recent passage, including a large black smudge on the roof—probably scorch marks from a torch. The slightest hint of a breeze issues from the mouth of the cave, carrying with it a smell of earth and the faintest whisper of a moan.

As the PCs progress deeper into the cave, the moaning grows louder until its source is reached at area 5.

1 — THE AUDITORIUM

This first and largest chamber is wide and low-roofed (ranging from 5 to 7 feet high), with many dark alcoves and fissures in the walls. The floor is strewn with rocky debris, which reduces movement rates by one-quarter. However, a cleared path stretches from the entrance to area 2. Nothing else of interest is here.

2 — THE CROOKED STAIR

This staircase is partially natural and partially constructed, as any dwarf can plainly see. It is entered from area 1 by way of a great crack in the wall. The stair is only wide enough for one Small or Medium creature, and the steps tilt dangerously towards the gaping fissure that borders the left-hand side of the stair for most of its course. Anyone who falls into the fissure drops 100 to 150 feet, depending from what point on the stair the fall occurs. If the imp Paxzux (see below) finds the characters intruding and decides to attack them, it does so on the stair. So narrow and steep are the stairs that anyone engaged in battle who misses on an attack roll must make a DC 12 Dexterity check or topple into the fissure.

3 — THE BRANCHES

In this area, the PCs must choose between numerous branching passages. Most often, passages lead to dead ends. It is possible for the characters to become separated or lost in this area. If the PCs find their way to the dead end branch marked with a star on the map, they find the skeleton of a priest of Lathander. The bones are draped in pitiful rags, but the hands still clutch a small iron box decorated with the symbol of Lathander. The box is locked (the key can be found under the bones); it contains a *potion of healing* and 2 vials of holy water.

4 — THE IMP'S LAIR (EL 5)

This cave is the lair of an imp named Paxzux. He could be the servant of a wizard related to the larger adventure, or he could simply be a free-roaming monster who chose to settle here. He spends most of the daylight hours here, only leaving near dusk to conduct his business, whatever that might be. If he is aware of the PCs' approach, Paxzux turns invisible and waits to see what they will do.

Paxzux: Male imp; CR 2; Tiny outsider (evil, lawful, extraplanar); HD 3d8; hp 17; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp -5; Atk or Full Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting); SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immune to poison, resistance to fire 5; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

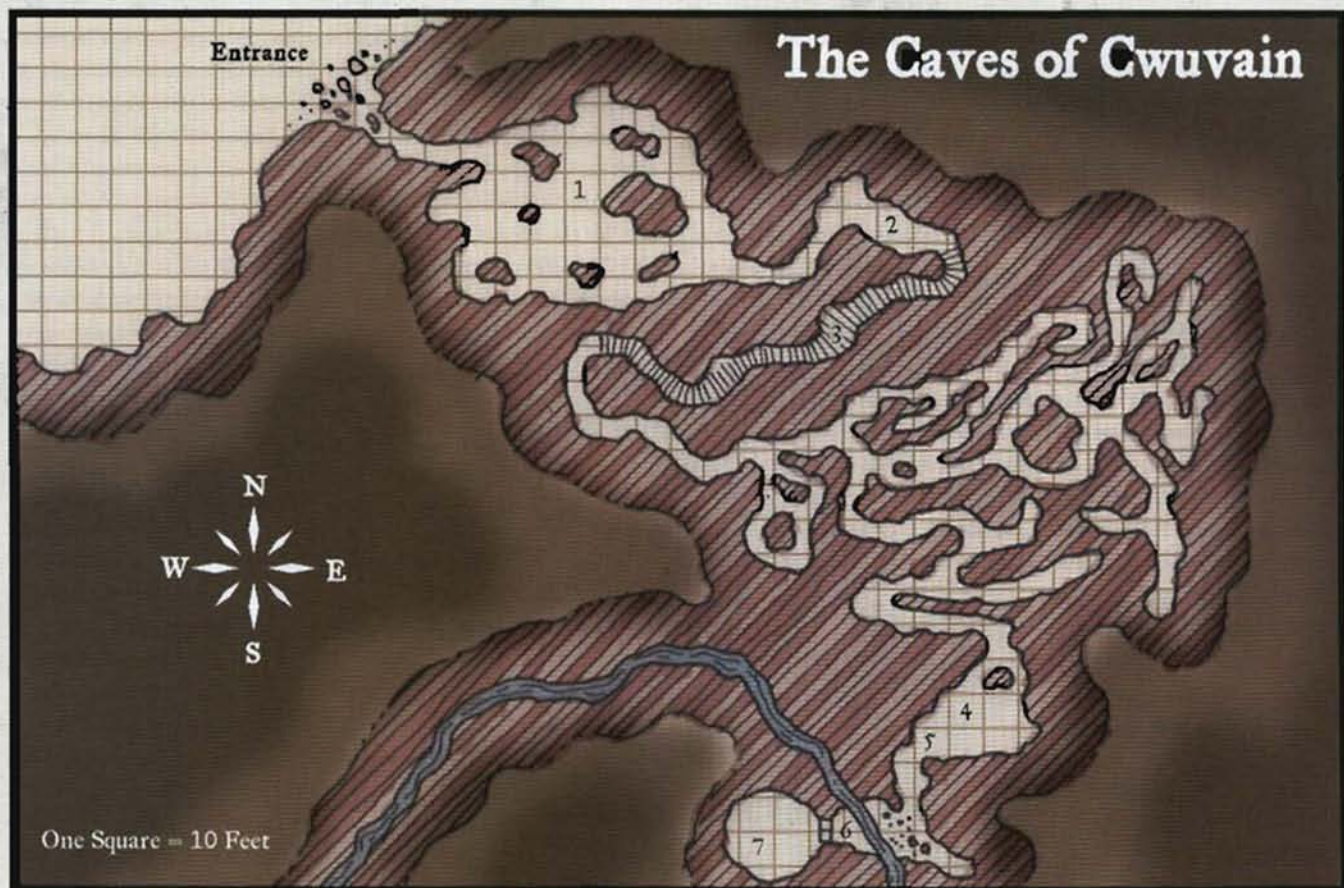
Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +8, Hide +17, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks); Dodge, Weapon Finesse (sting).

Languages: Common, Infernal.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, 1d4 Dex/2d4 Dex.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*suggestion* (DC 15); 1/week—*commune* (six questions). Caster level 6th.

Possessions: wand of fear (17 charges).



The imp is able to polymorph at will into a goat or a raven by means of his alternate form ability. Paxzux can use his innate power of *suggestion* to control the actions of those he meets. When in his lair, Paxzux always keeps his *wand of fear* nearby to use against intruders.

The south end of the chamber is piled with heavy carpets and many large soft pillows. Bowls of silver and carved oak are filled with an assortment of local fruits, nuts, and breads (two silver bowls worth 10 gp each). A wool blanket has been draped over an iron-bound chest. The chest contains 240 cp, 40 sp, and 115 gp, a *chime of opening*, and a *ring of spell storing* containing the following spells—*gaseous form*, *disintegrate*, and *passwall*. This area also contains a keg of beer and a barrel of wine, along with barrels and sacks of bread, dried meat, and fruit.

One of the barrels is not what it seems—it is a mimic. The mimic guards the imp's treasure in exchange for food.

Mimic: hp 60; see *Monster Manual* page 186.

5 – THE WINDY PASSAGE

This area is the source of the ever-present moaning that fills these caverns. Along the west wall are three large cracks. A stiff breeze blows through them, producing the noise. The breeze is cool and somewhat moist, as is evident by the quantity of lichens and fungi growing on the walls here.

A dwarf has the usual chance to detect that the west wall of the passage is false and can be moved (pushed back). Otherwise,

PCs have the standard chance of detecting a secret door here. The secret door leads to area 6.

6 – THE STREAM

Under steady pressure, the wall slides back, and after a last gasp the moaning stops. Beyond the wall is a small cave, with a swift stream flowing from a fissure in one wall into a crack in another. A brisk wind blows from the crack into which the stream flows. But, strangest of all, is the heavy door in the opposite wall; its iron bands are carved with runes of guarding and warding.

The stream is only 2 feet deep at its middle, but the water is icy cold. Careful examination of the door reveals that it is sealed with lead. The door is locked, but no lock is apparent. The door was built to lock automatically upon closing because the elves who created it never intended it to be opened again. Therefore, the lock cannot be picked. It must be opened magically (using a *knock* spell or a *chime of opening*) or not at all.

7 – THE TOMB OF CWUVAIN

Beyond the iron-bound door is the final resting place of the warrior-princess Cwuvain. The elves who defeated her sealed and hid this area so that no one could enter and unleash her spirit upon the world.

Beyond the door, PCs can see a small sepulcherlike chamber studded with large growths of shining crystals. It is like the inside

of a geode, only many times larger and more magnificent. In the center of the chamber lies the remains of a warrior, its bones still sheathed in now-rusted armor, its skull cloven by a bronze axe turned green with verdigris. Near its outstretched hand lies a wooden staff strangely untouched by the ravages of time.

A strange mist rises above the bones; it glows with a pale green light, and as the heroes watch, it begins to coalesce into a humanoid shape. They see the face of a beautiful elf maiden take shape in the mist, but it is a face twisted with evil and an undying hatred for all living things. Spectral hands form and extend toward the characters on ghostly arms; cold fingers scrabble at the air as the thing advances, floating upon the chill air.

This is the banshee of Cwuvain. She attacks as soon as she has fully formed. Evil characters can attempt to bargain with her in exchange for whatever treasure she guards.

Cwuvain: 7th-level ghost elf fighter; CR 9; Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 49; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 22, touch 17, flat-footed 19, 50% miss chance corporeal weapons; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/19–20, short sword) or +12 ranged (1d8+3/x3, +1 longbow) or +7 melee (1d6+2, unarmed); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+2/19–20, short sword) or +12 ranged (1d8+3/x3, +1 longbow) or +7 melee (1d6+2, unarmed); SA frightful moan, horrific appearance, manifestation; SQ darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, undead traits; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18.

The banshee of Cwuvain could not escape this chamber because of the spells that sealed the door. If the PCs open it, the spells are destroyed and she might escape. Her armor is rusted and beyond repair, as are her sword and other items. The DM can place items here that are important to the completion of a larger quest.

The curse of the demon claw

Location: Place this stone in a temple dedicated to the worship of demons, or in a place historically associated with the presence of demons, such as Hellgate Keep.

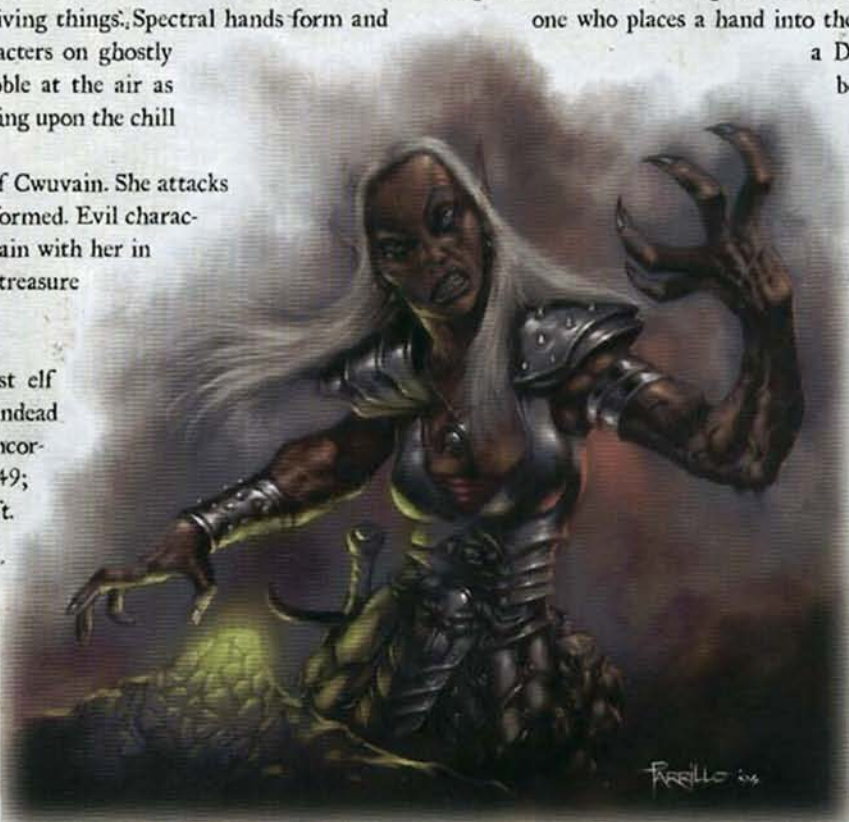
Description: This large round stone, about 6 feet in diameter, appears to have been shaped by the hand of a mad craftsman. At its top is the impression of a hand, as though some wizard had pressed his hand into the molten stone as it began to cool. The stone's dark surface is covered with weird angles and planes that shatter any light that falls, reflecting it back in a cacophony of color that dazzles the eye and befuddles the mind. A character must make a DC 20 Will save to avoid being affected by a telepathic *command* to place his hand in the impression on the top of the stone. Some-

one who places a hand into the impression must make a DC 22 Fortitude save or be affected by a strange cursed transformation.

His hand is replaced with an oversized demonic hand that gains benefits; the hand is red as blood and has long, black, clawlike nails. The character benefits from the great strength of the clawed hand (+2 Strength), an additional claw attack per round (+2 to base attack bonus, 1d8 damage), and the claw is treated as an evil-aligned weapon for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

This greater power comes at a price. Roll 1d6 to determine the curse of the demon claw.

- 1 The claw must be bathed in living blood at least once a day, or it becomes limp and useless.
- 2 The claw must be bathed in living blood at least once a day, or it attacks the character using his own base attack bonus. It continues to attack until it does damage to the character.
- 3 The character goes into an uncontrollable berserk fury (as a barbarian's rage) when in combat for more than 3 rounds, attacking friend and foe alike, and only ending when no targets are visible to attack. There is no limit to the number of times per day that this can happen, and the character is not fatigued by the rage.
- 4 In combat, the character always drops his weapon or eschews spellcasting in favor of claw attacks.
- 5 The claw attacks the character if his hit points fall to 10 or less.
- 6 Once every 24 hours, the claw separates from the character while he is asleep and acts as a crawling claw^{Mon}, attacking



A female drow finds out about the curse of the demon claw

anyone near. For this purpose, the claw has 16 hit points and AC 12, and it attacks with the character's base attack bonus. If brought to 0 hit points, it vanishes, rematerializes in its place on the character's wrist, and drains off 16 hit points to revitalize itself.

The greenstones (EL 7)

Location: This is an ancient ruined shrine once dedicated to some evil god, such as Bane or Shar. It could be located anywhere, from the wilderness to an urban setting, and introduced to the party as an opportunity to rebuild and rededicate the shrine, or an attempt to recover and use the stones for another purpose. It could simply be a unique encounter to liven up an evening, or it could be used as a starting point for some greater mystery involving the greenstones.

Description: The description below is written, as though the ruin lies in a clearing in a forest.

In the center of the clearing stands the ruin of a shrine—an irregular pile of square-cut greenish limestone, with many other similar stones scattered around the clearing as though blown around by a violent wind.

It appears that, rather than having been carried and dropped, the stones were rolled or blown to their present positions. The green stones do not radiate magic due to a masking effect of the magic that prevents their being used to rebuild the shrine, but they do radiate a faint evil aura.

If anyone casts *magic circle against evil* within 10 feet of any of the greenish stones, the stones will begin to slowly move away from the spellcaster. The square stones roll along the ground at a speed of 1 foot. When not in the presence of protection magic, the stones can be picked up and moved around without anything happening; they can even be stacked up to rebuild the shrine. But at night, the stones always attempt to dismantle themselves. The shrine must be completed before it can be reconsecrated. A DC 25 Craft (masonry) check is necessary to rebuild the shrine within a 12-hour period. Subtract 2 from the DC for each skilled assistant helping with the rebuilding, and subtract 1 for each unskilled assistant. The shrine can only be rebuilt during the day. At night, the stones always move away from one another.

Casting a *desecrate* spell on the stones, or making any attempt to stop them from dismantling themselves at night, causes them to clump together and form a Huge earth elemental.

Huge Earth Elemental: hp 152; see *Monster Manual* page 97.

The elemental attacks the spellcaster or the ones who are attempting to stop its effort to dismantle the shrine. It continues to attack until it is no longer being harassed, at which point it falls apart. The stones begin to roll along the ground in random directions until each one is at least 3 feet away from any other shrine stone.

Long ago, a priest of Selûne destroyed this shrine by summoning an earth elemental into it and binding it there with the command to never allow the stones of the shrine to be rebuilt.

If the elemental is driven out using *banishment*, *dismissal*, or similar magic, the shrine can be rebuilt normally. The stones can also be used in another construction as long as no shrine stone is within 3 feet of another shrine stone. Of course, *magic circle against evil* will still cause those stones to move, and could result in the damaging or destruction of the new building.

Hagskull hill

Location: This setting works best when placed at a location where the characters are emerging from the Underdark.

Description: Hagskull Hill is an uneven mound of black rock covered with thick patches of witchgrass. Atop the hill sits a 50-foot-high skull-shaped rock, while the hill itself rises some 100 feet above the surrounding landscape. Anyone climbing to the top of the hill sees a 10-foot-wide stone staircase rising to meet a crenellated platform that gives the skull the vague appearance of having a protruding stone jaw. Stone doors at the back of the platform lead to the interior of the skull, as do the skull's hollow eye sockets.

1 — BONE BED AND BREAKFAST

It is difficult to tell whether this chamber is dungeon or natural rock, or some combination of the two. The ceiling is low, barely high enough for a dwarf to stand, with irregular pillars of rock supporting the ceiling. All about you lie the scattered bones of hundreds of creatures—humans, elves, dwarves, goblins, orcs, ogres . . . all the humanoid races that you know, and some that you might never have seen before. Some are old and brittle, while others look fresh and picked clean. A broad, low opening, faintly lit by a dim and wavering light, appears to be the only exit from this place.

Many of the bones show signs of terrible injury—crushed skulls, hacked limb bones, shattered ribs. No treasure is here, nor any weapons or clothing.

2 — HELP ME, I'VE BEEN ZOMBIFIED

The low chamber opens into a wider cavern, sloping down to an uneven floor broken by pools of reeking black water that continually bubble with foul-smelling fumes. The floor is littered with bones and bodies in various states of decay. Balls of foxfire and wispy curtains of glowing gases, ever shifting and changing, provide this chamber with its only source of illumination. A half-dozen openings of various sizes lead out of the room.

<pause until characters enter the cavern>

As you enter the cavern, you hear a slipping hiss, like a gasp of alarm and anger. A dozen or more creatures rise up from the corpses littering the floor. Shambling toward you, the zombies erupt in a low chorus of moans.

The zombies attack anyone who enters this chamber.

Zombies (12): hp 16 each; see *Monster Manual* page 265.

3 — DARK NAGA (EL 8)

The passage brings you to a bowl-shaped cavern. The floor slopes down toward the chamber's center. Numerous weapons, pieces of armor, and common items, perhaps taken from the bodies in the first two rooms, appear to have been carelessly piled here. Opposite, a ramp curls up the side of the chamber to just above the entrance. Beneath it and to your right, another passage leads off into darkness.

<pause until characters enter the cavern>

As you enter, you hear a slithering, scraping noise. A serpentlike creature emerges from the side exit. The weird creature's skull is that of some kind of humanoid. Its body is covered in purple scales, and its tail is tipped with a stinger.

"Ah, I see that you have arrived," the creature says in a grinding monotone completely devoid of emotion. "The master awaits you above, but first he desires that you arm and clothe yourself from the items you find before you, if you have need."

This dark naga has been ordered to welcome the group. It attempts to answer their questions, but it will say nothing of how they arrived here or who "the master" is, saying only that "All will be revealed in time" or "It is for the master to say, not I." As for the zombies, it apologizes that it cannot be everywhere at once, but soon the group will have nothing to fear from such servants of the master. The PCs can take any items they wish from the pile of equipment. Many of the things are rusted beyond use or so old and rotten that they cannot be worn. None of the items are magical, and none are alchemical items such as sunrods or tanglefoot bags.

In each of the following lists, the quality of items is indicated by their order of appearance, with each group separated from the next one by a slash: items in good condition / items that are serviceable but needing repair / items in need of immediate repair.

Weapons: light mace, masterwork scimitar, composite shortbow, spear / 2 daggers, 11 light crossbow bolts, quarterstaff, throwing axe, 2 short swords, longsword, battle axe, heavy pick, warhammer, longbow, 13 longbow arrows, 6 shortbow arrows / bastard sword, spiked chain, morningstar, light crossbow

Armor and Shields: human-sized leather, dwarf-sized half-plate, heavy steel shield / elf-sized studded leather, human-sized chain shirt, dwarf-sized chainmail, elf-sized breastplate, buckler, 2 light wooden shields, 2 light steel shields / human-sized breastplate

Clothing: crested helm / 2 pairs of dwarf boots, 5 pairs of leather boots, cape, 2 cloaks, 6 wool shirts, 1 pirate shirt, kilt, 6 trousers, iron cap, mail hood, leather hat, buccaneer's hat, wizard's hat, 3 belts / gauntlets

Mundane Items: 2 bone scroll cases, copper scroll case / 2 backpacks, 4 small belt pouches, miner's pick, large belt pouch, healer's kit, iron pot and tripod, iron pry bar, 3 oiled leather bags, drinking horn, 2 wineskins, goatskin waterbag, blacksmith's hammer / none

In addition to these items, the naga also points out a large pottery chime. It is black and decorated with a maddening array of strange symbols. It warns the PCs not to strike the chime here, but to take it with them, because they will need it. It tells them nothing else about the object, but they can discover on their own that it is magical. It is a *chime of discord*, useful for negating the harpies' songs (see area 5) and other magical sound-based charm effects. Once the chime is struck, the harpies will leave the party alone.

The dark naga will defend itself if attacked. The side chamber is its lair and contains its treasure: a giant snow adder's hide (300 gp), eye of the serpent gem (large amber with dark occlusion, 200 gp), egg of the serpent gem (large milky opal, 500 gp), and a vial with 2 doses of giant snow adder venom (injected; Fortitude DC 20; freezing touch plus paralysis or 1d3 Con/1d3 Con).

Dark Naga: Large aberration; CR 8; HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +6; Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (2d4 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4 plus poison, sting) and +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); SA poison, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts (DC 15), guarded thoughts, immunity to poison; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +8 (+10 against charms); Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +9, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Intimidate +5, Listen +11, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +12, Spot +11; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials^B, Lightning Reflexes.

Languages: Common, Infernal.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 16 or lapse into nightmare-haunted sleep for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/5 per day; caster level 7th): 0—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *electric jolt*^{Mag} (+7 ranged touch), *light*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *read magic*; 1st—*expedition's retreat*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp* (+7 melee touch), *shield*, *silent image* (DC 14); 2nd—*invisibility*, *scorching ray* (+7 ranged touch), *summon undead II*; 3rd—*control darkness and shadow*^{*}, *lightning bolt* (DC 16).

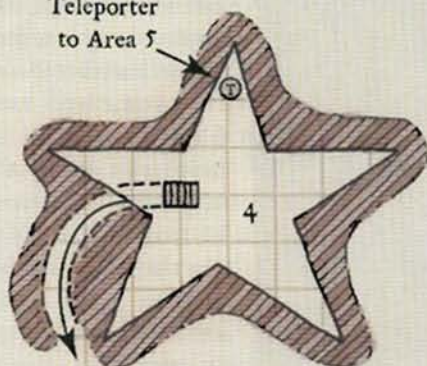
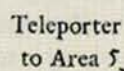
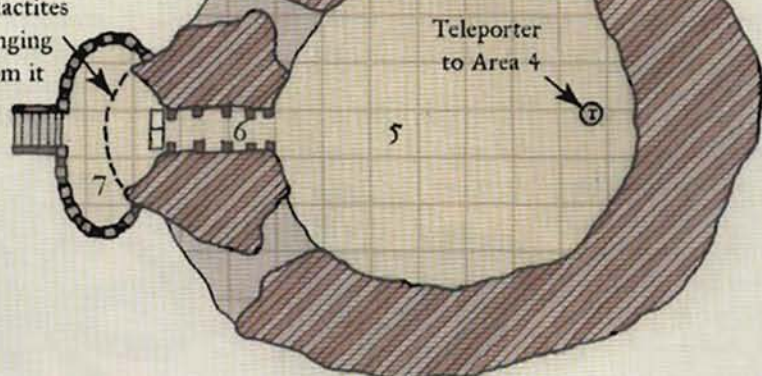
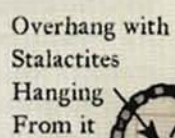
^{*}New spell described on page 29.

4 — THE STAR CHAMBER (EL 7)

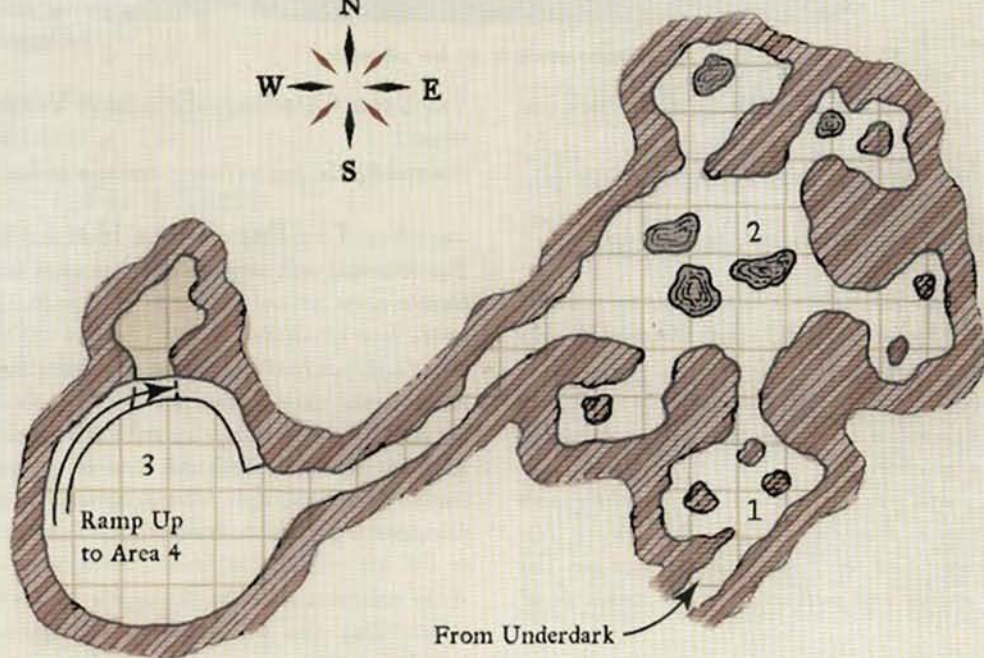
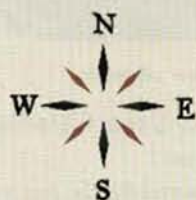
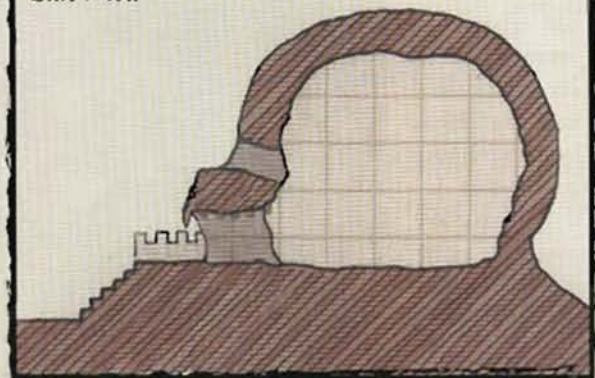
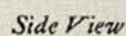
The ramp spirals up to a passage roughly carved from solid stone. It continues upward for some distance at approximately the same slope and radius, completing approximately two full turns before straightening out and turning into steps. The steps lead up another twenty feet or so. They are covered by a thick black patina of ancient blood.

The stair ends near the center of a large, star-shaped chamber, the floor of which is covered with both carved and painted cabalistic symbols and weird geometric patterns. The center of the chamber is graven with numerous overlapping

Hagskull Hill



Ramp Down to Area 3



From Underdark

One Square = 10 Feet

circles charred into the floor. This appears to be some kind of summoning chamber; there are no other exits.

As you enter, a shimmering column of hazy purple light springs into being at the room's center. It rises from floor to ceiling. Within it, you see a shadowy being. Though human in shape, the creature is utterly featureless, looking as much like a shadow as the ones your own bodies cast on the floor, were it not bloodred.

"Welcome," it says in a voice that seems to echo from across a great distance. "I expended much of my remaining energy on this plane to bring you here. I need brave adventurers such as you, and called upon favors owed me by dark gods and demon lords to guide your steps to this place. I hope that fate has not betrayed me."

Allow the characters to ask some questions before continuing, and answer the questions as needed by the adventure you have in store for the PCs. The shadowy being answers all other questions with "You will learn, in time." Use this section to describe the quest that they are to accomplish.

If the PCs refuse to help, a horde of shadows emerges through this portal (the shimmering column of purple light) to attack and destroy the group.

Shadows (20): hp 19 each; see *Monster Manual* page 221.

If the characters agree to cooperate, read the following.

"I see you are wise. Your task will not be easy, but the rewards of success are great. Time is your ally, but do not tarry, for my power on this plane weakens daily.

"You stand within a chamber wholly dedicated to magic. Not only can it be used to summon allies from other planes, it can also be used as a teleport chamber.

"Before you go, I will give you each a mark, so that servants like my zombies will no longer harass you. But beware. Not all the evil that once filled this forest is allied with me. You will face danger within and without. But this should be of assistance. . . ."

A whip of purple fire lashes out, striking each character across the forehead or hand (1-4 hand, 5-6 forehead) leaving behind a bluish welt that never heals. This welt grants the character a +2 bonus to Charisma when dealing with evil creatures, including the rebuking or commanding of undead. It is also the shadowy creature's way of communicating with them, for whenever he needs to speak to the group's members, the welt will begin to ache and burn.

After this, the column of light disappears. The characters can

return below to question the dark naga more, or they can attempt to use the teleporter.

To do so, they must activate it by blowing a note on a silver flute that they can find lying in a corner of the star chamber (Search DC 15). After it is activated, the teleporter delivers anyone stepping on it to area 5. The teleporter remains active for 10 rounds. The PCs should take the flute with them, or else they won't be able to activate the teleporter from the other side.

The dark naga can instruct them in how to use the teleporter. If they encounter the harpies and retreat, it will tell them to use the *chime of discord* to negate the harpies' song.



Danger awaits in the star chamber

STAR CHAMBER SHADOW WEAVE NODE

Class: 5

Granted Spells: *project image*, *summon undead V*

5 - THE OPERA HALL (EL 9)

The following text assumes the characters have just teleported from area 4.

In a flash, you find yourself in a towering natural cavern. The dome-shaped ceiling seems to collect and focus sound, for even the tiniest noise generates an echo that seems to go on forever. High overhead, two large side caverns appear to be open to the outside by the dim light filtering through them. Opposite where you stand, a passage leads out of this chamber.

A few moments after the PCs appear in this room, the harpies attack. They also will attack anyone approaching from the outside.

With a feathery rustle of wings, several creatures leap out of the caverns high above and descend toward you. These creatures look like evil-faced human females with the lower body, legs and wings of a huge vulture. They begin to shriek a horrific song that dulls the mind and slows the wits.

Harpies (5): hp 31 each; see *Monster Manual* page 151.

The harpies have their lairs in the two caverns high above the main part of the chamber. Their caves grant them access both to the outside and the interior of the hill. They attack anyone, even those bearing the shadowy being's mark, for they have no loyalty to him. He allows the harpies to stay here because they protect the hill and the swamp from intruders.

Ring the chime of discord breaks the power of the harpies' song. They know their powers are useless against its magic, and rather than risk melee combat, they retreat to their lairs. They will, however, defend their lairs against all intruders, chime or no chime. Each cavern contains nests made out of feathers, twigs, and marsh grasses. Scattered coins totaling 1,000 sp, plus three gems (total value 530 gp), can be found by a careful examination of both caverns (Search DC 20). The caves are located nearly 100 feet up a nearly vertical, uneven, wet rock face (Climb DC 30).

6 - THE NO. 6 DANCE HALL

Unlike many of the other passages and rooms in this place, this broad low hall was obviously constructed by human hands. Squat, square columns support the low-hanging roof overhead, while the walls between the columns are carved in low relief depicting all sorts of evil scenes, from the burning of villages and slaughtering of humans and elves, to the torturing of victims by bestial and demonic creatures and the bloody sacrifice of prisoners to a variety of dark gods.

This hallway leads from area 5 to area 7. Other than the decorations, it is unremarkable.

7 - FALSE TEETH

A pair of squat bronze doors open to the outside world. Beyond, a stone landing has been leveled out of the floor of a natural grotto. The ceiling is thick with hanging stalactites, while outside, a ramp of roughly hewn stones forms a crenellated wall. Stone steps lead beyond the wall down the hillside.

Anyone approaching this area from the outside is attacked by the harpies, whose lairs overlook the staircase. Otherwise, this place is unremarkable except for the fact that, seen from a distance, it gives the appearance of a snaggle-toothed grin. Combined with the eyehole harpy caves above, these features give the hill its name—Hagskull.

The scarab chamber (EL 16)

Location: Use this location to hold a clue that aids in completing a larger quest. The mummies and the treasure suggest an Egyptian motif, so the location is particularly suited to the area surrounding Skuld, in Mulhorand.

Description: The passage opens out into a large circular chamber. This cavern looks to have been carved from the rock, or at least its walls have been shaped from some old cave, for its circumference is almost perfectly circular and the marks of the chisel are quite plain upon the walls. Numerous niches have been carved into the walls; each one holds a badly decayed human corpse. Visitors would almost mistake this for a burial chamber, were it not for the strange object in the center of the room.

Beneath a glass case and resting atop a purple cushion, the characters can see a gleaming golden beetle. It looks wrought entirely in gold and encrusted with crushed rubies and tiny black pearls. It has the appearance of a beloved idol, but one dedicated to evil.

Once the PCs enter this chamber, they have 2 rounds to explore before the mummies lying in the niches rise up and begin to attack.

Mummies (20): 55 hp each; see *Monster Manual* page 190.

The mummies attack until they are destroyed or turned.

Other than the golden beetle, no treasure is found in this room. The beetle is wrought of solid gold, with a shell encrusted with rubies and tiny black pearls. Beneath the shell are wings carved from thinly sliced pieces of a unicorn's horn. Its base material value is 15,000 gp. The beetle can be used as the phylactery of a lich, or it might contain some small scroll or key essential to the completion of an adventure.

To reach the beetle, its glass covering must be removed. This is no simple task, since lifting the glass releases the poison gas contained within. The gas immediately disperses into the room.

Insanity Mist Vapor Trap: CR 8; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; never miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (insanity mist, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis; multiple targets (all targets within 5-ft. radius of the trap); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20.

Tomb of queen NO'RIS (EL 16)

Location: This tomb can be placed in any swampy region or underground lake (with modifications to the descriptions). It is accessible by water. The setting is designed with the expectation that the party includes dwarf or duergar characters.

Description: A large grassy mound, more than 120 feet in diameter, rises up out of the water. Its shape is too regular to be a natural feature. Several large gray stones ring its crown, some upright, some fallen and broken into pieces half hidden by

the tall marsh grass. Several scars on the hillside show evidence of ancient excavations. The most striking feature of the mound is a large section that has apparently collapsed and slid down into the water, exposing bare black earth and what appears to be masonry.

The characters can beach their boat in the shallow water next to the collapsed section of the barrow mound. The masonry proves to be a stone wall and heavily corroded bronze door. The characters must clear away the mud, and then make a DC 23 Strength check to open it. However, the interior of the tomb has a powerful *antipathy* spell on it that prevents any nondwarf from entering (Will DC 22). Those standing at the door can see the glint of gold within. An engraved stone above the door records the occupant of this tomb, Queen No'Ris; written in dwarf runes below it is a curse upon all nondwarves who enter.

Squeaking horribly on corroded hinges, the door gives way, revealing a low circular chamber beyond. It appears that this place has remained sealed for many centuries, but despite the ages that have passed, the chamber appears remarkably clean. A smooth stone floor stretches out before the characters, with only a thin layer of dust obscuring the patterns beneath. Even so, they can see here and there the gleam of a jewel embedded in the stone.

Thirteen niches are spaced at regular intervals around the walls of the tomb—each contains some kind of tall urn, atop which sits the skull of a dwarf. The far end of the tomb is dominated by a huge stone altar. A shriveled dwarf corpse rests atop it, dressed in the finery of a former time, with golden breastplates and bracelets and a jeweled belt encircling its skeletal hips. A shining golden helm and face mask covers its head, from which spills a profusion of dirty blond curls. The corpse's shrunken brown hands still grasp an axe to its breast.

Queen No'Ris was a powerful dwarf warrior who ruled with an iron fist long before an earthquake formed the Iceclutch Swamp. A bitter foe of the elf nations, she led a series of brutal wars that reduced both the dwarf and elf populations of the region. The Queen's spirit has long since fled, but the shadows of her former followers are cursed to guard her tomb. Anyone attempting to despoil the queen draws their ire. They swoop out and attack, first casting darkness to extinguish any flames or light sources.

Greater Shadows (13): hp 58 each; see *Monster Manual* page 221.

Each shadow resides within an urn. The urns are otherwise empty, except for the skulls atop them. As the shadows emerge, they appear to pour out of the empty nostrils and eye sockets of the skulls.

The queen is largely dressed in rags. Her breastplate, mask and helm are actually gold foil over hardened leather, but the leather is rotten and crumbles at a touch, leaving a worthless pile of dust and gold flakes. The belt is a different matter; it is solid gold and encrusted with uncut, polished semiprecious stones. The primitive craftsmanship speaks of its age; still, the belt is worth 500 gp. The bracelets are also gold and of a serpent design with carnelian or amethyst chips for the eyes. Each of the six bracelets is worth 100 gp. The axe is a +2 *dwarven waraxe* that glows when a nondrow elf comes within 180 feet of it.

Eighteen large ornamental stones are embedded in the floor, connected by etched lines that form an intricate star pattern. The eighteen-pointed star was the symbol of the queen and is repeated on her helm and breastplate, but it is otherwise meaningless. Each stone is worth 2 gp.

The wizard's way

Location: This simple but deadly trap can be placed in a wizard's lair, either ancient or currently occupied.

Description: This passage is only 6 inches tall, preventing characters from entering it normally. To further discourage anyone from finding the way through this area, a *greater glyph of warding* holding a *greater dispel magic* spell has been placed on the floor of the passage about halfway down its length. The *dispel* effect is targeted against any spells currently in effect on the one who crosses the glyph. The intention is to negate any *polymorph*, *gaseous form*, or other effect used to allow the individual to enter the tiny passage, thus forcing him back to his normal size and shape. Any creature of Small size or larger reverted to its normal form inside the Wizard's Way instantly takes 18d6 points of damage, with no save.

WIZARD'S WAY (EL 7)

Clogged Pipe Trap: CR 7; spell trap; location trigger; no reset; bypass-password; spell effect (*glyph of warding* that triggers a targeted *greater dispel magic*; see page 223 of the *Player's Handbook*; caster level 11th); no attack roll required (18d6, crush); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.



ENCOUNTERS WITH EVIL

So you want to run an evil campaign? Your players are determined to take the fight to the Harpers for a change, and you're going to give them what they want. There are many things to consider before doing so, however, such as the style of your campaign, the depths of evil you and your players are prepared to act out or encounter, and how the characters will interact within the party and with the world at large. The following section contains advice for DMs, including advice on how to present evil in your campaign, how to keep a party of evil characters together, and the different goals and methods an evil party might use that would not be part of a normal campaign.

The tone of your game

How evil is the game going to be? This is a question that should be answered by the entire gaming group, since it's possible to cross boundaries that will make the game unpleasant for one or more players. Even the DM might find that some of the themes explored or specific actions taken by the characters will diminish his enjoyment of the game. The first consideration of any new campaign should be the enjoyment of all involved.

The best thing to do is to sit down with all the players and discuss the level of evil in the campaign, how far the characters will be allowed to go, and even specific actions or situations you might or might not allow. In *Book of Vile Darkness*, the following acts are considered evil: lying, cheating, theft, betrayal, murder, vengeance; worshiping evil gods and demons, creating and consorting with undead, casting evil spells, damning or harming souls, consorting with fiends, creating evil creatures, using others for personal gain, greed, bullying innocents, bringing despair, and tempting others. Certainly many of those acts are present in a standard campaign, and even good characters could be driven toward them from time to time. But the repeated, deliberate use of many of these is the hallmark of an evil character. They are often the evil character's first choice rather than his last resort, because committing an evil act can be easier and faster than acting in a moral way.

You and your players should discuss which of these acts are likely to be present in the campaign, and how obvious they will be. Some players are comfortable with acts such as drug use, outright murder, and fetishes as long as they are presented "offstage"; that is, they happen out of the game session but affect it in some way. Others do not mind the presentation of such acts in character or in the game. It is very important to determine these limits before the campaign begins.

Another consideration is the frequency of evil in your game. If you present too much of it, it can become bland and have less of an impact on the players. After all, if every villain has strange fetish powers and vile, fiendish cohorts, then they become as common as orc chieftains and pickpocketing rogues in standard games. You want to be able to strike the right balance between presenting vile acts and situations and allowing the players to experience the regular world so that they will have some context for the truly vile things they witness. Again, this is a consideration that should take into account each player's viewpoint and desires.

what the players want

Players might want to play an evil campaign for a number of reasons. Some might feel constrained in their actions by playing good or neutral characters, or they might want a change of pace from their normal heroic deeds. It can be fun to turn the tables on the heroes of the setting, to perhaps put a crimp in the Harpers' plans or help a tribe of orcs smash caravans en route from Silvermoon to Sundabar. Scheming to dominate Faerûn has always been a part of the game—but it's time to stop letting the villains have all the fun!

There are some warning signs and pitfalls you should try to avoid when running an evil campaign. Players might see this as an opportunity to backstab their fellow players, stealing their treasure and generally making their lives miserable. Unless agreed to beforehand, the presence of one or more players with this in mind can be disruptive and ruin the fun for everyone else. It's important to strike a balance between the naturally self-serving nature of evil characters and the goals of the party within the campaign. Evil works with evil all the time without falling apart due to internal conflicts, and the characters can still act selfishly without endangering the party or committing treachery against the other characters.

Players who want to play evil characters in order to act out or experiment with their darker curiosities can also be disruptive to the group. This ties in with the overall tone of your game, so all of the players involved should have agreed beforehand to limit character behaviors and player interactions to a level acceptable to all involved.

why run an evil game?

There are several reasons for both players and DMs to want an evil game. Putting the players in an unfamiliar role can help shake things up and create memorable roleplaying sessions. Evil characters have almost as many options as good ones, but players rarely get to use them in the game. An evil campaign allows players to play priests of Bane, assassins, and evil races such as yuan-ti, orcs, and drow without diluting their true nature. Roleplaying opportunities normally closed to good characters are available in an evil campaign as well. Rather than planning an assault on an evil necromancer's lair, the characters might hatch a plan to steal an artifact from the king's treasury, interrupt an agricultural rite that ensures a ripe harvest every year, or counterattack a force that has driven a horde of orcs back toward its home. These different tactical and strategic challenges can add fun and variety to the game.

An evil campaign also opens up rare opportunities for the DM. He can use good monsters as enemies, affording him the opportunity to pit the PCs against gold dragons, celestials, and paladins rather than red dragons, demons, and blackguards. Benevolent creatures are often less active antagonists—they don't rampage through a village, enslave a town's children, or any of the other nasty things evil creatures do. Players of evil characters can formulate their own plots, determining how to act against normal society to further their own goals.

In addition, good-aligned NPCs provide a roleplaying challenge to the DM—maniacal overlords and necromantic wizards are replaced by law-abiding paladins and good adventurers out to stop the PCs' plots. The DM still plays nonplayer characters as antagonists, but their demeanor and methods are often antithetical to the normal selection of villains.

keeping it fun for everyone

All of the above advice is geared toward one goal—keeping the game fun for the DM and the players. It takes a bit of foresight and work to pull off an evil game. You must decide before the campaign how far you and the players are willing to go in portraying evil characters. In preparing for the game, you must look to monsters that aren't normally thought of as villains and figure out how to make them into interesting antagonists, albeit



Illustration by William O'Connor

sometimes good-aligned ones. Then, during the game, the DM and players must keep the party together even while they might be working toward selfish goals using any means possible to achieve them. The potential rewards are great, however—your game might find a freshness it has been lacking, while your players enjoy the new challenges they face as champions of ruin.

Enemies and Allies

"Evil is accompanied by opportunity."

—Dorzad ain Vereet

Evil denizens of Toril might pursue their own dark philosophies in the shadows, or they might actively promulgate vile doctrines and activities. Every great villain needs reliable allies and empathetic or unwitting tools to accomplish her grand plans. Great evil is constantly challenged and opposed.

Forces of all alignments work against what they perceive as iniquities and injustices. Some foes focus on promoting their own agendas that conflict with others' evil plans. In addition, good-aligned folk often work to generally oppose evil or end specific manifestations such as slavery.

Here, you'll find characters who can be grand villains or simply useful allies of the player characters. They make suitable opponents, patrons, cohorts, employers, or chance encounters.

Damian Krake

Damian Krake is a large man. Physically, he is an impressive specimen, but that is not the extent of it. His deep, booming voice and force of personality make it difficult to ignore his commands or deny his wishes. His presence intimidates all who

stand in his shadow, and the dark power granted to him by Shar radiates like a smothering blanket. His black hair has grown long, but he keeps his strong jaw clean-shaven to accentuate his sneering visage. He normally wears the black and purple robes of his faith, and displays his holy symbol on a thick silver chain around his neck. He wears three heavy silver rings accented by amethyst and onyx gems.

Krake has been tasked by the Lady of Loss to coordinate the efforts of the independent Sharran cells in the Western Heartland region. His most pressing concern is doing so in a way that allows each to maintain its independence while turning their efforts toward a common goal. Exactly what that goal is remains Krake's secret, one he is unlikely to share with anyone else.

A few of the cell leaders know of Krake's plan, while the rest are being manipulated without their knowledge. Rumors of the plan have begun to leak out of the region, but with the construction of the fortress over the Well of Dragons, the defenders of righteousness have too much on their hands already to investigate thoroughly.

The earth genasi monk, Alon, has recently contacted Krake and pledged to aid him in his endeavor. While Alon claims to have been sent by Shar, the cleric is skeptical. Krake prefers to

summon demons to aid him, and

he is still not certain of how Alon came to know of his plan. Still, the monk has proven useful in defending him from unwanted distractions, so for now he is content to use the monk until he can determine what is really going on.

Damian Krake: Male human cleric 8/shadow adept 4/divine disciple of Shar 5; CR 17; Medium humanoid (evil, native); HD 13d8+4d4+51; hp 131; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 12,

new minor artifact: shadowstone

This +2 *heavy mace* is a Shadow Weave magic item created by Shar and given to Damian Krake to help him unite the Sharran cells of the Western Heartlands. It raises the effective caster level of any of his spells with the darkness descriptor by one. It protects him, as a *scarab of protection*,

against the first two energy-draining attacks he suffers each day. Finally, any creature struck by the weapon must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or be targeted by a *blindness* effect for 1d4 rounds.

Strong abjuration and necromancy; CL 20th; Weight 8 lb.



Damian Krake

flat-footed 20; Base Atk +11; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+3, *Shadowstone*); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d8+3, *Shadowstone*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA rebuke undead 7/day (+6, 2d6+13, 9th); SQ darkvision 60 ft., *imbue with spell ability*, low-light vision, sacred defense +2, shadow defense +1, shield of shadows; AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +20; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 23, Cha 19. Height 6 ft. 1 in.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Bluff +10, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +6, Heal +17, Hide +9, Intimidate +6, Jump +2, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +15, Spellcraft +14, Survival +9; Blind-Fight, Extend Spell, Improved Turning, Initiate of Shar, Insidious Magic, Pernicious Magic, Persistent Spell, Shadow Weave Magic, Silent Spell, Spire Walking, Tenacious Magic.

Languages: Abyssal, Chondathan, Draconic.

Shield of Shadows (Su): As a standard action, Damian can surround himself with a globe of purple-black force. This grants him the effect of a *shield* spell and provides him concealment. He can use the shield for up to 17 rounds per day.

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 17th): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*^K, *detect poison*^K, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*; 1st—*comprehend languages*^K, *divine favor*, *faith healing*^{Mag} (2), *hide from undead*, *protection from good*^{D,E}, *remove fear*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*aura against flame*^{Mag}, *cure moderate wounds*, *darkness*, *death knell* (DC 19), *detect thoughts*^{D,K} (DC 19), *enthrall* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *silence* (DC 18); 3rd—*animate dead*, *blacklight*^{D,FRCS} (DC 20), *dispel magic* (2), *searing light* (+14 ranged touch), *skull watch*^{PG}, *weapon of impact*^{Mag}; 4th—*air walk*, *divine power*, *doomtime*^{Mag} (DC 20), *freedom of movement*, *lesser planar ally*, *sending*, *unholy blight*^{D,E} (DC 21); 5th—*darkbolt*^{FRCS} (+14 ranged touch, DC 22), *monstrous regeneration*^{Mag}, *soul scour*^{Una} (+13 melee touch, DC 22), *spell resistance*, *summon undead* ^V^{PG}, *true seeing*^{D,K}; 6th—*Azuth's exalted triad*^{Mag}, *blade barrier* (DC 21), *heal*, *prying eyes*^{*}, *word of recall*; 7th—*blasphemy*^D, *ethereal jaunt*, *persistent*^{FRCS} *shield of faith*, *repulsion* (DC 23); 8th—*fire storm* (DC 23), *greater planar ally*, *power word blind*^D; 9th—*foresight*^{D,K}, *implosion* (DC 24).

D: Domain spell. **Domains:** Darkness (Blind-Fight bonus feat), Evil (cast evil spells [^E] at +1 caster level), Knowledge (cast

divination spells [^K] at +1 caster level, all Knowledge skills are class skills).

Possessions: *Shadowstone* (see sidebar), +3 chain shirt, ring of force shield, amulet of natural armor +1, periapt of Wisdom +6, pearl of power (4th), cloak of elvenkind, scroll of restoration, scroll of heal, 3 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of fly, potion of neutralize poison, 20 onyx gems (100 gp each; for *animate dead*), 110 pp.



qooql

The mind flayer known as Qooql is a weak, sickly member of his race. His skin is a pallid pink, and his tentacles are covered with tiny, bulbous sacks of tissue that sometimes burst open, draining pus. He wears an oversized coat of cloaker skin that almost loses him in its folds due to his short stature. Despite all this, Qooql has an amazing facility for interacting with others. He has learned to read the nature and mood of his opponents and allies, and uses this information to get them to do what he wants. He has no problem turning people against one another, using their fears and jealousies against them, and manipulating their sympathies. Sometimes he even feigns weakness to elicit pity, if he believes it will get him what he wants.

Partly due to his sickly nature and partly due to the perceived lack of respect and devotion given to Ilsensine in the mind flayer community, Qooql decided almost two years ago to leave the city and move toward the surface. He reasoned that he could better serve Ilsensine by corrupting surface dwellers, and there he would not have to worry about the taunts and treachery of his heathen kin. He has now taken command of a tribe of grimlocks, as well as a clan of dwarves who live in shallow caverns on the northern edge of the Giant Run mountains (for more on the Unworthy of Ilsensine, see page 90). His ultimate goal is the subversion of Westgate, but the undead masters who truly run the city have proven to be an effective roadblock for his ambition.

Qooql: Mind flayer cleric of Ilsensine 8; CR 16; Medium aberration; HD 16d8; hp 81; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +12; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+2, +1

light mace) or +14 melee (1d4+1, tentacle) or +16 ranged (1d8+1, masterwork light crossbow with +1 bolt); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+2, +1 *light mace*) or +14 melee (1d4+1, 4 tentacles) or +16 ranged (1d8+1, masterwork light crossbow with +1 bolt); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA rebuke undead 7/day (+7, 2d6+13, 8th), *mind blast*, psionics, improved grab, extract; SQ darkvision 60 ft., mind flayer traits, spell resistance 33, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +16; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +17, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +7, Heal +12, Hide +10, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +9, Spellcraft +12, Spot +13; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Chondathan, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Infernal, Undercommon.

Mind Blast (Sp): At will; Will DC 19; all creatures in a 60-ft. cone are stunned for 3d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*charm monster* (DC 19), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *levitate*, *plane shift*, *suggestion* (DC 18). Effective caster level 8th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 8th): 0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *inflict minor wounds* (DC 14), *mending*, *read magic*; 1st—*command*^D (DC 17), *entropic shield*, *faith healing*^{Mag}, *hide from undead*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*calm emotions*^D, *cure moderate wounds*, *owl's wisdom*, *silence* (DC 16); 3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *create food and water*, *dispel magic*, *suggestion*^D (DC 19); 4th—*air walk*, *fear*^D (DC 20), *freedom of movement*, *neutralize poison*.

D: Domain spell. **Domains:** Charm^{FRCS} (+4 Cha 1/day for 1 minute as a free action), Tyranny^{FRCS} (+2 on save DC for all compulsion spells).

Possessions: +1 *light mace*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 +1 bolts, masterwork light steel shield, leather armor +2, cloak of Charisma +2, helm of comprehend languages and read magic, 107 gp.

vargo kent

Vargo Kent is a monstrous figure whose entire life has been devoted to dragons in general, and black dragons in particular. When he was only 7 years old, his parents were chosen—more pointedly, forced—to care for a black dragon egg that was near hatching. The creature that came out was fascinating to the young boy, who took on the responsibility for its care and feeding. Despite the fact that it tried to eat him several times, and its saliva repeatedly burned him, leaving scars all over his body, Vargo wanted to stay around it night and day. As Vargo grew and his aptitude for magic became more evident, the dragon used its influence with him to shape the new mage's philosophy. It guided

him toward the outlook he holds today, that dragonkind will one day rule the world.

That dragon, Amnemis, is still with him, although she now acts as his cohort. She was his familiar for a short time once his powers had grown strong enough, but she soon outgrew the role. Vargo chose another black dragon as his next familiar, a choice Amnemis is still not happy about. She taunts and abuses her younger kin, something she gets away with only because of her importance in Vargo's life.

Vargo remained independent for some time, seeking to become more and more like his dragons through arcane research. After the arcane alchemical process that transformed him into a half-dragon left the lower part of his face almost skinless, the mage decided to join forces with the Cult of the Dragon (see page 72) in order to take his research even farther. He knew the organization had lore that could help him, and his closeness to dragonkind virtually assured him a high position in the group. Even he was surprised at how high he would rise within only a few months of joining the cult, when he was given the task of sifting through the graveyard at the Well of Dragons and assisting Naergoth in the final stages of construction of the great citadel. Now he has essentially taken over the project by virtue of his charisma and the cult members' fear of him. Naergoth is happy to concentrate more on the defense of the citadel, leaving the administrative work to this new wizard, who does not yet even wear the purple. Like Naergoth, Vargo is unaware that a mature red dragon named Arsekaslyx has been summoned to aid in the citadel's defense.

Vargo Kent: Male half-dragon evoker 16; CR 18; Medium humanoid (human); HD 16d6+48; hp 108; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d6+5, +1 *quarterstaff*) or +13 melee (1d4+5, claw) or +11 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+5, +1 *quarterstaff*) and +8 melee (1d6+3, bite) or +13/+13 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d6+3, bite) or +11 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ darkvision 60 ft., familiar benefits, immunity to acid, sleep, and paralysis, low-light vision, spell resistance 20; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 26, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Concentration +19, Craft (glassmaking) +14, Decipher Script +23, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (local) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +17, Listen +5, Ride +6, Spellcraft +27, Spot +5; Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Dragon Cohort^{Dr}, Dragon Familiar, Energy Substitution, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Signature Spell (*Mesti's acid breath*^{Mag}), Spell Mastery (*dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *Mesti's acid breath*^{Mag}, *shatter*), Spell Thematics, Spellcasting Prodigy.

Languages: Abyssal, Chondathan, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Terran.

Breath Weapon (Ex): 60-ft. line, once per day, damage 6d8 acid, Reflex DC 13 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Familiar Benefits: Vargo has chosen a black dragon familiar named Enixtryx. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below. When his familiar is within 5 feet of him, Vargo gains the benefit of the Alertness feat. He also gains the following benefits.

Empathic Link (Su): Vargo can communicate telepathically with Enixtryx at a distance of up to one mile. He has the same connection to an item or a place that Enixtryx does.

Scry on Familiar (Sp): Vargo can scry on Enixtryx once per day as if he had cast *scrying*.

Share Spells: Vargo can have any spell he casts on himself also affect Enixtryx if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. Vargo can also cast a spell with a target of "You" on Enixtryx.

Wizard Spells Prepared (base caster level 16th; prohibited schools enchantment and illusion): 0—*acid splash*^T, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *stick*^{Und}; 1st—*corrosive grasp*^{Mag} (+12 melee touch), *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*^T, *shield*, *spirit worm*^{Mag} (DC 19), *unseen servant*; 2nd—*command undead* (DC 20), *death armor*^{Mag}, *Gedlee's electric loop*^{Mag} (DC 20), *levitate*, *Melf's acid arrow*^T (+10 ranged touch), *resist energy*, *shatter*; 3rd—*Mestil's acid breath*^{Mag} (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *flashburst*^{FRCS} (DC 21), *fly*^T, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *scintillating sphere*^{Mag} (DC 21), *wind wall*; 4th—*fire shield*, *ice storm*, *Ilykur's mantle*^{Una}, *polymorph*, *stoneskin*^T, *Tirumael's energy spheres*^{Mag} (DC 22); 5th—*Beltyn's burning blood*^{T, Una} (DC 23), *break enchantment*,

firebrand^{Mag} (DC 23), *Lutzaen's frequent jaunt*^{Mag}, *Simbul's spell matrix*^{PG}, *teleport*; 6th—*acid storm*^{T, PG} (DC 25), *disintegrate* (+10 ranged touch, DC 24), *prismatic eye*^{PG} (+6 ranged touch, DC 19), *repulsion* (DC 24), *true seeing*; 7th—*Bigby's grasping hand*^T, *control undead* (DC 25), *forcecage*, *Simbul's synostodweomer*^{Mag}, *Zajimarn's ice claw prison*^{Mag}; 8th—*lightning ring*^{T, PG} (DC 27), *maze*, *polar ray* (+10 ranged touch), *protection from spells*.

*Vargo almost always leaves a 4th-level spell slot open in case he needs to scry or use another divination.

T: Themed spells (+1 caster level). Vargo's spell theme is black dragons, and combined with his Energy Substitution he can make any energy spell appear as, and cause, acid damage. His themed spells have the following appearances, and his other spells often have themed appearances as well.

Acid splash: He flings acidic sweat from his brow toward the target.

Acid storm: A swarm of black dragons crisscrosses the sky, raining acidic breath upon the area.

Beltyn's burning blood: A draconic form appears underneath the target's skin and writhes, causing ripples in his flesh.

Bigby's grasping hand: The hand is shaped like that of a huge black dragon.

Fly: A translucent black dragon picks him up on its back.

Lightning ring: Thousands of tiny acid globules spin around his body, lashing out in a spray from time to time (Vargo uses spell thematics and energy substitution to alter this spell accordingly).

Illustration by Marc Sasso



Vargo Kent

Magic missile: Miniature black dragons zoom toward the target.

Melf's acid arrow: An oozing black dragon clings to the target, dripping acid each round.

Stoneskin: His skin changes to black scales.

Spellbook: 0—All others except enchantment and illusion; 1st—alarm, burning hands, erase, mage armor, Snillloc's snowball^{Mag}, Tenser's floating disk; 2nd—Aganazzar's scorcher^{PRCS}, arcane lock, Balagarn's iron horn^{Mag}, cat's grace, darkvision, detect thoughts, flame dagger^{Mag}, knock, locate object, scorching ray, Snillloc's snowball swarm^{PRCS}, spectral band, stone bones; 3rd—arcane sight, halt undead, haste, nondetection, protection from energy, undead lieutenant^{Mag}; 4th—animate dead, lesser globe of invulnerability, Otiluke's resilient sphere, remove curse, wall of fire; 5th—ball lightning^{PG}, cone of cold, permanency, sending, wall of force; 6th—acid fog, Bigby's forceful hand, cacophonous shield^{Mag}, contingency, create undead, energy transformation field^{Mag}, greater dispel magic, move earth; 7th—delayed blast fireball, ethereal jaunt, greater teleport, prismatic spray; 8th—Bigby's clenched fist, create greater undead, Otiluke's telekinetic sphere, skeletal guard^{Mag}, temporal stasis.

Contingency: If Vargo ever comes under the effect of a spell or ability that causes petrification or immobilization, or if he is affected by a hostile enchantment or transmutation, he casts a break enchantment spell in an attempt to remove the effect.

Permanent Spells: Vargo has had the following spells made permanent on him: comprehend languages, darkvision, magic fang (both claws and bite), and see invisibility.

Possessions: amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +3, ring of protection +2, ring of invisibility, +1 quarterstaff, masterwork light crossbow, 20 masterwork bolts, gloves of Dexterity +2, headband of intellect +4, scarab of protection (6 left), potion of bear's endurance, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of displacement, potion of mirror image, scroll with ethereal jaunt, animate dead, and nondetection, contingency statuette worth 2,000 gp, 53 pp.

Amnemis, Dragon Cohort: Female very young black dragon; CR 4; Small dragon (water); HD 7d12+7; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +7; Grp +4; Atk +9 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+1, bite), +7 melee (1d4, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., immunity to acid, magic sleep effects, and paralysis, low-light vision, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Intimidate +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +5, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8, Swim +15; Enlarge Breath, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Breath Weapon (Su): 40-ft. line (60-ft. if enlarged), 4d4 acid, Reflex DC 14 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Enixtryx, Dragon Familiar: Male wyrmling black dragon; CR 3; Tiny dragon (water); HD 4d12+4; hp 34; Init +4; Spd 60 ft.,

fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp -4; Atk +10 melee (1d4, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1d4, bite), +5 melee (1d3, 2 claws); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft. (5 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon; SQ blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., deliver touch spells, empathic link, immunity to acid, magic sleep effects, and paralysis, improved evasion, low-light vision, share spells, spell resistance 21, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Spot +6, Swim +14; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. line, 2d4 acid, Reflex DC 13 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Improved Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save and half damage if the save fails.

chazzar ne

Chazzar Ne grew up in the Gray Wolf tribe of Uthgardt barbarians, roaming the savage North with them and learning the ways of their shamans. She witnessed the orc hordes of 1343 and 1367 DR, and saw the destruction the humanoids wrought on the lands as they marched. They burned entire forests to the ground, destroyed or ate every animal in their path, and trampled the grasslands in mile-wide swaths. It was enough to turn her burning hatred for all things civilized toward those that straddle the line between civilization and savagery. She wanted the orcs out of the North forever; she wanted them dead.

Her first thought was to unite the barbarian tribes under one banner, hers, and lead them into the Spine of the World to strike the orcs at their heart. She worked for nearly two decades to do so, but her plan was a terrible failure. Not only did the barbarians resist her leadership, but they also drove her into the Night Trees, where they believed she would be taken by demons to their fiery realm. Instead, she met a druid of immense power who controlled the many plant creatures that roamed that deadly forest. Chazzar Ne was immediately enthralled, and saw in the druid another opportunity. If only he could be convinced that the orcs were more dangerous than humans and their cities, he could turn his incredible control over nature toward their destruction. Unfortunately, he did not agree, and she was allowed to leave the forest before he turned his creatures on her.

For the past few years, Chazzar Ne has been gathering strength once again. She created her own totem and drew followers to her, foregoing any mention of her ultimate goal. She created a stable place for them to live and provided all they needed. Things were going very well for the new tribe until the werewolves came. Incensed that these humans had encroached upon their lands, the werewolves swiftly and fiercely brought death to the tribe. Chazzar Ne traveled into their lands with her dire wolf, Stonefang, as her only companion, and there she met with the local leader of the People of the Black Blood. She

negotiated an alliance with the lycanthropes after demonstrating her considerable power, and now her tribesmen mingle with and learn from the shapechangers in the woods. She leads them as a cult of the moon, and many of her tribesmen have become Black Blood cultists, channeling their fury into savage attacks upon their chosen foes, the orcs of the North.

Chazzar Ne: Female human druid 14; CR 14; Medium humanoid; HD 14d8+28; hp 100; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 fire/18–20, +1 flaming scimitar) or +15 ranged (1d6+2, masterwork javelin); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 fire/18–20, +1 flaming scimitar) or +15 ranged (1d6+2, masterwork javelin); SQ animal companion (dire wolf), animal companion benefits, nature sense, resist nature's lure, a thousand faces, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy +17 (+13 magical beasts), wild shape 5/day (Large, plant, Tiny, 14 hours), woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +14; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 21, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Craft (glassmaking) +6, Diplomacy +12, Handle Animal +11, Heal +13, Knowledge (nature) +14, Listen +15, Ride +9, Spellcraft +11, Spot +15, Survival +17 (+19 aboveground); Alertness, Brew Potion, Initiate of Malar, Leadership, Natural Spell, Track.

Languages: Druidic, Illuskan, Sylvan.

Animal Companion (Ex): Chazzar Ne has a dire wolf as an animal companion. Its abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Animal Companion Benefits (Ex): Link, share spells. PH 36.

Typical Druid Spells Prepared (caster level 14th): 0—create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, purify food and drink, read magic; 1st—camouflage^{Mag}, claws of the beast^{Mag}, entangle (DC 16), longstrider, speak with animals, speed swim^{Mag}; 2nd—barkskin, bull's strength, cloudburst^{Mag}, easy trait^{Mag}, heat metal, soften earth and stone; 3rd—cure moderate wounds, dominate animal (DC 18),

greater magic fang, protection from energy, sleet storm; 4th—dispel magic, ice storm, land womb^{Mag} (DC 19), mass camouflage^{Mag}, scrying (DC 19); 5th—animal growth (DC 20), call lightning storm (DC 20), commune with earth, stoneskin; 6th—greater dispel magic, stonehold^{Mag}, transport via plants; 7th—aura of vitality^{Mag}, fire storm (DC 22), heal.

Possessions: +2 hide armor, +1 heavy wooden shield, +1 flaming scimitar, 5 masterwork javelins, amulet of mighty fists +1, ring of protection +1, periapt of Wisdom +4, boots of the winterlands, cloak of elvenkind, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of bull's strength, two pieces of ivory worth 80 gp each.

Stonefang: Dire wolf animal companion; CR —; Large animal; HD 10d8+30; hp 85; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +19; Atk +15 melee (1d8+12, bite); Full Atk +15 melee (1d8+12, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA trip; SQ evasion, low-light vision, scent, tricks; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +7; Str 27, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

+4 morale bonus on saves against enchantments.

Skills and Feats: Hide +1, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7, Survival +2; Alertness, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

Trip (Ex): If Stonefang hits with a bite attack, it can attempt to trip its opponent (+12 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking attacks of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the dire wolf.

Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save.

Tricks: Attack, guard, hunt.

Possessions: collar of natural armor +2.



Chazzar Ne

Alon

Alon's thick, muscular body gives the impression that he is made of solid stone, and those who have been struck by his flying fists and feet come away with that belief as well—if they come away at all. He keeps his long, black hair knotted into a braid and slung over the front of his shoulder. He keeps a blade lashed to the end of the ponytail for emergencies, although he does not use his hair as a weapon. His only hint of personality is the baggy clothing he wears, shining golds and silvers in the style of Calishite nobles.

Despite his eccentricities, he is a grim assassin, serving at the behest of his master, the tiefling sorcerer-monk, Erent Skall. Recently Alon has been assigned to aid the Sharran priest, Damian Krale. Krale is uniting the Sharrans of the Western Heartlands for a reason Alon neither knows nor cares about. His duty is to serve, and that is what he is doing—for now.

Alon: Male earth genasi monk 13/sorcerer 4; CR 17; Medium outsider (native); HD 13d8+4d4+51; hp 120; Init +2; Spd 70 ft.; AC 23, touch 18, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +11; Grp +14; Atk +15 melee (1d6+4, +1 nunchaku) or +15 ranged (2d6+3, unarmed) or +15 ranged (1d4+4, masterwork sling with +1 bullets); Full Atk +15/+15/+15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+4, +1 nunchaku) or +15/+15/+15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+3, unarmed) or +15 ranged (1d4+4, masterwork sling with +1 bullets); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA greater flurry, ki strike (magic, lawful); SQ abundant step, darkvision 60 ft., earth genasi traits, evasion, immune to poison, improved evasion, purity of body, slow fall 60 ft., spell resistance 23, still mind, summon familiar, unarmed strike, wholeness of body; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +10; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

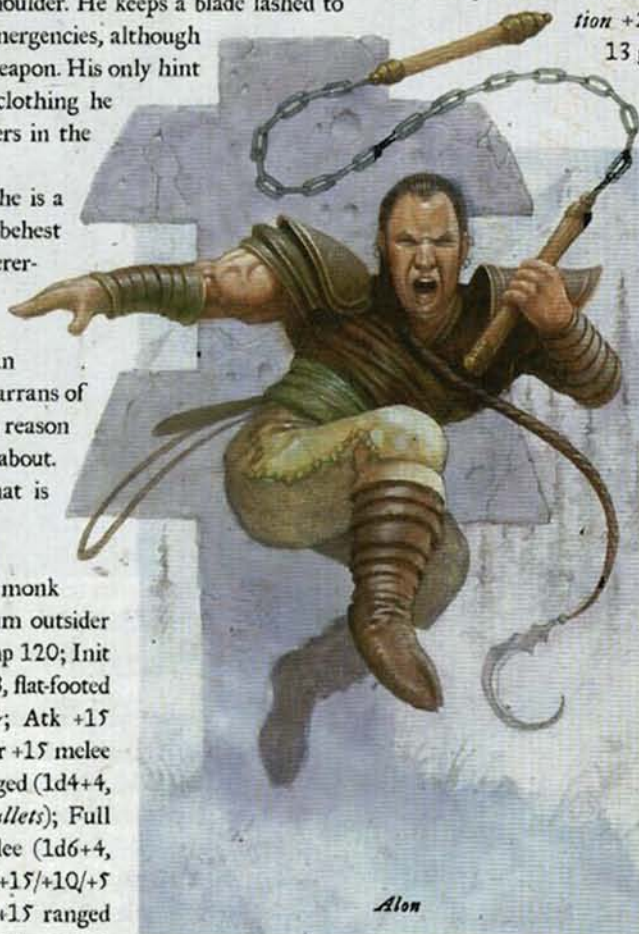
Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +5, Climb +7, Escape Artist +8, Hide +9, Jump +11, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Listen +11, Move Silently +9, Spellcraft +2, Spot +11, Swim +6, Tumble +11; Blind-Fight, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Run, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike).

Languages: Chondathan.

Improved Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save and half damage if the save fails.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/4 per day; caster level 4th): 0—daze (DC 12), detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, message; 1st—enlarge person (DC 13), obscuring mist, shield; 2nd—alter self.

Possessions: +1 nunchaku, masterwork sling with 40 +1 bullets, amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +3, ring of protection +2, 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, 13 gp.



Daren Timbide

Daren Timbide has risen quickly through the ranks of the Banite army stationed in Mintar. He is classically handsome, with wild blond hair that whips across his face when he speaks, intense blue eyes that can stare a lie out of a person, and a lithe body that does not betray his great strength. He loves to give speeches and does so with a fervor unseen outside the ranks of Bane's clerics, some of whom secretly wonder why he never took up the mantle himself. Still, he seems more comfortable preaching Bane's edicts from the general's platform than from a temple's stage.

General Timbide is a fervent worshiper, and spends as much time celebrating Bane in the shrine he built as he does practicing weapons and inspecting troops. He converted an old government building near the center of Mintar into a gladiatorial arena and secret shrine to Bane

known as the Thunder Room. There he tortures Bane's enemies to the rhythm of thunderous drums that can be heard through the streets of Mintar on a quiet night. Unlike many zealots, Timbide is not anxious to demonstrate the might of his patron and army. He has no doubt that they could defeat any army on the continent, but he is content to let them train in Mintar until the time is right to strike. He knows that Bane will use him and the army he has helped create to bring a new age of terror to Faerûn and its weak gods.

Daren Timbide: Male human fighter 11; CR 11; Medium humanoid; HD 11d10+33; hp 99; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +11; Grp +15; Atk +17 melee (1d8+7/17-20, +1 human bane longsword) or +16 ranged (1d8+6, +1 composite longbow with +2 arrows); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+7/17-20, +1 human bane longsword) or +16/+11/+6



Daren Timbide

ranged (1d8+6, +1 composite longbow with +2 arrows); AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +14, Jump +7, Listen +5, Ride +12, Spot +5, Swim +1; Cleave, Close-Quarters Fighting, Improved Critical (longsword), Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Languages: Chondathan, Orc.

Possessions: +2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, ring of protection +1, +1 human bane longsword, +1 composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 +2 arrows, greater arrow of giant slaying, potion of freedom of movement, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of neutralize poison, 138 gp.

dorzad ain vereet, krinith

Dorzad ain Vereet is a half-human krinith who tired of his servitude to the Shadovar and went underground to find a way out. Little did he know that nine months later he would be the leader of an organized underground operation whose goal was to smuggle krinith out of the City of Shade and into the lands below. Dorzad is a practical realist, and, as such, has formed an alliance with the Zhentarim, even though he suspects that some of the krinith he smuggles out never make it to their new homes.

Dorzad is truly a jack-of-all-trades and is moderately successful across a broad range of skills and disciplines. This made him an especially valuable slave to the noble house he served, a servant who could train others in the craft of bowmaking and then turn around and shake down a debtor or negotiate a fair price for services and goods. He was always a faithful servant in deed, but he was frustrated at his captivity. He had many an opportunity to trade one master for another as several shadow demons tempted him to their service, but he remained an independent mind who could never truly serve another.

At first he planned merely to escape, to see what lay beyond the floating city in the lands below, but at the moment of escape, he found that he could not bear to let his fellows remain enslaved. He stayed in the city and founded the underground movement that he now runs. He travels to the surface world at least once a month to gather information and find contacts that can help him smuggle more of his kin to freedom.

Dorzad ain Vereet: Male krinith fighter 10/rogue 4; CR 14; Medium humanoid (krinith); HD 10d10+4d6+42; hp 122; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +13; Grp +14; Atk +19 melee (1d6+5/15-20, +2 rapier) or +17 ranged (1d6+4, +1 composite shortbow); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d6+5/15-20, +2 rapier) or +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d6+4, +1 composite shortbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, krinith traits, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15. Height 5 ft. 10 in.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +11, Craft (bowmaking) +9, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +8, Hide +10, Intimidate +14, Jump +10, Knowledge (local Shade) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Profession (guide) +3, Ride +13, Search +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6; Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Investigator, Leadership, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (shortbow), Weapon Specialization (rapier), Weapon Specialization (shortbow).

Languages: Abyssal, Chondathan, Netherese.

Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save.

Possessions: +2 studded leather of silent moves, +2 rapier, masterwork buckler, +1 composite shortbow (+1 Str bonus) with 40 arrows, ring of protection +2, cloak of elvenkind, gauntlets of ogre power, 220 gp.



Dorzad ain Vereet helps a frightened krinb escape into the underground

Horrsin zespar, extaminaar

Horrsin Zespar was among the first generation of extaminaar to be hatched, and she has grown to be its brightest star. Her potential was measured along with all of the other young extaminaar as the leaders of House Extaminos made their plans. They decided to send Horrsin to the streets of Waterdeep—or, more accurately, beneath them—to begin gathering information on this jewel of the Sword Coast. While Waterdeep lies far from Hlondeth, its importance in the affairs of Faerûn is undeniable. It was there that they would lay the groundwork for their plans.

The young extaminaar was arrogant, and this was almost her undoing several times. She has grown more canny in the intervening years but still overextends herself on a regular basis. Despite this flaw, she has survived, and even thrived, in her lair deep within Waterdeep's sewers. She has gathered a tribe of kobolds to her, and has trained them in several of the rogue's arts, and even keeps a mated pair of trolls in the caverns for greater defense. In addition, she claims control over a band of outlaws that makes the

Dock Ward its home. In this way, she can gather information about the city above without having to risk the streets herself.

Horrsin is short for her race, but she is extremely agile and uses her size to squeeze through bars, portcullises, and enemies' arms in order to escape danger. She has resisted getting any grafts, seeing them as a sign of weakness. She is completely hairless, and her eyes are thin and wide. She has a purple and green diamond pattern running from the base of her neck down to her tailbone, and often dresses to show off these markings.



Horrsin Zespar

Horrsin Zespar: Female extaminaar rogue 17; CR 17; Medium humanoid (extaminaar); HD 20d4+80; hp 133; Init +8; Spd 40 ft.; AC 26, touch 21, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +12; Grp +13; Atk +22 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 electricity/15–20, +2 *shocking burst rapier*) or +21 ranged (1d4+2, +1 *dagger*); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+2 plus 1d6 electricity/15–20, +2 *shocking burst rapier*) or +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d4+1, +1 *dagger*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +9d6; SQ defensive roll, improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, low-light vision, slippery mind, spell-like abilities, trapfinding, trap sense +5, extaminaar traits; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +20, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 26, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +17, Disable Device +9, Disguise +16, Escape Artist +18, Forgery +12, Gather Information +18, Hide +19, Intimidate +13, Jump +13, Knowledge (local Waterdeep) +14, Listen +10, Move Silently +19, Open Lock +16, Search +11, Sense Motive +12, Spot +11, Swim +10, Tumble +20, Use Magic Device +24; Cosmopolitan, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Chondathan, Draconic, Turmic, Yuan-ti.

Improved Evasion (Ex): No damage on successful Reflex save and half damage if the save fails.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Cannot be flanked and can be sneak attacked only by a character with at least twenty-one rogue levels.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*speak with animals* (snakes only); 3/day—*charm animal* (snakes only) (DC 14). Caster level 17th.

Possessions: +3 studded leather of fortification, +2 shocking burst rapier, +1 cold iron dagger, +1 silvered dagger, masterwork dagger, ring of protection +2, ring of levitate, wand of Melf's acid arrow (22 charges), cloak of resistance +2, boots of striding and springing, 6 doses of poison (random varieties), gloves of Dexterity +6, masterwork potion belt, 3 potions of blink, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of mirror image, scroll of improved invisibility.

Leargath, draegloth

Leargath has not been particularly affected by the loss of Lolth in recent months, since he was always a somewhat independent spirit. He has no sponsoring house and spends most of his time hunting in the caverns of the Underdark. He does not even particularly care for the company of drow, and spends most of his down time in duergar communities, where he is cautiously welcomed because of his strength and his casual and often demeaning attitude toward the dark elves. Leargath has a particular hatred for grimlocks and mind flayers; he has managed to steer clear of large groups of illithids up until this point, but when he has the chance to hunt a lone mind flayer down, he takes it.

Leargath is smaller than most of his race, but this trait helps him better navigate and fight in the crowded tunnels of the Underdark. His skin is the deepest black, and bile-drips from his

jaws when he gets excited or is about to enter combat. He loves to wade through opponents with his axes whirling, and uses a normal-size greataxe so he can wield it even while climbing. For a draegloth, Leargath is quite a social creature, and he has even been known to tell a joke on rare occasion.

Leargath: Male draegloth ranger 8/cavelord^{Und} 2: CR 15; Large outsider (native); HD 6d10+8d8+2d10+48; hp 135; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +16; Grp +26; Atk +23 melee (1d12+8/×3, +2 greataxe) or +20 ranged (1d8+7, Large +1 returning throwing axe); Full Atk +21/+16/+11/+6 melee (1d12+8/×3, +2 greataxe) and +20/+15 melee (1d8+4, Large +1 returning throwing axe) or +20 ranged (1d8+7, Large +1 returning throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA favored enemy aberrations +4, favored enemy monstrous humanoids +2, spells; SQ cave tracker, darkvision 120 ft., draegloth traits, immunity to poison and sleep, improved combat style (two-weapon fighting), lesser cavesense, resistance to acid 20, cold 20, electricity 20, and fire 20, wild empathy +9 (+5 magical beasts), woodland stride*; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +19, Will +12; Str 22, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 12.

*Because Leargath has trained in the Underdark and not in forests, his woodland stride ability applies to stalagmite-filled caves and rocky tunnels instead of areas of overgrowth.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Bluff +6, Climb +13 (+15 with ropes), Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +9, Heal +12, Hide +12, Intimidate +3, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local Underdark) +12, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +13, Move Silently +16, Search +10, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7, Spot +13, Survival +12 (+14 underground or when following tracks), Swim +13, Use Rope +9; Blind-Fight, Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Shadows of the Soul, Stealthy, Track, Tunnelfighter^{Und}, Tunnelrunner^{Und}.

Languages: Abyssal, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Undercommon.

Spell-Like Abilities: 4/day—darkness; 1/day—dancing lights, desecrate, faerie fire, unholy blight (DC 15). Caster level 6th.

Typical Ranger Spells Prepared (caster level 4th): 1st—*magic fang*, *pass without trace*; 2nd—*protection from energy*.

Possessions: +3 chain shirt, +2 greataxe, Large +1 returning throwing axe, ring of protection +1, minor cloak of displacement, gloves of Dexterity +2, potion of invisibility, 2 potions of cure serious wounds.



Leargath

CHAMPIONS OF EVIL

Faerûn has known great evils over its history, from the hubris of Karsus to the machinations of the fey'ri to the power-hungry Zhentarim under Fzoul Chembryl. There are three great evils that have been around since the dawn of Abeir-Toril that dwarf even these, however—three evils so foul, so corrupt, and so powerful that even the gods tread lightly in their presence. Dendar the Night Serpent prowls the Fugue Plane, swallowing the nightmares of mortals, Kezef the Chaos Hound hunts the Outer Planes and Faerûn looking for fresh souls and the weakened god who betrayed him, and Ityak-Ortheel seethes in his Abyssal home, waiting for the day when Malar will once again call upon him to bring ruin to the elves. Other evils are perhaps more recently spawned, but no less deadly.

Aumvor the undying

Perhaps the most legendary lich north of Warlock's Crypt, Aumvor the Undying is said to lair amid one of the great mountain ranges of the Savage Frontier. His reputation for cruelty is second only to Shoon VII, for both are known to have experimented with the uses of alicorns and blood of unicorns, earning them the undying enmity of the Fair Folk. Aumvor's mastery of the necromantic arts is unmatched; even today, daring wizards seek him out in hopes of securing an apprenticeship.

Aumvor rose to prominence during the Netherese Age of Discovery, during the heady days of the empire's expansion across Faerûn. While other Netherese wizards sought out the stars and distant shores, Aumvor turned inward, seeking to understand the mysteries of death and dying. Aumvor earned the moniker of "the Undying" by surviving for centuries in the bowels of his black basalt castle in the heart of the Lonely Moor, attended by generation after generation of descendants, all the while untouched by the ravages of time. Instead of resorting to lichdom, the Netherese necromancer fed off the life force of a long line of "living zombies" he created as servitors, some of them from his own family.

In the Year of Sundered Webs (-339 DR), another Netherese wizard, Karsus, triggered the collapse of the Weave, which tore

apart the magical underpinnings of Netheril. The momentary absence of magic decimated Aumvor's legion of living zombies and triggered his contingency magics, whisking him to the depths of a secret lair in the heart of the High Forest and transforming him into a lich. Aumvor never returned to his castle, leaving it and the fruits of his studies to his great-grandniece Morasha, but the lich's only surviving descendant has continued Aumvor's studies for centuries since.

What little is known of Aumvor's activities after the fall of Netheril has been recorded by his former apprentice, the Archmage Briel, who last studied under his mentor in the Year of the Watching Cold (1320 DR). According to Briel's personal memoirs, entitled *A Life Lived in the Shadows of Death* and held in the library of his daughter Brielbara of Baldur's Gate, Aumvor is calculating, paranoid, and utterly devoid of any moral compass, not unlike others of his ilk. The lich cares only for his own aims, but he is unusually willing to adapt his plots as circumstances warrant. Morasha's diaries, entitled *Nesoterica: A Study of the Sublimation of the Soul*, date to the period before Aumvor embraced lichdom, but they, too, depict a practitioner of the Art consumed with the study of the necromantic arts to the exclusion of all else.

In life, Aumvor was short and stocky, with fat hands, a sizable paunch, fair skin, and long, unkempt black hair. As a lich, he has only grown more obese. The Undying One now resembles a bloated corpse left to rot after a drowning, with his slimy, bone-white skin distended from his skeletal frame. His eye sockets are empty save for two flickering points of crimson light that seem to swim in pools of infinite, hateful blackness. Aumvor favors the fine robes of a highborn Netherese arcanist, and is never without his crown-shaped *headband of intellect* or *rod of the epic spellcaster*^{EL}, which he plans to use as his regalia once Netheril is reborn.

Aumvor's Lair

Since abandoning his keep in the Lonely Moor over seventeen centuries ago, Aumvor has laired in the depths of the Endless Caverns, far below the sheltering boughs of the High Forest and the forested slopes of the southwestern Star Mounts. The lich has claimed a series of limestone caverns carved by a forgotten clan of Ammarindaran dwarves, which are periodically enveloped from below by a long arm of Araumycos.

Access to the lich's lair is restricted to tunnels flooded by a tributary of the Unicorn Run that rises as a spring near the river's headwaters. As a result, anyone approaching the complex must survive passage through biting cold waters without access to air. The walls of the lair are lined with naturally occurring veins of lead and painted with gorgon's blood to render teleportation into or out of the complex impossible. A one-way portal in the heart of the lair exits into the bowels of Aumvor's old keep in the Lonely Moor, but the lich has never found cause to use it.

Aumvor's quarters are richly appointed with the trappings of a highborn Netherese archmage. The lich's servants scour ruins across the North in search of heirlooms dating back to the Netherese diaspora. Aumvor particularly prizes tapestries and sculptures depicting scenes of Netherese society from his youth. The lich also maintains extensive laboratories, well stocked with the decaying corpses of his experimental subjects.

The lich's storerooms house all manner of magical treasures forged by Netherese artisans. Some of the more legendary artifacts he is believed to hold or have held in his living vault^{EL} include the *alicorn diadem of Sharrven*, the *bonestaff of Sadebreth*, the *Crown of Horns*, the *jewel cage of Congenio*, and the pyramid-shaped *tear of Ascore*. In addition, Aumvor is believed to own a massive library of spell tomes, most of them acquired from dozens of crypts scattered across the North by the first wave of Netherese emigrants.

Aumvor is personally attended by several dozen absolutely loyal servitors and guards, including both living zombies and various other types of undead. On rare occasions the lich has taken a living apprentice, assuming the student shows great promise and is of Netherese heritage, but few survive the apprenticeship. Those who do not are usually transformed into spectral mages^{ME} and forced to serve the Undying One for eternity.

Aumvor's Domain

Aumvor claims all of the Endless Caverns as his domain, although several other powerful creatures (such as Grimnosthasdrano, the "Riddling Dragon") and factions (such as a band of illithids and drow slavers) would strongly contest such a claim should the lich choose to try to enforce it. In practice, Aumvor holds sway over the northwest quarter of the Endless Caverns, and his creations wander freely in this region, far from the unwelcome light of day.

Deeds of Aumvor

As one of the last surviving arcanists of fallen Netheril—if a lich can truly said to be "surviving"—Aumvor hoards every scrap of knowledge he can acquire regarding his long-dead homeland, in preparation for the day when Netheril rises anew under his stewardship. The lich is wise enough to realize that founding a petty kingdom and calling it Netheril will never recapture the glories of that which was lost. So Aumvor seeks to rekindle the culture of magical experimentation and investigation that grew up in the early days of Netheril and thus seed the rebirth of a culture of magecraft that will grow to rule all of Faerûn. He also labors to escape Mystra's strictures on the most powerful workings of the Art, and thereby to remove the limits he feels might eventually stifle his Netherese empire reborn. Above all else, Aumvor sees keeping himself "alive" as of chief importance, for he is convinced that only he has the vision and the drive to see his plan through.

For centuries, Aumvor has quietly observed promising candidates of strong Netherese bloodlines and placed scrolls and tomes of simple spells where they will be discovered by those showing promise in the Art. Through his agents, Aumvor has then subtly encouraged such individuals to master ancient Netherese traditions and then teach their insights to others he directs to their door. Although Aumvor's actions in this regard are not unlike that of Mystra's servitors, the lich's intent is far more sinister, for he deliberately encourages those of Netherese descent who rebel against any limitation on their workings of the Art.

As an extension of this approach, Aumvor has also labored from the shadows to start schools of wizardry in the lands of the Netherese diaspora. Evidence of his guiding hand is seen in Briel's School of the Arcane in Baldur's Gate, the Brotherhood of the Black Hand in Ascalhorn, and Ulcaster's School of Conjuratation in Beregost. However, the legacy of such efforts has largely been one of spectacular failure, and from such bitter lessons Aumvor has concluded that he must concentrate his efforts on nurturing the master/apprentice relationship, the linchpin on which the culture of Netherese magecraft was built.

Perhaps most disquieting of the lich's deeds was Aumvor's attempt to claim Laeral Silverhand as his bride by placing the *Crown of Horns* where it would be discovered by the Nine adventuring band. It is unclear whether the lich sought to tempt the Witch-Queen of the North with access to lost Netherese magics or simply to bind her will to his, but the plot failed spectacularly when Laeral descended into madness, thanks to the magical conflict between the artifact and Mystra's silver fire, and turned on her companions. Although Khelben eventually rescued Laeral from the stronghold of the Nine, neither archmage ever learned of Aumvor's culpability, or the Lord and Lady of Blackstaff Tower would have sought revenge on the Undying One long ago.

Although Aumvor has yet to escape Mystra's strictures on the lost spells of yore, his research into epic spellcasting has

proven productive. Fruits of the lich's study include such spells as *Aumvor's fragmented phylactery* and *Aumvor's soulbatter* (see below). Aumvor's greatest success is, of course, ensuring his continued survival. His creation of living zombies sustained him for centuries, until he was forced to embrace lichdom. However, his all-consuming paranoia and careful cunning have done more to ensure his continued survival than even his magic.

Aumvor's magic

Aumvor is heir to the great tradition of Netherese magic and a skilled practitioner in the Art. The Undying One has created innumerable spells and magic items over the centuries, and he continues his ceaseless experimentation. Two epic spells of note include *Aumvor's fragmented phylactery* and *Aumvor's soulbatter*, both of which are detailed in Chapter 2 of this book.

Aumvor's phylactery is the rune-inscribed skeleton of Dethed, a former apprentice of Ioulaum and rival of Aumvor. Aumvor has cast his *fragmented phylactery* spell on his phylactery repeatedly, and scattered the individual bones of Dethed in caches hidden throughout the Endless Caverns (as well as a few in locations farther afield). Most of the 206 bones have been cloaked against all manner of divination, including detection for magic, for undead, or for location of Dethed's remains.

Aumvor's fate

The return of the Shadovar to the Realms has disrupted many of Aumvor's plans, but also provided the Undying One with great opportunities. The lich has yet to approach the inhabitants of Shade or make himself known to them. Instead, he has chosen to observe the shades as they investigate many sites he has already plundered. Of course, the Shadovar also pose a great threat to the lich, for he holds much of the lost Netherese lore that they seek, and, once they become aware of his position, the Princes of Shade might well hunt him down without mercy.

Aumvor the Undying: Male lich (augmented elite Netherese human) necromancer 15/archmage 5/epic wizard 7/Netherese arcanist 5: CR 34; Medium undead (augmented elite humanoid); HD 32d12; hp 208; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +18; Grp +18; Atk +18 (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis, touch); Full Atk +18/+13/+8/+3 touch (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis, touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA fear aura, greater spell focus (epic), high arcana

(arcane fire, mastery of counterspelling, mastery of elements, mastery of shaping, spell power), paralyzing touch, touch attack, spells, +2 bonus to caster level checks to overcome spell resistance (*black robe of the archmagi*); SQ backlash resistance, damage reduction 15/bludgeoning, epic spell artisan, field specialization, immune to cold, electricity, polymorph (though he can use polymorph effects on himself), and mind-affecting attacks, spell resistance 18 (*black robe of the archmagi*), +4 turn resistance, undead traits, AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +17, Will +25; Str 10, Dex 12 (14 with *ioun stone*), Con —, Int 25 (31 with *headband of intellect* +6), Wis 15, Cha 16.

Backlash Resistance (Su): Aumvor gains resistance 5 to backlash damage from casting epic spells. Each time he casts an epic spell with a back-

lash, that damage is reduced by 5 points.

If the backlash damage continues for more than 1 round, the reduction is 5 points each round.

Epic Spell Artisan: Aumvor can develop epic spells with less expense in time and resources. When determining the cost of raw materials for researching an epic spell, he multiplies the Spellcraft DC by 7,000 gp instead of the usual 9,000 gp and reduces the development time and XP cost accordingly.

Fear Aura (Su): Aumvor is shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at the lich must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell from a 27th-level sorcerer. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by Aumvor's aura for 24 hours.

Field Specialization: Aumvor's major field of magic is variation (epic spell seeds: *animate dead*, *dispel*, *fortify*, *reflect*, *slay*, *transform*, *transport*, *ward*) and his minor field is invention



Aumvor the Undying

(epic spell seeds: *afflict*, *armor*, *conjure*, *destroy*, *energy*, *slay*, *summon*). He cannot cast epic spells based on seeds from the field of mentalism.

The base Spellcraft DC for developing spells in the variation field of specialization is reduced by 5.

Greater Spell Focus (Epic): The saving throw DC for each of Aumvor's epic spells increases by +2, but the Spellcraft DC does not increase.

Immunities (Ex): Aumvor is immune to cold, electricity, polymorph (though he can use polymorph effects on himself), and mind-affecting spells and abilities.

Paralyzing Touch (Su): Any living creature Aumvor hits with its touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude save or be permanently paralyzed. Remove paralysis or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim (see the *bestow curse* spell description). The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralyzed by a lich seems dead, though a DC 20 Spot check or a DC 15 Heal check reveals that the victim is still alive.

Touch Attack: Aumvor has a touch attack that uses negative energy to deal 1d8+5 points of damage to living creatures; a DC 26 Will save halves the damage.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +38, Craft (alchemy) +25, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcana) +45, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +28, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +28, Knowledge (geography) +28, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (local the North) +28, Knowledge (nature) +28, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +28, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Knowledge (religion) +28, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Search +18, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +42; Spot +10, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Epic Spellcasting^{II}, Forge Ring, Improved Metamagic, Improved Spell Capacity (10th), Improved Spell Capacity (11th), Improved Spell Capacity (12th), Improved Spell Capacity (13th), Maximize Spell, Quickened Spell, Scribe Scroll^{II}, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (necromancy), Spellcasting Prodigy, Twin Spell.

Typical Wizard Spells Prepared (caster level 33rd): 0—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *electric jolt*^{Mag} (+19 ranged touch), *mage hand*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (+18 melee touch, DC 18); 1st—*alarm*, *corrosive grasp*^{Mag} (+18 melee touch), *know protections*^{Mag} (DC 18), *spirit worm*^{Mag} (DC 18), *Tenser's floating disk*, *true strike*; 2nd—*command undead*, *death armor*^{Mag}, *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *spectral hand*, *touch of idiocy* (+18 melee touch), *whispering wind*; 3rd—*blacklight*^{FRCS} (DC 20), *fireball* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 21), *undead lieutenant*^{Mag}, *undead torch*^{Mag}; 4th—*animate dead*, *charm monster* (DC 22), *crushing despair* (DC 22), *detect scrying*, *explosive cascade*^{Mag} (DC 21), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*, *summon undead IV*^{Mag}, *wall of evil*^{Mag}; 5th—*dominate person* (DC 23), *feeblemind* (DC 23), *Grimwald's graymantle*^{FRCS} (DC 22), *nightmare* (DC 22); 6th—*create undead*, *eyebite* (DC 24), *globe of invulnerability*, *translocation trick*^{Mag} (DC 24); 7th—*finger of death* (DC 25), *greater arcane sight*, *greater ironguard*^{Mag}; 8th—*create greater undead*, *flensing*^{FRCS} (DC 26), *horrid wilting* (DC 26); 9th—*dominate monster* (DC

27), *meteor swarm* (+19 ranged touch), *Mordenkainen's disjunction*; 10th—empowered maximized twinned *explosive cascade*^{Mag} (DC 21), twinned *finger of death* (DC 25); 11th—empowered maximized *horrid wilting* (DC 26); 12th—quickened *time stop*; 13th—empowered quickened *meteor swarm* (+19 ranged touch); Epic—*Aumvor's soulshatter*^{*} (DC 51), *mummy dust*^{EL}, *Tolodine's killing wind*^{RG} (DC 30).

^{*}New epic spell described on page 37.

Spellbook: Aumvor knows hundreds of worthwhile spells and a few odd spells of particular use to him. He knows all the sorcerer/wizard spells in the *Player's Handbook* and many of the sorcerer/wizard spells in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*, *Magic of Faerûn*, and *Player's Guide to Faerûn*.

Possessions: *amulet of the planes*, *black robe of the archmagi*, *crystal ball with true seeing*, *darkskull*, *headband of intellect* +6, *ring of spell-battle*^{Mag}, *ioun stone* (deep red sphere), *ring of wizardry IV*, *rod of the epic spellcaster*^{EL}, *staff of skulls*^{Mag} (25 charges), various potions, scrolls, and wands (collectively worth 30,000 gp).

Living zombie

Living zombies are living creatures reduced to a mindless state by a potent combination of enchantment and necromantic magic.

Living zombies have no free will and obey only the exact commands of their master.

Living Zombie Moon Elf, 1st Level Warrior

Medium Humanoid (Elf)

Hit Dice: 1d8+3 (7 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 17 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 light shield, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20) or longbow +3 ranged (1d8/×3) or slam +2 melee (1d6+1)

Full Attacks: Longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20) or longbow +3 ranged (1d8/×3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Elf traits, life leech

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 9, Cha 1

Skills: Hide +1, Listen +2, Spot +2

Feats: Toughness^{II}, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Any

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

combat

Living zombie elves abandon the caution of their race and wade into combat without concern. They use their bows only if a target is far off or fleeing. They favor longswords and rapiers, and usually carry longbows or shortbows. Living zombie elves are graceful and deadly in melee, using complex maneuvers that are beautiful to observe.

creating a living zombie

"Living zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature (other than undead) that has a skeletal structure (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

Living zombies appear as they did in life, except their eyes turn solid black.

Living zombies can be created by a ritual that involves the casting of *command undead*, *dominate animal*, *person*, or *monster* (depending on type), *false life*, and *feeblemind* spells. The process involves embedding a piece of the caster (usually a single strand of hair) in the subject. If this piece of the caster is ever separated from the living zombie, the template is removed. Creating a living zombie costs 1,000 gp in materials and takes at least six hours to complete. A spellcaster can concurrently control at most one living zombie per ability point bonus in his primary spell-casting ability.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to magical beast if it is an animal, and it gains the augmented subtype. Otherwise the type remains unchanged.

It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by a number based on the living zombie's size.

Size	AC Bonus	Damage
Fine	+0	1
Diminutive	+0	1d2
Tiny	+0	1d3
Small	+1	1d4
Medium	+2	1d6
Large	+3	1d8
Huge	+4	2d6
Gargantuan	+7	2d8
Colossal	+11	4d6

Attacks: A living zombie retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature. A zombie also gains a slam attack.

Damage: Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. A slam attack deals damage depending on the living zombie's size. (Use the base creature's slam damage if it's better.)

Special Attacks: A living zombie is unable to cast spells, employ spell-like or supernatural abilities, understand language, or communicate coherently.

Special Qualities: A living zombie gains the following special quality:

Life Leech (Su): Living zombies retain a magical bond to their creator that diminishes the former and sustains the latter. For every full day that passes while the bond exists, the creator of a living zombie ages only half that amount. This effect is cumulative, so a creator of three living zombies would age only 3 hours ($1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2 \times 24$ hours). This also means that living zombies heal naturally at only half the normal rate.

Abilities: A living zombie's Intelligence and Charisma changes to 1.

Skills: A living zombie is unable to use Intelligence- or Charisma-based skills.

Feats: A living zombie gains the Toughness feat.

Environment: Any land or underground.

Organization: Any.

Challenge Rating: +0.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: A living zombie's alignment is always neutral. It is unable

to act contrary to its creator's wishes.

Advancement: As base creature, or — if the base creature advances by character class.

Level Adjustment: —.

in the realms

Living zombies are the creation of Aumvor the Undying, a Netherese lich rumored to lair amid the mountain ranges of the North. Only his descendants (e.g., his great-grandniece Morasha) and his former apprentices (e.g., the writings of Briel) know the secret of their creation, although it is possible others have stolen the formula as well. Although Briel never created any such creatures, small armies of living zombie servitors serve both Aumvor and Morasha. Both particularly prize elf living zombies because of their long life spans.



Living zombie

eltab

Eltab, the "Lord of the Hidden Layer," is an ancient and powerful demon lord who has wreaked havoc in the eastern reaches of Faerûn for centuries.

First summoned by Narfelli demonbinders in the waning years of the great war between Narfell and Raumanthar, Eltab led an invasion of Rashemen and ruled that land for several decades after the fall of Narfell. After being imprisoned by the Witches of Rashemen and then released by crusaders of Myrkul over twelve centuries ago, Eltab helped establish the theocracy of Eltabranar in the Eastern Shaar. He played a pivotal role in the Battle of Thazalhar when the Red Wizards threw off the yoke of the Mulhorandi god-king, and was then imprisoned beneath the newly constructed Thayan capital city of Eltabbar when the Red Wizards failed to banish him.

THE GOALS OF ELTAB

Now, after centuries of imprisonment, the Lord of the Hidden Layer is finally free to seek vengeance against his many enemies. This grim, hateful creature's chief foes include the Red Wizards of Thay, particularly the lich Szass Tam, the god-kings of Mulhorand, and the Witches of Rashemen. He also plots against the followers of Orcus in the Galenas and the paladin-princes of Impiltur, who long ago destroyed his half-fiend son, Agrosch the Scaled. Once his quest for revenge is sated (if that is ever possible), Eltab intends to establish a powerful empire in eastern Faerûn. From this new base of power, the Lord of the Hidden Layer intends to reclaim his throne in the Abyss and resume his ancient battle with Demogorgon, Graz'zt, and Orcus.

THE CULT OF ELTAB

Most of Eltab's former allies and enemies think him dead, a mistake he has done nothing to correct. However, a small number of cultists still venerate the Lord of the Hidden Layer, and Eltab has reached out to a few such groups since his escape from the grasp of the Red Wizards. Small bands of Eltab's followers exist in the city of Eltabbar in Thay, in the city of Lyrabar in Impiltur, in the city of Teflamm in Thesk, and in the outlaw wastes of Dambrath, known as the Swagdar. At the demon lord's direction, members of these cabals have recently begun visiting cities in the guise of Red Wizards, committing crimes in their name. Through this tactic, Eltab hopes to undermine the mercantile might the Red Wizards have built through the establishment of enclaves across Faerûn.

The leaders of such cabals typically adopt the Thrall of Eltab prestige class (detailed below).

THE SERVANTS OF ELTAB

Eltab is served by a motley array of demons, primarily glazebru and succubi he has liberated from bindings in the upper catacombs of the Citadel of the Conjurers. The Lord of the Hidden Layer continues to seek out new servitors buried in demoncysts across the Demonlands, but assembling an army in this fashion is a slow and laborious process.

eltab's lair

After recently escaping the clutches of Szass Tam and the Red Wizards of Thay, Eltab has found himself in the depths of the Citadel of Conjurers, the site where long ago he was first summoned to Faerûn by the demonbinders of Narfell. This Narfelli ruin lies in southwestern Impiltur, near the Hill of Tombs in the foothills of the Earthfast Mountains, at the mouth of Moaning Gorge. Although the wizards of Old Impiltur warded the Citadel of Conjurers against entry long ago, Eltab was able to gain access by way of the demoncysts of the Hidden Layer, detailed below.

The Citadel of Conjurers is the most infamous ruin of ancient Narfell, and it has played a prominent role in the history of Impiltur (as discussed below in the write-up of the *Moaning Crown of Ndulu*). The fell dungeons of this place are believed to contain countless Narfelli artifacts and spelltomes, including many that enable the summoning and binding of demons and other fiendish creatures. The last known mortal to tread in the citadel's depths was the paladin-prince Nord, in the Year of the Moaning Gorge (786 DR). His account of what he saw therein is carefully guarded by the Paladin-Princes of Impiltur in the royal library of the Realm of Sword and Wand in Lyrabar.

eltab's domain

Eltab once ruled the 248th layer of the Abyss, known as The Hidden Layer. This terrible place is a vast wasteland of boulders and fissures, beset by constant electrical storms of incredible ferocity. The howling wind, frequent lightning strikes, and never-ending torrential rain make it inhospitable to most creatures, with the notable exception of demons. Nevertheless, it is home to a riotous array of extraordinarily deadly plant life, including forests of assassin vines, bloodthorns, ironmaws, and viper trees.

For more than fifteen centuries, Eltab's Abyssal kingdom has been fragmented into ever-changing fiefdoms. Eltab's balor lieutenants battle endlessly to seize control of his vacated kingdom. The most powerful of the balors is Ndulu (32 HD advanced balor), the general of a demonic host banished back to the Abyss by the Paladin Princes of Impiltur at the Battle of Moaning Gorge (786 DR).

Since the Year of the Stone Giant (-160 DR), fragments of the Hidden Layer, known as demoncysts, have lain buried beneath the lands claimed by the last Nentyarch of Narfell. Somehow, in the process of summoning and binding Eltab to their will, the last Nentyarch's demonbinders inextricably linked Abyssal fragments of the Hidden Layer to the lands under the sway of the Nentyarch, creating little islands of the Abyss throughout northeastern Faerûn, buried just beneath the surface.

Demoncysts of the "Demonlands" are typically 100 or so feet in diameter. Conditions within each demoncyst mirror that of the Hidden Layer, but the environment within a demoncyst does not usually interact with the surrounding terrestrial environment. (At least one demoncyst in the eastern Thaymount bleeds Abyss-tainted water from the River of Blood into the River Eltar, thanks to the actions of the first Zulkir of Conjurage.) All known demoncysts

lie underground, so reaching a demoncyst usually requires digging or passage through a tunnel of some sort. Creatures and objects can pass freely into or out of a demoncyst, but environmental conditions within or outside of a demoncyst cannot push a creature or object into or out of a demoncyst. As a result, a demoncyst typically resembles an odd-shaped cavern with a wholly different environment than the surrounding earth or open spaces.

Although most of the undiscovered demoncysts lie beneath the forests of the Great Dale or the Thaymount, a few lie undiscovered beneath the lands of Damara, Impiltur, the Priador, Thesk, and Vaasa. Many demoncysts contain imprisoned fiends, for, in the wake of Narfell's fall, Nar demonbinders placed many calling diagrams (usually in the form of iron, bronze, or silver signs, as detailed in *Unapproachable East*) within such planar pockets to hold demons they might later wish to unleash. When Impilturan settlers carved out the Great Dale in the 600s DR, they uncovered many such demoncysts and inadvertently freed many of the demons, half-fiends, and tieflings bound within during their subsequent explorations of these strange "pocket planes."

The largest demoncyst, known as the Hall of the Hidden Throne, lies in the depths of the Citadel of Conjurers. Over 500 feet in diameter, the Hall of the Hidden Throne contains the throne room of Eltab's long-abandoned palace, wrenched from the Abyss by the Narfelli demonbinders when they first summoned Eltab to Faerûn in the Year of the Stone Giant (-160 DR). Inscribed on the floor in front of the Hall of the Hidden Throne is the *Adamantine Binding*, an extremely powerful calling circle that ties Eltab and the Hidden Layer to the eastern Realms. Only the legendary sword *Hadryllis* can shatter this binding. Until such time as the binding is destroyed, Eltab can only be banished to a demoncyst and cannot depart the Realms. Moreover, for as long as the binding persists, the demoncysts of the Hidden Layer are inextricably tied to lands once claimed by ancient Narfell.

deeds of eltab

The empires of Narfell and Raumathar warred from the Year of Clipped Wings (-623 DR) to the Year of Recompense (-150 DR) over control of the Priador. Centuries of warfare culminated

in a great decade-long conflagration that consumed both empires (beginning in -160 DR, the Year of the Stone Giant) and left all manner of summoned beings unchained upon the face of Faerûn.

The ruling Nentyarchs of Narfell had long heeded the dark whisperings of the *Crown of Narfell* (said to have been a gift to the first Nentyarch from the demon lord Orcus, Prince of the Undead) and directed members of the Narfelli court to traffic with demonic agents, in the hopes of mastering the dark art of sorcery.

Perhaps the greatest of the demons summoned by the Narfelli demonbinders was Eltab, at the time a powerful demon lord who rivaled the ever-warring triumvirate of Demogorgon, Graz'zt, and Orcus in power and influence in the Abyss. Some say it was Orcus who revealed the secret of binding Eltab with the *Adamantine Binding*, while others claim it was a power inherent in the *Crown of Narfell*. In an effort to open a new front against Raumathar, the reigning Nentyarch directed Eltab to invade Rashemen with a host of demons, who quickly overran the realm. In the Year of the Black Marble (-148 DR), Eltab claimed Rashemen for himself, and the demon lord quickly found he had a taste for ruling in the lands of humankind, with the almost godlike veneration one such as he could inspire.

In the Year of the Bloody Goad (-105 DR), an Illuskan tribe known as the Rus arrived in eastern Faerûn via a malfunctioning *portal* that deposited them on the eastern shore of Lake Ashane. Although quickly integrated into the native Rashemi population, the Rus were powerful berserkers who sparked an insurrection among the native Rashemi against the court of Eltab. The arrival of the Rus coincided with the emergence of the Witches of Rashemen, a secret sisterhood formed in the dying days of Raumathar to preserve that empire's magical lore.

In the Year of Leather Shields (-75 DR), an alliance of the Rashemi, the Rus, and the Raumviran witches finally liberated Rashemen from demonic rule. The hero of this conflict was a half-Rus/half-Rashemi warrior named Yvengi, who wielded a great magical blade named *Hadryllis* against Eltab, severely wounding the demon lord and forcing him to flee. The Witches of Rashemen finally caught up with Eltab in the Sharawood, far to the south in the Eastern Shaar. They imprisoned him beneath the forest floor



Eltab

and bound a dracolich known only as the Everlasting Wyrms to be his guardian.

In the Year of the Adamantine Spiral (106 DR), crusaders of Myrkul from the Castle of Alphanar attacked and (temporarily) destroyed the Everlasting Wyrms. While plundering the dracolich's hoard, the followers of Myrkul discovered the imprisoned demon lord, and, in exchange for ninety-nine years of service to the Church of Myrkul, the crusaders agreed to release the demon lord from his binding. With Eltab's aid, the followers of Myrkul seized control of the city of Shandaular in the Council Hills and established the theocracy of Eltabanar, encompassing most of the Eastern Shaar. The crusaders of Myrkul might have learned from Eltab the ritual of voluntarily transforming themselves into death knights, a secret the demon had long ago stolen from Demogorgon, although church dogma holds (or at least held) that the Lord of the Dead granted them the "gift" in exchange for their eternal servitude.

In the Year of the Fanged Gauntlet (202 DR), Eltabanar undertook an ambitious and ill-fated invasion of southern Unther and Mulhorand prompted by Eltab, who coveted the might of the god-kings. Led by an incarnation of Anhur wielding the legendary *Hadryllis*, the clerics of the god-kings managed to defeat Eltab and imprison him in a demoncyst beneath far-off Thaymount. By the Year of the Greengrass (205 DR), Unther and Mulhorand had reclaimed all of their lost territory, and by the Year of the Spoiled Splendors (211 DR), the inhabitants of Eltabanar had been forced to abandon their realm and flee south and west.

In the Year of Spouting Fish (922 DR), Jorgmacdon, the leading conjurer of the Red Wizards, tunneled into the Thaymount demoncyst in which Eltab had been imprisoned for more than seven hundred years. Using a rediscovered ritual of the Narfelli demonbinders, he called forth the demon lord to fight alongside the Red Wizards at the Battle of Thazalhar. In so doing, Jorgmacdon inadvertently shattered the boundary that normally keeps the environment of a demoncyst from mixing with the outside world, and thus created the River Eltar.

With Eltab's assistance, the Red Wizards routed the god-kings' army and established the nation of Thay. When Jorgmacdon realized it was impossible to dismiss the demon lord, he imprisoned him near the mouth of the River Eltar with a variant of the same ritual that had been used by the Narfelli demonbinders nearly a millennium before. The Red Wizards then built their new capitol city, Eltabbar, in and around the canals that formed the massive binding rune.

Centuries after Eltab's imprisonment beneath the Thayan capitol city, Szass Tam realized that the demon lord would soon break free. Instead of waiting for that to occur, in the Year of the Shield (1367 DR) the lich released the Lord of the Hidden Layer, in the process causing a major earthquake in Eltabbar. Using the *Death Moon Orb*, an artifact acquired from the legendary Larloch, the Zulkir of Necromancy compelled Eltab to sit in *Thakorsil's seat*, another artifact given to him by the Netherese lich of Warlock's Crypt. Szass Tam hoped to permanently enslave Eltab using an epic spell known as the *ritual of twin burnings*

in conjunction with the artifact-throne but, before Szass Tam could weave all nine runes of chaos, adventurers foiled the lich's plot, enabling Eltab to escape to a demoncyst, deep below the Thaymount. Biding his time and recovering his strength, Eltab began to slowly subvert servants of the Zulkir of Necromancy, seeking to defeat his foe and re-conquer what he considered rightfully his. Finally, in the Year of Rogue Dragons (1373 DR), Eltab emerged from hiding and confronted Szass Tam but was thwarted by the actions of Thazienne Uskevren, who seemingly vanquished him after a great and terrible battle. In truth, Eltab was magically transported to the Citadel of Conjurers in far-off Impiltur by ancient bindings cast on him by wizards of Narfell over one thousand years ago. There he is free to plot anew and wander Faerûn unchecked, seeking his vengeance.

eltab's magic

Since his escape from the Red Wizards of Thay, Eltab has acquired a potent array of magical items, many of them artifacts dating back to the empire of Narfell and lost over fifteen centuries ago. Perhaps the most prominent of the items he has acquired is the *Moaning Crown of Ndulu*, a wraithlike shadow of the legendary *Crown of Narfell*.

MOANING CROWN OF NDULU

In the Year of Visions (731 DR), the legendary paladin Sarshel entered the Citadel of Conjurers (which lay near the Hill of Tombs) and shattered the fabled *Crown of Narfell*. In so doing, he broke Orcus's hold over the artifact and forced the army of demons led by the balor Ndulu to retreat and scatter. Although Sarshel gathered up the physical fragments of the headgear, the souls of the long-dead Nentyarchs trapped within the crown quickly fled their ancient prison in the form of powerful wraiths.

Over the next five decades, Ndulu captured the crown-wraiths one by one and brought them to his lair in the depths of the Earthfast Mountains. Calling on the power of the Prince of the Undead, Ndulu forged the crown-wraiths into an incorporeal circlet of evil and darkness. With the *Moaning Crown of Ndulu* on his brow, so named for the endless wailing of the souls it had trapped anew, Ndulu was able to reforge his army of succubi and glabrezu. In the Year of the Moaning Gorge (786 DR), Ndulu's army was met by the great-grandsons of King Sarshel at the mouth of a gorge that led deep into the Earthspurs, just outside the gates of the Citadel of Conjurers. Employing three shields—*Kimeltaar*, *Naelotaar*, and *Dizeltaar*—and the sword *Demonbane*, the Paladin Princes formed a vortex portal and through it drove Ndulu and his horde back into the Abyss.

In his final act, Ndulu shattered two of the shields—*Naelotaar* and *Dizeltaar*—and their shield-bearers, Essys and Araln. In his wake, the balor left the *Moaning Crown of Ndulu*, for it could not pass beyond this plane. Recognizing the *Moaning Crown* as the fell echo of the *Crown of Narfell*, but unable to destroy it, Prince Nord secretly carried it to the depths of the Citadel of Conjurers and placed it amid the other Narfelli artifacts that lay therein. After

his sudden reappearance a tenday later, he had the court wizards of Old Impiltur renew their wards on the site, and the *Moaning Crown of Ndulu* is believed to remain within, forever locked away.

The *Moaning Crown* resembles an incorporeal circular cloud of black smoke. It can be moved only by someone or something capable of manipulating objects on the Ethereal Plane. (Prince Nord carried it on the blade of *Felthann*, Crown Prince Essys' sword with the *ghost touch* property.) However, if somehow placed atop the brow of a sentient creature, it remains firmly in place. Anyone staring into the depths of the headpiece can discern tortured faces swirling through the dark mists, and it is from their mouths that the ever-present moaning emerges.

Physical contact with the *Moaning Crown* is equivalent to the touch of a powerful crown-wraith, dealing 1d8 points of Constitution drain per round unless a DC 24 Fortitude save is made. (Most bearers would require some form of *negative energy protection* to safely wear the crown.) As its name suggests, the *Moaning Crown* radiates a constant moaning. This is a magical sonic effect and can be negated by magical *silence*. In nonevil creatures, this moaning engenders the effect of an *emotion (despair)* spell, centered on the wearer. In evil creatures, the effect is akin to a bard's inspire greatness ability. Evil creatures within 30 feet of the crown-bearer who can hear the moaning gain +2 HD (d10s that grant temporary hit points), a +2 competence bonus on attacks, and a +1 competence bonus on Fortitude saves. Three times per day, at the command of the crown-bearer, the collective moaning of the crown-wraiths can rise to the level of a terrifying scream, equal in effect to a *wail of the banshee* spell.

Strong necromancy; CL 20th; Weight 5 lb.

eltab's fate

The fate of the Lord of the Hidden Layer is inextricably tied to future events in eastern Faerûn: The various means of binding the demon lord to one's will are recorded in a small number of tomes, but such means have been discovered anew enough times to suggest that Eltab will be a recurring influence in the unfolding history of the eastern Realms.

Removing Eltab's tie to the Realms (and thus breaking the enduring ties between the Hidden Layer and the "Demonlands" of the Easting Reach) would require a quest of epic scope. Eltab's lair in the depths of the Citadel of Conjurers is unknown to all but a handful of demons and cultists. Once it is learned that Eltab is alive, understanding the nature of the Narfelli binding that ties the Hidden Layer to Faerûn might require a trek into the depths of the Castle of Al'hanar to the Myrkulyte library guarded by the Knights of the Undying Dragon or perusing the *Demonbane Annals* in the Vault of Sages in Silvermoon. The sword *Hadryllis* was last seen in the hands of an incarnation of Anhur, and now lies forgotten in the depths of the Blood Fortress of Sultim. Banishing Eltab requires delving the depths of the Citadel of Conjurers once again, defeating the demon lord and his minions, and shattering the *Adamantine Binding* forged when Eltab was brought to this world centuries ago.

ELTAB, LORD OF THE HIDDEN LAYER

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)

Hit Dice: 35d8+385 (542 hp)

Initiative: +12

Speed: 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good), burrow 20 ft.

AC: 43 (-1 size, +8 Dex, +6 insight, +20 natural), touch 23, flat-footed 35

Base Attack/Grapple: +28/+45

Attack: Gore +40 melee (1d8+13) or +5 *keen shock greatsword* +45 melee (3d6+18/15-20)

Full Attack: Gore +40 melee (1d8+13) and 2 claws +38 melee (1d6+13) or +5 *keen shock greatsword* +46/+41/+36/+31/+26/+21 melee (3d6+18/15-20)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Death gaze, fear, spell-like abilities, summon demon

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 20/cold iron and good, fast healing 5, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, item master, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, spell resistance 39, telepathy 100 ft., *true seeing*

Saves: Fort +30, Ref +27, Will +26

Abilities: Str 37, Dex 27, Con 33, Int 28, Wis 24, Cha 28

Skills: Bluff +37, Climb +41, Concentration +40, Diplomacy +39, Escape Artist +36, Gather Information +37, Hide +36, Intimidate +46, Jump +43, Knowledge (arcana) +47, Knowledge (history) +47, Knowledge (the planes) +47, Knowledge (religion) +47, Listen +35, Move Silently +36, Search +37, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +49, Spot +35, Swim +41, Tumble +38

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech^{BV}, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vile Martial Strike^{BV} (greatsword), Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Environment: A chaotic, evil-aligned plane or any land or underground

Organization: Solitary or Eltab plus 1d4 glabrezu and 1d2 succubi

Challenge Rating: 28

Treasure: Quadruple standard

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

Eltab is a 15-foot-tall, muscular humanoid creature with the head of a muzzled beast. His body is covered with bony, dark red plates and sprouts dozens of horns and antlers. His slitted eyes are narrow and yellow, with glowing red irises.

Eltab speaks Abyssal, Celestial, Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Dwarven, Mulhorandi, Rashemaar, and Nar.

Ordinarily archfiends such as Eltab do not grant spells, but he might act as a patron for a cleric with the given domain, whether or not the cleric worships a specific deity. Eltab's domains include Chaos, Demonic^{BV}, Evil, Hatred^{PG}, and Retribution^{PG}.

COMBAT

Eltab loves to wade into melee combat against multiple foes, carving into their ranks with his greatsword or tearing them asunder with his claws and head spikes.

Eltab's natural weapons, as well as any weapons he wields, are treated as chaotic-aligned and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Death Gaze (Su): Death, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 39. The save is Charisma-based.

Fear (Su): Eltab radiates a *fear* effect (Will DC 39 negates) at will. The save is Charisma-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bestow greater curse*^{BV} (DC 27), *blasphemy*, *call lightning* (DC 22), *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect thoughts* (DC 21), *greater dispelling*, *read magic*, *suggestion* (DC 22), *telekinesis*, *teleport without error*, *tongues* (self only), *unballow*, *unboly aura*, *unboly blight* (DC 23), *wall of thorns*; 1/day—*despoil*^{BV} (DC 28), *symbol of fear* (DC 25), *shapechange*, *utterdark*^{BV}, Caster level 20th.

Item Master (Ex): Although not an actual spellcaster, Eltab can use any magic item, even spell completion magic items such as wands and scrolls.

True Seeing (Su): Balors have a continuous true seeing ability, as the spell (caster level 20th).

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day Eltab can automatically summon 1d8 succubi, 1d6 glabrezu, or 1 balor. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Possessions: *Moaning Crown of Ndulu* (see above), *Stormsplitter* (+5 keen shock greatsword).

Thrall of Eltab

The thrall of Eltab has embraced the dark legacies of ancient Narfell. He works to bring the lands once claimed by the Nentyarch of Narfell under the rule of Eltab, in hopes of achieving a position of some power as the demon lord's lieutenant.

Thralls of Eltab often work in small groups, usually led by a demon the group has found and liberated from a binding dating back to the waning days of Narfell. A few thralls of Eltab are solitary individuals, traitors within an organization hated by Eltab—who seek to betray their fellows for personal gain. More than a few Red Wizard conjurers have heeded the whispers of Eltab and serve as the demon lord's eyes and ears within the ruling hierarchy of Thay.

BECOMING A

THRALL OF ELTAB

Clerics and thaumaturgists are most commonly found as thralls of Eltab, for their spells lend themselves toward working with demons, unlike Nar demonbinders, sorcerers, and wizards, whose spells lean toward binding and commanding demons, a practice Eltab detests. Barbarians, blackguards, fighters, rangers, and rogues also make good thralls of Eltab, for their combat abilities blend naturally with the abilities of this class.



Thrall of Eltab

Illustration by Marc Sasso

TABLE 7-1: THE THRALL OF ELTAB

	Base					
	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Bonus Feat or Spells
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bone spurs, scaly flesh +1	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing spellcasting class
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	<i>Touch of fear</i>	—
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Burrow	—
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Scaly flesh +2	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	<i>Summon minor demon</i>	—
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	<i>Demoncyst jump</i>	—
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Scaly flesh +3	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing spellcasting class
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Immunity to electricity	—
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	<i>Summon major demon</i>	—
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	<i>Death gaze</i> , scaly flesh +4	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing spellcasting class

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills (4 + Int Modifier): Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, Swim, Use Rope.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Language: Abyssal.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 8 ranks.

Feats: Deformity (Clawed Hands)^{BV}, Thrall to Demon^{BV}, Willing Deformity^{BV}.

Special: Must have released a bound or otherwise imprisoned demon without demanding any assurances or anything in return.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the thrall of Eltab prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A thrall of Eltab is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor, and with shields.

Bonus Feat or Spells: When a thrall of Eltab attains 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th level, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in whatever spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class, or else he gains a bonus feat of his choice. If the thrall chooses +1 spellcasting level, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that he adds the new level to the level of whatever other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

If a character had more than one spellcasting class before he became a thrall of Eltab, he must decide to which class he adds the level for purposes of determining spells per day.

A thrall of Eltab is free to choose the bonus feat at one opportunity and the spellcasting level the next time the decision arises, or vice versa. Characters who are not spellcasters must choose the bonus feat.

Bone Spurs (Ex): A 1st-level thrall of Eltab gains a profusion of sharp bone spurs emerging from his skull, which provide a gore attack. If the thrall does not already have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the table below. Creatures that have other kinds of gore attacks retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage	Size	Damage
Fine	—	Large	1d8
Diminutive	1	Huge	2d6
Tiny	1d2	Gargantuan	2d8
Small	1d4	Colossal	4d6
Medium	1d6		

Scaly Flesh (Ex): A 1st-level thrall of Eltab gains dark red, scaly flesh, which provides a +1 natural armor bonus. At every three levels beyond 1st (4th, 7th, and 10th), this bonus increases by 1. The bonus from scaly flesh stacks with that of natural armor derived from creature type (if the thrall of Eltab is a lizardfolk or troglodyte, for example), but not from magical sources such as an *amulet of natural armor*.

Touch of Fear (Sp): Three times per day, a 2nd-level thrall of Eltab can produce an effect identical to that of the *cause fear* spell cast by a 10th-level caster.

Burrow (Ex): A 3rd-level thrall of Eltab can burrow at a speed of 10 feet. If the creature can already burrow, this speed does not stack.

Summon Demon (Sp): A 5th-level thrall of Eltab can summon a demon of 5 HD or less once per day. This functions as a summon monster spell cast by a 15th-level caster. Once per day, a 9th-level thrall of Eltab can summon a demon of 10 HD or less.

Demoncyst Jump (Sp): Once per day, a 6th-level thrall of Eltab can produce an effect identical to that of a *teleport* spell cast by a 10th-level caster. This ability can be employed only within a demoncyst, and the target must lie within another demoncyst. Off-target results arrive in the desired demoncyst, but not at the desired location. Similar area results lead to a randomly chosen demoncyst, somewhere in eastern Faerûn. Mishaps deposit the thrall of Eltab on the 248th layer of the Abyss.

Death Gaze (Su): At 10th level, a thrall of Eltab gains a gaze attack: death, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 10 + thrall's class level + thrall's Cha bonus negates. The save is Charisma-based. If the target fails its save, it dies.

soneillon, “queen of whispers”

The “Queen of Whispers” has haunted the nation of Impiltur since the Battle of Moaning Gorge, although her central role in Impiltur's enduring troubles is a carefully hidden secret. This former consort of Agros the Scaled, Ndulu, and the Archmage Ferentier is a succubus from the Abyss who excels in the twin arts of possession and corruption. She has contributed to the fall of two royal houses in Impiltur and sown the seeds of civil war in both Chondath and the Realm of the Sword and Wand. Banished more than four centuries ago from the kingdom of Impiltur, Soneillon now rules the hobgoblins of the Giantspires from the shadows, and claims the death knight Imbrar Heltharn, fallen king of Impiltur, as her undying prince-consort. However, Soneillon's desire for revenge against Impiltur remains unslaked, and she continues to plot against its leadership.

soneillon's lair

Soneillon is based in the depths of the Giantspire Mountains, having claimed a long-plundered crypt of ancient Narfell as her lair, and its twin thrones as her seat of power. The Queen of Whispers nominally dwells therein, attended by the Fallen King of Impiltur and the undead remnants of his Royal Guard, but, in practice, she spends much of her time secretly lurking within the minds of mortals, possessing crowns and other symbolic objects as she sows the seeds of corruption. Soneillon is most often found possessing the *Coronation Crown of Alia* while it rests atop the brow of the most powerful hobgoblin of the tribes of the Giantspire Mountains.

Soneillon's domain

Soneillon claims all the Giantspire Mountains as her domain, having secretly proclaimed it to be the kingdom of Naratyr. The Queen of Whispers does not rule Naratyr in open court, preferring instead to whisper to the various hobgoblin chieftains from the shadows. Soneillon seeks to regain the throne of Impiltur, which she held briefly centuries ago before being banished forever from the realm by Soargar, then the Archmage of Lyrabar.

needs of soneillon

For centuries, the Giantspire Mountains, which today form the border between the Kingdom of Damara and the tribal lands of Narfell, have been home to bugbears, hill giants, ogres, stone giants, and countless hobgoblins. Although long considered a deadly nuisance, the eternally-warring tribes of hobgoblins did not begin to pose a significant threat to neighboring realms until the Year of the Dawndance (1095 DR). However, the roots of their emergence stretch back nearly four centuries before that date.

In the 600s DR, Impilturan settlers began settling the Great Dale, inadvertently unleashing the fell legacies of ancient Narfell buried beneath the forest floor. Once again, demons, half-fiends, and tieflings began to plague the region. West of the Easting Reach, fiends began infiltrating the ruling strata of the Impilturan court, while others mustered armies under the command of the balor Ndulu. Once unleashed in the Year of the Dowager Lady (726 DR), the armies of fiends quickly brought Impiltur to its knees. On the eastern shores of the Easting Reach, the lack of organized resistance (outside of Milvarn) allowed individual fiends to rampage unchecked through what is now Thesk.

Among the fiends released during the blazing of the Great Dale was a succubus named Soneillon. Some scholars specializing in the study of fiends claim this is not her true name, but the name of a female demon lord, whose guise she has assumed. The Queen of Whispers, as the consort of Agrosh the Scaled styled herself, was instrumental in engineering the fall of the Durlarven dynasty, but her reign as queen of Impiltur was short-lived. In the Year of the Twisted Horn (729 DR), Agrosh, the half-fiend offspring of Eltab, the Lord of the Hidden Layer, was slain by Belthar Garshin, a paladin of Torm, at the Battle of Horned Heads; Soneillon narrowly escaped with her life.

The Queen of Whispers spent the next five decades skulking about Impiltur, serving as favored consort and chief spy of Ndulu, the balor general of the demon horde. Just before the Battle of Moaning Gorge (786 DR), she assumed the guise of Prince Nord's mistress and nearly succeeded in subverting his will. However, Prince Nord resisted her insidious attacks and had her imprisoned beneath his keep. As such, Soneillon escaped the fate of Ndulu and his host of demons, who were banished back to the Abyss. In the immediate aftermath of the battle, while Nord plumbed the depths of the Citadel of Conjurers, Soneillon managed to escape, engulfing her captor's keep in flames in the process.

Soneillon spent the next century-and-a-half in Chondath, playing the role of consort to Archmage Whinonas Ferentier of Hlath.

There she sowed the seeds of corruption that came to fruition in the Rotting War that ended in the Year of Queen's Tears (902 DR), when Whinonas released the evil magics of ancient Netheril. During the war's last battle on the Fields of Nun, Soneillon was seen flitting from one dying warrior to the next, whispering final torments in their ears and delighting in the suffering.

In the wake of the Rotting War, the Queen of Whispers returned to Impiltur, armed with knowledge of all manner of magical plagues. In the Year of the Spouting Fish (922 DR), Soneillon unleashed the magics of the Tortoisecab Plague on the royals of House Elethlim. Over the next two years, the descendants of Sarshel fell victim to Talona's touch one by one, until only Princess Alia remained. Two years later, the Queen of Whispers struck again, possessing the ship *Nadyra's Glory* as it sailed from Hlammach to Turlagol and forcing it to dive into the depths. As the ship was en route to Suzail, delivering Princess Alia to her wedding, its sinking marked the last chapter of House Elethim, the end of Impiltur's Golden Age, and the beginning of the era known as the Kingless Years.

In the wake of Alia's death, Soneillon returned to Impiltur to finally reclaim "her" throne. She spent the next decade whispering dark promises in the ears of Impiltur's patriarchs, inciting the realm's noble houses and cities into civil war. With the kingdom in chaos and those that might oppose her wracked by feuds, only the efforts of Soargar, Archmage of Lyrabar, prevented the Queen of Whispers from desecrating the *Crown of Narfell* and claiming it as her own. The former Mage Royal of Impiltur crafted a spell that forever banished Soneillon from the lands claimed by Impiltur, and the civil war, sparked by Soneillon's whispers, finally subsided.

Soneillon fled north to the abandoned gnome mining tunnels beneath the Rawlinswood, and from there she made her way north into the Giantspires. In the decades that followed, the Queen of Whispers slowly formulated a plan to exact her revenge on the Realm of the Sword and Wand. One by one, the succubus seduced the various hobgoblin tribal chiefs of the region, binding them to her will, until she had knit the primitive humanoids into an army and realm capable of challenging the might of shattered Impiltur.

In the Year of the Dawndance (1095 DR), the Queen of Whispers sent her army through the Rawlinswood tunnels to muster on the northern border of Impiltur. From there, the hobgoblin horde swept into northern Impiltur, leaving only their banished queen behind. Imphras Heltharn, War-Captain of Lyrabar, with the aid of Soargar, united the city-states of Lyrabar, Hlammach, Dilpur, and Sarshel, the elves of the Grey Forest, and the dwarves of the Earthfast Mountains into an army capable of holding off the hobgoblins. After a terrible struggle, the host of Impiltur was driven back to the shores of Bluefang Water in the uplands of Impiltur. There Soargar, the young sorceress Sambral, the visiting archmage Velgarbrin of Baldur's Gate, and the folk of Impiltur and its allies routed the hobgoblin horde.

Frustrated once again, the Queen of Whispers retreated to the Giantspires to rebuild her armies and plot her next attack. Meanwhile, in Impiltur, Imphras was crowned king, having learned

from the dying Soargar where lay the *Crown of Narfell* and five score fabled blades of the Realm. Imphras I was succeeded by his son Imbrar in the Year of Rose Pearls (1122 DR). Imbrar's younger sister, Princess Ilmara, became a sorceress under Mhilra of Milvarune and found the *Scrying Stones of Myth Drannor*. Ilmara then founded Ilmwatch, to guard against the return of the hobgoblins.

In the Year of the Luminar Procession (1127 DR), the ever-vigilant Ilmara saw the hobgoblins stirring in one of the *Scrying Stones* and alerted her brother to the looming threat. Instead of mustering his army on the northern border of the realm and inciting the hobgoblins to come out onto the plains, King Imbrar foolishly marched north into the mountains, accompanied only by his Royal Guard, who bore the blades that were collectively known as Soargar's Legacy. This had been Soneillon's ploy all along, for her armies were still too weak to confront Impiltur's defenders directly.

Although Imbrar and his Royal Guard fought valiantly, they were no match for the Queen of Whispers and her minions on their own turf. One by one they fell, as they fled through the treacherous mountain passes, until only Imbrar remained. Undone by his pride and dreams of valor, Imbrar realized he had squandered Soargar's Legacy and broken the faith of his subjects. The Queen of Whispers captured him alive, and the brokenhearted king was then subjected to a stream of torments, until finally his will and faith in the Triad broke as he drew his final breath. To Soneillon's delight, the fallen king of Impiltur then arose as a death knight and servant to her will.

In the two and a half centuries since Ilmara donned the *Crown of Narfell*, the Queen of Whispers and her undead prince-consort have ruled the Giantspires from the shadows, hidden behind the throne of the reigning hobgoblin monarch. Although Soargar banished Soneillon from Impiltur, he did not recognize the threat she would continue to pose to the realm and breathed his last before he could mention her existence to anyone else. However, his long-lost notes might detail some of what he learned about the Queen of Whispers, should they someday come to light.

Soneillon calls her realm Naratyr, in homage to the terrible city of her patron, Orcus, Demon Prince of the Undead. While

Imbrar trains his hobgoblin armies in preparation for a future invasion, should Impiltur's defenders ever lower their guard, the Queen of Whispers plots from the shadows anew. The succubus has learned to whisper in the minds of Impiltur's rulers from afar, circumventing Soargar's prohibition, and has corrupted more than one royal of House Heltharn with thoughts of power. Those who have succumbed to her whispered promises of absolute power include Prince-Consort Rilaun, King Lashilmbrar, Prince Thaum, Crown Prince Imphras IV, and at least two of the Lords

of Imphras II who administer the realm today. In many ways, Soneillon has unleashed far more horrors on mighty Impiltur than the legendary Ndulu ever did, and her vengeance remains unslaked.

soneillon's magic

Over the centuries, the Queen of Whispers has acquired an array of magical items, many of them of great historical import, which she now regards as the regalia of Naratyr. When Imbrar rose as a death knight, she allowed him to keep his Impilturan regalia, so he, too, is suitably attired in the fashion of a powerful monarch. Three items of particular historical interest are discussed below, and others are mentioned in the list of possessions of each monarch of Naratyr.



Soneillon

CORONATION CROWNS OF ALIIA AND RHIIGARD

The *Coronation Crowns of Aliia and Rhiigard* were crafted in the Year of the Fearless Peasant (926 DR) and packed aboard the *Nadyra's Glory*, along with many other treasures of the realm that were being sent to Cormyr. After scuttling the bridal ship, Soneillon kept the crowns as symbols of her eventual rightful rule of Impiltur, and they now serve as the royal crowns of Naratyr.

The *Coronation Crown of Rhiigard* usually sits on the brow of Prince-Consort Imbrar; he even wears it into battle. It is an ornate, almost gaudy, crown, fashioned of gold and adorned with countless jewels. The *Coronation Crown of Aliia* usually lies on Soneillon's throne, although the Queen of Whispers wears it whenever she manifests in physical form. This crown is often "loaned out" to the most powerful hobgoblin among the tribes of the Giantspires. It too is an ornate crown, fashioned of platinum and also adorned

with countless jewels. Each crown is worth some 30,000 gp in materials alone.

Each of the *Coronation Crowns* has earned the sobriquet of the "Crown of Whispers" and acquired the reputation of a fell magical artifact among the hobgoblins of the Giantspires. However, despite the legends that surround them, both simply enhance the Charisma of their bearers (as a *cloak of charisma* +4). The reason behind their reputation is that both crowns are favorite targets of Soneillon's object possession ability, and she often whispers to whomever's head her crown bestrides.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor*; Price 50,000 gp; Weight 5 lb.

GREATSWORD OF IMPILTUR

Commissioned to mark the coronation of Sarshel Elethim as king of Impiltur and forged by the dwarves of Earthfast, the *Greatsword of Impiltur* was not completed until the Year of the Splendid Stag (734 DR), during the early days of the reign of Halanter I. The blade served as Halanter's ceremonial sword of state from the time of its dedication until the Year of the Missing Blade (759 DR), when it vanished from the royal vaults along with several other treasures of the realm. Rumors at the time attributed the blade's theft to an agent of Ndulu, the balor general who was known to have survived the Fiend Wars. However, the *Greatsword of Impiltur* was not among the treasures seized in the aftermath of the Battle of Moaning Gorge twenty-seven years later, casting some doubt on this theory.

In the Year of Wolfpacks (826 DR), Eljak Ferenfal, the Horned Ranger, spent the latter half of the winter hunting a pack of winter wolves across the ice-bound Bluefang Water. During the course of his relentless pursuit, Eljak stumbled across the mauled and frozen corpse of a Rashemi berserker trapped in the ice. Although the body was clad in simple hide armor and carried nothing else of any worth, the warrior's scabbard held an impressive greatsword, later identified as Impiltur's long-missing sword of state. At winter's end, Eljak presented both the *Greatsword of Impiltur* and a cloak made from the pelt of the winter-wolf pack leader to King Halanter II, and both were placed in the royal vaults with the king's heartfelt thanks.

In the Year of the Fearless Peasant (926 DR), the *Greatsword of Impiltur* was lost en route to Cormyr, during the sinking of the *Nadyra's Glory*, along with Princess Aliia and many treasures of the realm. Thus, it is one of the few royal blades of Impiltur that is not included in the five-score swords collectively known as Soargar's Legacy. Soneillon recovered the blade from the depths of the Inner Sea, along with the *Coronation Crowns of Aliia and Rhiigard*, and eventually bore it back to her court in the depths of the Giantspire Mountains. The great blade then passed to a succession of hobgoblin champions until the Year of the Luminar Procession (1127 DR), when Soneillon reclaimed the blade and gave it to her newly risen undead servant, Prince-Consort Imbrar Heltharn, who has wielded it ever since.

Forged of cold iron, the *Greatsword of Impiltur* is a +2 *ravenous doomstrike greatsword*. The blade is engraved with images of dead

and wailing demons, and the pommel is carved in the shape of a balor whose torso has been pierced by the blade.

Strong evocation and necromancy [death]; CL 15th; Craft Arms and Armor, *shatter, slay living*; Price 54,350 gp; Cost 27,350 gp + 2,174 XP; Weight 15 lb.

Soneillon's fate

Having survived the fall of Narfell, sparked civil wars in Impiltur and Chondath, and precipitated the fall of two royal houses in Realm of the Sword and Wand, Soneillon has proven herself a cunning survivor and insidious opponent. Her power, however, comes from her ability to scheme from the shadows, not confront foes directly. Should she ever be unmasked, the paladins of Impiltur would undoubtedly destroy her, or at least drive her back to the Abyss.

The fate of Soneillon's prince-consort, Imbrar Heltharn, is less certain. Eventually, he must march his hobgoblin legions back into Impiltur, where he is almost certain to be defeated—unless the Queen of Whispers has corrupted enough of his opponents to shatter the might of Impiltur's defenders.

Soneillon, Queen of Whispers: Female advanced succubus fiend of possession^{FF} 6/fiend of corruption^{FF} 6; CR 23; Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar); HD 12d8+12 plus 12d6+12; hp 120; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +13; Grp +13; Atk +13 melee (1d3+1, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA curse, energy drain, spell-like abilities, summon tanar'ri; SQ ally or enemy, alternate form, animate object, control creature, control object, damage reduction 20/+2, ethereal form, fiend's favor, fiendish graft, geas, grant wish, hide presence, immunity to electricity and poison, magic item, major creation, mark of justice, mind shielding, possess creature, possess noncontinuous object, possess object, resistance to acid 20, cold 20, and fire 20, soul bargain, spell resistance 12, suggestion, telepathy, temptation, tongues; AL CE; SV Fort +19, Ref +19, Will +20; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 26 (30 with *Coronation Crown of Aliia*).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +7, Disguise +14*, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +17, Listen +16, Move Silently +7, Ride +7, Search +9, Spot +16; Dodge, Epic Leadership, Expertise, Flyby Attack, Hover, Leadership, Improved Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quick Change.

Class Abilities: Soneillon's class abilities are too numerous and lengthy to repeat in detail. See the *Fiend Folio*, pages 202–212. Her Leadership score is 36. Her cohort is Imbrar. Her followers are NE/CE hobgoblins (660/66/33/17/9/5/3/2/1), all placed in positions of authority among the hobgoblin tribes.

Alternate Form (Su): Soneillon can assume any humanoid form of Small to Large size as a standard action. This ability is similar to the *polymorph self* spell but allows only humanoid forms.

*While using this ability, Soneillon gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks.

Energy Drain (Su): Soneillon drains energy from a mortal she lures into some act of passion, or by simply planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is not willing to be kissed, she must start a grapple, which provokes attacks of opportunity. Her kiss or embrace bestows one negative level; the victim must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom check to even notice. The Fortitude save to remove the negative level has a DC of 18.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*charm monster* (DC 19), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *doom* (DC 16), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 18), and *teleport without error* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only); 1/day—*unholy blight* (DC 19). Caster level 12th.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day, Soneillon can attempt to summon one balor, with a 10% chance of success. When she needs to, she usually attempts to summon Ndulu, because he delights in the opportunity to return to the Demonlands and temporarily assuage his appetite for revenge.

Telepathy (Su): Soneillon can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

Tongues (Su): Soneillon has a permanent *tongues* ability as the spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. She usually uses verbal communication with mortals and saves telepathic communication for conversing with other fiends.

Possessions: *Blazing Mantle of Horus-Re* (robe of scintillating colors), *Coronation Crown of Aliia* (crown of charisma +4), *Scepter of Tharos* (rod of embassy [The Abyss]), *Signet Ring of Raumathar* (ring of elemental command [fire]), *Vambraces of Whinonas* (bracers of armor +6).

Prince-Consort Imbrar Heltharn, Fallen King of Impiltur: Male human death knight ex-paladin 8/blackguard 10; CR 21; Medium undead; HD 18d12; hp 117; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. (20 ft. in full plate); AC 28, touch 20, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +26; Grp +25; Atk +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+10/17–20, *Greatsword of Impiltur*) or +23/+18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+7 plus 1 Con [Will DC 25 halves damage and negates Con damage]), touch on living creatures; SA Abyssal blast, command undead 8/day (+9,

2d6+12, 5th) (10/day with *Coronation Crown*), fear aura, smite good 4/day, sneak attack +4d6, spellcasting; SQ aura of evil, aura of despair, damage reduction 15/+1, dark blessing, *detect good*, fiendish servant (fiendish raven), immunity to cold, electricity, and polymorph, lay on hands (1/day, cures 126 hp to self), spell resistance 26, summon mount, turn immunity, undead followers, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +20, Ref +13, Will +15; Str 18 (24 with *belt of giant strength*), Dex 10, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 20 (24 with *Coronation Crown*).

Skills and Feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +21, Hide –7, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +7, Ride +5, Spot +7; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, and Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, Imbrar can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 1,120 feet. The blast deals 16d6 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire damage, but the rest results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by *protection from elements (fire)*, *fire shield* (*chill shield*), or similar magic. A DC 26 Reflex save reduces the damage by half.

Aura of Despair (Su): Imbrar radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to take a –2 penalty on all saving throws.

Aura of Evil (Ex): The power of Imbrar's aura of evil (see the *detect evil*

spell) is equal to his blackguard level.

Dark Blessing (Su): Imbrar applies his Charisma modifier (normally +5, +7 with *Coronation Crown of Rhiigard*) as a bonus on all saving throws.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, Imbrar can use *detect good* as a spell-like ability, duplicating the effect of the *detect good* spell.

Fear Aura (Su): Imbrar is shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within 15 feet of



Imbrar Heltharn

Imbrar must succeed on a DC 26 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a 16th-level sorcerer.

Smite Good (Su): Imbrar adds his Charisma modifier (normally +5, +7 with *Coronation Crown of Rhiigard*) to his attack roll and deals an extra 10 points of damage when using this ability. For example, Imbrar armed with a greatsword would deal 2d6+10 points of damage, plus any additional bonuses from high Strength or magical effects that normally apply. If he accidentally smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect but it is still used up for that day.

Summon Mount (Su): Imbrar has the ability to summon a mount, typically an advanced 8 HD nightmare, though it can be any other kind of creature normally used as a mount. The mount can have no more than 8 HD. If the mount is lost or killed, Imbrar can summon another one after a year and a day.

Turn Immunity (Su): Imbrar cannot be turned. He can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if he were an evil outsider. (Imbrar would return to the Abyss, specifically to the domain of Orcus.)

Undead Followers: Imbrar is attended by the undead remnants of his Royal Guard, four of whom survive as huecavas. Each huecava carries one of the five-score blades of Soargar's Legacy. These creatures are in addition to any undead creatures that Imbrar can rebuke.

Undead Traits: Imbrar is immune to mind-affecting spells and abilities, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also work on objects. Imbrar is not subject to extra damage from critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. Imbrar cannot be raised, and *resurrection* works only if Imbrar is willing. Imbrar has darkvision out to 60 feet.

Blackguard Spells Prepared (caster level 10th): 1st—*strategic charge*^{MAG} (2), *summon monster I*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *darkness*, *death knell* (DC 14); 3rd—*bedevil*^{*}, *contagion* (DC 15), *protection from energy*; 4th—*poison* (+33 melee touch, DC 18).

^{*}New spell described in Chapter 2.

Possessions: *Cincture of Saint Jasper* (belt of giant strength +6), *Tabard of Sarshel* (cloak of resistance +4), *Coronation Crown of Rhiigard* (crown of Charisma +4), *Shining Mail of Nord* (+5 gnashing* full plate), *Greatsword of Impiltur* (+2 ravenous* doomstrike* greatsword).

^{*}New special ability described in Chapter 2.

dendar the night serpent

Colossal Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 54d8+864 (1,193 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 80 ft. (16 squares), climb 80 ft.

AC: 42 (–8 size, +6 Dex, +34 natural) touch 8, flat-footed 30

Base Attack/Grapple: +54/+89

Attack: +65 melee (4d8+19/19–20 plus nightmare venom, bite)

Full Attack: +65 melee (4d8+19/19–20 plus nightmare venom, bite)

Space/Reach: 50 ft./40 ft.

Special Attacks: Crush, ignore armor, improved grab, nightmare scales, nightmare venom, spell-like abilities, swallow whole, unleash nightmares

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 15/epic and good, darkvision 120 ft., fast healing 10, immunity to charm, death, and fear magic, immunity to petrification, immunity to poison, low-light vision, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, and sonic 10, spell resistance 40, *true seeing*

Saves: Fort +45, Ref +35, Will +39

Abilities: Str 48, Dex 23, Con 42, Int 23, Wis 26, Cha 24

Skills: Bluff +64, Climb +64, Concentration +73, Diplomacy +44, Hide +47, Jump +76, Knowledge (arcana) +63, Knowledge (the planes) +63, Listen +65, Move Silently +63, Search +63, Sense Motive +45, Spellcraft +43, Spot +65, Survival +31, Swim +76

Feats: Ability Focus (nightmare venom), Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor (6), Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, *Quickened Spell-Like Ability* (*shadow evocation*)

Climate/Terrain: The Fugue Plane

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 26

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement: —

Dendar the Night Serpent is a vile elder evil as old as the world itself. She roams the Fugue Plane, devouring the nightmares of the living, and looking forward to the day when she has collected enough of the fears of humankind to initiate the end of the world.

combat

Dendar prefers to confront attackers head-on, using her awesome bite attack and nightmare venom to incapacitate a single combatant at a time. She prefers to target spellcasters first, since her nightmare scales can eliminate or severely weaken melee fighters before she finishes them off. She often just slithers over creatures in her path, crushing them under her awesome weight. Dendar tries not to kill her opponents, preferring to put them into an endless sleep with her venom so that she can feed upon their nightmares forever.

Dendar does not need to worry about most mortal challengers, and it would take a concerted effort by several of the most powerful angels, demons, or devils to give her pause. Should she ever find her opponents actually damaging her, she would not hesitate to unleash the nightmares from her gizzard in an attempt to trap her attackers inside their greatest fears forever.

Crush (Ex): As a standard action, Dendar can jump, roll, or slither onto her opponents, using her whole body to crush them. She can crush creatures of Large size or smaller, up to as many

as will fit under her gigantic body. Creatures crushed by the Night Serpent take $4d8+28$ points of bludgeoning damage and must attempt a DC 45 Reflex save. Failure means the creature is pinned beneath her body, automatically taking crush damage each round the pin is maintained.

Ignore Armor (Ex): Dendar's incredibly sharp fangs pierce any armor as if it were paper. Not even the most powerful magic armor protects against her vicious bites; as a result, do not count armor and natural armor bonuses when determining an opponent's AC against the Night Serpent's bite attacks.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Dendar must hit with her bite attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Nightmare Scales (Su): Anyone striking the Night Serpent in melee combat causes one of her scales to fly off. Each scale contains a consumed nightmare, which is unleashed on the character in the form of a *nightmare* spell (DC 26).

Nightmare Venom (Ex): Anyone struck by Dendar's bite attack must succeed on a DC 53 Fortitude save or fall into a coma. While in this state, the character is assailed by a constant stream of his worst nightmares. The only way to recover a character in this state is through the use of a *wish* or *miracle* spell, and even then the character must succeed on a DC 53 Will save or take $1d4$ points of Wisdom drain from the horrible lucid nightmares he has experienced.

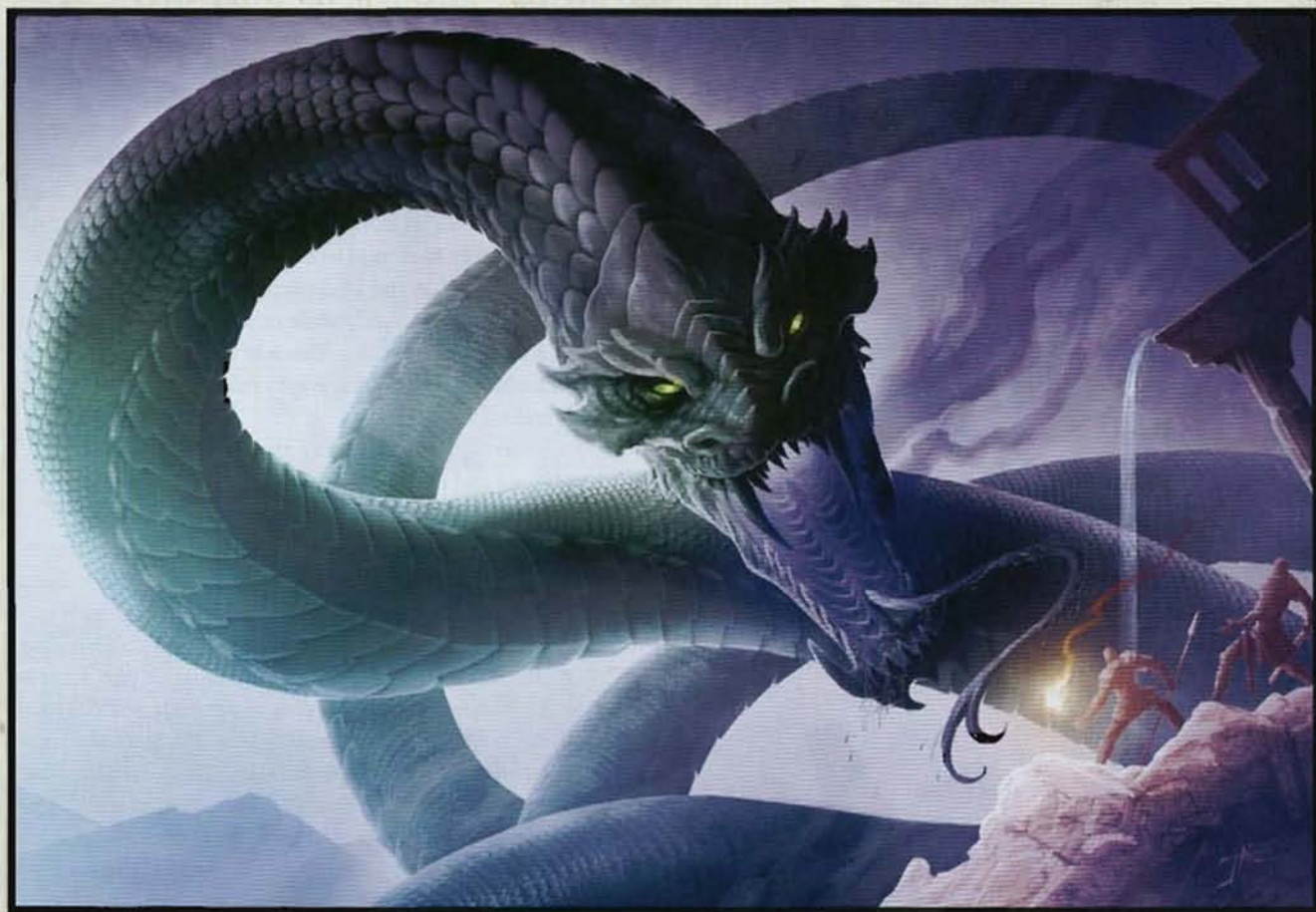
Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*dream*, *fear* (DC 25), *nightmare* (DC 26), *plane shift*, *shadow conjuration* (DC 25), and *shadow evocation* (DC 26). Caster level 30th. The save DCs are Charisma-based and include a +4 racial bonus.

Swallow Whole (Ex): When Dendar begins her turn with a grappled opponent in her mouth, she can swallow that opponent with a successful grapple check. Once inside, a creature takes $2d10+28$ points of bludgeoning damage per round from her muscular contractions. There are worse things inside the Night Serpent's gizzard, however.

The undigested nightmares of thousands of souls reside within Dendar's belly. Anyone trapped within is automatically assailed by these nightmares $1d6$ times per round as if they had struck her in combat (the Will save is affected as if Dendar had one of the character's body parts).

There are two ways to escape this nightmare prison. The first is to deal at least 100 points of damage to the Night Serpent's gizzard with a light slashing or piercing weapon (her gizzard has an AC of 27). Once a creature has escaped in this way, muscular action closes the hole; other swallowed creatures must cut their own way out. The second method of escape is under Dendar's control. If she ever uses her *unleash nightmares* ability with a creature in her gizzard, the creature is automatically expelled along with the nightmares, suffering the nightmare attack along with all others in the area of effect (and possibly finding its way right back into her belly).

Illustration by Jason Engle



Dendar the Night Serpent

Dendar's interior can hold 2 Gargantuan, 4 Huge, 8 Large, 32 Medium, 128 Small, 512 Tiny, 2,048 Diminutive, or 8,192 Fine or smaller opponents.

True Seeing (Su): Dendar the Night Serpent continuously uses this ability, as the spell (caster level 30th).

Unleash Nightmares (Su): The Night Serpent can cause any being on any plane to relive her worst nightmare. Unless the creature succeeds at a DC 26 Will save, she goes completely insane. This insanity can be cured only by a *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* spell. Dendar can unleash this ability as a breath weapon in combat once every 1d4 rounds as well, although she is loathe to do so since it delays the end of the world just that much longer. If she does so, all creatures within a 100-foot cone must make the saving throw, and those that fail are carried by their own nightmares into the Night Serpent's belly, in addition to being driven insane.

History

Some say that Dendar the Night Serpent was created the first time a mortal creature had a dream. They believe that she was created to be the dream's opposite, and that had the first mortal had a nightmare instead, a beautiful creature of goodness and light would now roam the Gray Waste, swallowing good dreams rather than nightmares. Debate rages on whether or not this fate would have been better for the world. Since her creation, Dendar has been devouring the nightmares of mortals, gathering them in her gullet where they swim in an eternal miasma of fear and hatred. She takes pleasure in swallowing the fears of mortals and immortals alike, particularly enjoying the fancies of kings and gods.

The Night Serpent is said to be the harbinger of the end of the world, so that when she has swallowed enough nightmares, she will come forth from her lair to douse all of existence in darkness and fear. Even the gods will be unable to stop her, because they are subject to the same nightmares as the mortals who serve them. A sect of plane-hopping clerics and monks of Kelemvor (formerly Myrkul) believe that it is their sacred duty to stop this from happening. They train every generation to hunt the Night Serpent on her plane, forcing her to expend precious nightmares in defense of her lair and her life. Although these religious fanatics know that they go to their deaths when they move against Dendar, they believe that they are vital to the continued existence of Faerûn and its people.

Dendar has been known by many names throughout the ages. Different civilizations have different uses for a legendary creature that swallows nightmares in an attempt to bring about the end of the world. The ancient Rus called her Nidhogg, and believed that she would gnaw the roots of the world tree that connects all things, until it could no longer survive. The people of Calimport believe that she is the mother of the Night Parade, although this is not true. And in Chult, the followers of Utao believe that Dendar lives underneath the Peaks of Flame, and that she will emerge through a massive iron door to devour the sun.

Although she sometimes slithers across the fiendish planes, Dendar is content to spend most of her time in her lair, contentedly

gorged on the world's unremembered nightmares. She lives in a vast cave near the river that surrounds the Fugue Plane, and the hiss of her breathing echoes throughout that plane as she sleeps. She is automatically aware of any creature that approaches her cave, and she awakens in order to savor the taste of their worst nightmares before she destroys them.

Appearance

The Night Serpent appears as a 300-foot-long serpent with scales that range in color from midnight black to deep green. These scales represent the physical embodiment of the nightmares that she has swallowed over the millennia. Her slit-pupiled eyes are the sickly yellow-black of rotten eggs, and her forked tongue flickers incessantly over her smooth lips. Dendar's mouth unhinges at the jaw to reveal a maw large enough to swallow a dragon without trouble. She has four jagged fangs that sink deep into the flesh of her enemies, injecting a nightmare venom that slowly works to destroy their minds. Her tongue is a weapon, too, able to knock giants from their feet with a single swipe and entangle bitten foes so she can swallow them whole. Beneath her tongue is a viscous pit of greasy spittle and the bones of enemies past. She secretes the essence of nightmares that she has devoured, and constantly regurgitates the souls of those she has destroyed.

Dendar the night serpent in your campaign

The Time of Troubles was more than just a time when the gods walked the land. It was also a formidable recruiting tool for apocalyptic cults everywhere. As the gods died right before the eyes of ordinary Faerûnians, it began to seem as if the entire world might be in peril. Even though things have calmed and the reorganized pantheon has begun to rebuild its base, gods continue to disappear (the recent upheaval in the Underdark because of Lolth's disappearance is a prime example), while others war for dominion of the various aspects of existence. This was the perfect time for the cults of Dendar the Night Serpent to make great gains in both numbers and resources.

Cults revolving around Dendar are active across Faerûn, but the two largest and most devoted can be found in Calimport and the Jungles of Chult. In Calimport, the Sacred Order of Akabar recruits thieves, assassins, and other skulks to fulfill their twisted purpose. This order of fanatics believes that Dendar the Night Serpent is the mother of the Night Parade, a congregation of demonic creatures that oversaw a reign of terror in Calimport in 1359 DR. Their appearance in the year after the Time of Troubles only reinforced their conclusion that the "Serpent Mother" was preparing for the end of the world. Since that time, they have made it their single-minded goal to feed Dendar enough nightmares to bring about Faerûn's destruction, at which time they expect to rule over the remaining planes of existence as the Serpent Mother's chosen people. They do so by kidnapping and drugging the dregs of Calimport society, who are kept in a secret

chamber and feed Dendar with an endless string of poison- and narcotics-induced nightmares.

The other large group of Dendar-related cultists can be found in the Jungles of Chult, hidden among the caves below the Peaks of Flame. Unlike the Sacred Order of Akabar, these cultists are bent on preventing the Night Serpent from destroying the world. They believe that they are the guardians of an enormous iron door through which Dendar will one day slither and attempt to eat the sun. The Spearbearers of Ubtao, as they call themselves, believe that they must maintain a long list of rituals in order to give their god the strength to defeat Dendar when she finally hungers for the light of the world. Many of these rituals require the sacrifice of sentient life, however, leading the Spearbearers to commit evil acts in the of saving the world.

caverns of the serpent mother

Hidden beneath the sands of the Calim Desert and connected to a hideout in the city of Calimport, some twelve miles away, the caverns of the Serpent Mother are the secret stronghold of the Sacred Order of Akabar. It is here that the Order tends to its growing herd of victims, who spend weeks or even months at a time in a comalike state, feeding nightmares to Dendar the Night Serpent. The entire operation is run by Ali Kumara, a godless priest of Dendar who actually receives his spells from Cyric, although he does not know it. He employs a variety of cutthroats, degenerates,

and true believers who are loyal to him because of either their fanaticism or the gold he lavishes freely upon them.

A. ROAD TO CALIMPORT

This tunnel winds beneath the sands of the Calim Desert, eventually coming to a small cavern hidden beneath a merchant's warehouse in Calimport. The tunnel is smooth and well ventilated, making it perfect for transporting newly kidnapped victims to the sleeping chamber beyond. Two ruts can be detected in the floor of the tunnel, where the sled used to transport unconscious prisoners has worn away the soft earth floor.

The sandy floor is well worn and covered with visible human tracks, as well as the paw prints of a tiger the group has trained to pull the sled. When the tiger is present in the caverns, its roar can often be heard echoing through the tunnel, even miles away.

B. SERPENT'S GORGE

This seemingly bottomless crevice cuts directly across the tunnel, and hissing winds can be heard blowing in its depths. In reality, it descends nearly a mile and contains nothing more than stale air and thousands of years of loose rock and sand at the bottom. The Sacred Order uses this crevice as a natural defense, and they have constructed a drawbridge that fits into grooves cut into both sides of the pit. When it is drawn up, the bridge can be wheeled over to a wall where it is out of the way or it can be tilted down to provide cover for those on the cavern side.



C. GUARD CHAMBER (EL 7 OR EL 12)

Just on the other side of the gorge is a small cavern that houses any Sacred Order members that are here. Ali typically keeps four members of the cult here at all times—a poisoner, a mage, and two "toughs." The tiger's cage is also here, but the tiger itself is normally kept in a bazaar in Calimport. If the tiger is here, that means victims have been brought within the last 24 hours and there will be additional guards and Order members around.

Encounter (EL 7): Human rogue 5/assassin 1, human wizard 3, human fighter 1 (2).

Encounter (EL 12): As above plus human expert 7, human rogue 2 (4), tiger.

D. SLEEPER CAVERN

The cavern here is incredibly large and riddled by sharp stone formations on the floor and the ceiling. Several beds are scattered throughout the room, either carved from the stone of the cavern or made from piles of clothing and straw on the open floor. Motionless men and women can be found on most of the beds, put to sleep by the drugs of the Sacred Order and made to play their worst nightmares over and over again in their minds. They are kept here for days or even weeks, depending on the poisoner's assessment of their health (and thus their ability to handle repeated dosages of the drug). At any one time, between ten and twenty-five sleepers are here, all under the effects of the Sacred Order's drug. There is a 25% chance that the poisoner will be here, checking on his "wards" at any time of the day or night—otherwise, all the cavern's occupants are in the guard chamber.

An elevated shelf along the northwestern wall holds the Sacred Order's supply of drugs, as well as food and water for those housed here. It is set back into the stone and free of torchlight, making a cool, dark storage area for both the food and the sensitive leaves from which the drug is brewed. Ali has set a magical trap as a last line of defense against intruders who would steal or destroy this essential part of his plans to aid the Night Serpent. Anyone who passes the threshold of the inset cavern without a sacred mark of the Mother Serpent conjures five serpents into being, each made of pure force. They attack any living creature in the area and attack like weapons from a *spiritual weapon* spell in all ways.

A dozen small tunnels lead away from this room into the Underdark; no activity has ever been seen in any of them.

Trap: CR 6; magic; location trigger; no reset; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, 5 force serpents); force serpents attack for 9 rounds or until all living creatures are out of the area; Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

player characters and Dendar the Night Serpent

The cults of Dendar the Night Serpent have been spreading quickly over the past twenty years, so it's quite possible that any or all of the player characters in a group have had some contact with one cell or another. Indeed, it's possible that a character might have grown up within the cult and to this day believe that the ancient

prophecies are soon to be fulfilled. Such individuals have every reason to adventure, gathering gold and magic to aid the cult in their mission.

With their recent expansion and increase in activity, the Night Serpent cults make for good employers as well. They are in constant search for artifacts and relics of their unholy mistress, many of which have been scattered across the various planes that she sometimes roams.

Ali Kumara: Human cleric 9; CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 9d8+18; hp 63; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, +2 heavy mace) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+3, +2 heavy mace) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA turn undead 5/day (+4, 2d6+9, 9th); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +11, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local Calimshan) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +5, Profession (merchant) +6, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +10, Spot +5; Craft Wondrous Item, Endurance, Negotiator, Scribe Scroll, Spellwise^{PG}.

Languages: Alzhedo, Draconic, Infernal.

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 9th): 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*; 1st—*cause fear* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *disguise self*^D, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*calm emotions*, *cure moderate wounds*, *delay poison*, *enthrall* (DC 15), *invisibility*^D, *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*create food and water*, *meld into stone*, *contagion*^D (DC 16), *protection from energy*, *stone shape*; 4th—*confusion*^D (DC 17), *discern lies* (DC 17), *neutralize poison*; 5th—*false vision*^D, *plane shift* (DC 18).

D: Domain spell. **Domains:** Destruction (smite good 1/day, +4 on attack, extra 9 damage), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Possessions: +2 chain shirt, +2 heavy mace, masterwork light crossbow, 20 +1 bolts, ring of sustenance, potion of bear's endurance, 2 potions of cure moderate wounds.

kezef the chaos hound

Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 28d8+280 (426 hp)

Initiative: +17

Speed: 60 ft. (12 squares)

AC: 33 (−2 size, +7 Dex, +18 natural) touch 15, flat-footed 26

Base Attack/Grapple: +28/+49

Attack: +37 melee (3d6+13/19–20 plus 1d10 acid, bite) or +36 melee (1d8+13, claw)

Full Attack: +37 melee (3d6+13/19–20 plus 1d10 acid, bite) and +34/+34 (1d8+6, 2 claws)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Acidic bite, breath weapon, corrosion, terrifying howl

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 15/adamantine and good, darkvision 120 ft., extinguish, fast healing 10, flawless tracker, immunity to acid, petrification, and poison; immunity to charm, death, and fear magic; low-light vision, resistance to cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, and sonic 10, spell resistance 35, superior initiative

Saves: Fort +26, Ref +23, Will +24

Abilities: Str 36, Dex 24, Con 31, Int 15, Wis 26, Cha 20

Skills: Balance +35, Diplomacy +23, Hide +31, Intimidate +33, Jump +41, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Listen +36, Move Silently +35, Search +30, Sense Motive +36, Spot +36, Survival +36, Swim +28

Feats: Ability Focus (howl), Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Climate/Terrain: The Outer Planes and the Material Plane

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 21

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: —

Kezef the Chaos Hound, the Ravager of Heavens, is a putrid creature made of pure hatred that roams the Outer Planes eating the souls of the faithful.

combat

Kezef prefers to begin combat by howling to confuse and separate his opponents. He follows up with a blast of his acidic breath weapon before wading into melee combat, crunching sinew and bone with his powerful bite. He does not fear melee because the maggots that form his body can part to avoid blows as well as splash his enemies with scalding slime. He does not normally fight while invisible, since he enjoys the terror his form causes other creatures. He will go invisible against opponents that have the capability to damage him, and he will not hesitate to retreat via *teleport* or *plane shift* in order to save his hide.

Acidic Bite (Ex): Kezef's acidic saliva deals an additional 1d10 points of acid damage every time he bites an opponent.

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 2d20 acid, Reflex DC 34 half. Any creature that fails its save takes 2d20 points of damage the following round as well, as the acid eats its way through its flesh. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Corrosion (Ex): Kezef's flesh bubbles and roils with acid-spewing maggots; any creature that strikes Kezef in melee combat causes an acidic cloud to explode outward from his body. Unless the creature makes a successful DC 34 Reflex save, he is splashed by burning slime that causes 1d12 points of damage per round until wiped away. A character can take a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity to remove all of the slime from his body.

This same acid is found in pools where Kezef stands on the ground. It is not left while he is running or incorporeal, but only

where he actually touches the ground. The acidic pools last for 24 hours before burning off into empty holes (except where they are magically preserved; see the Death Shallows entry below).

Extinguish (Ex): All nonmagical fires within 60 feet of the Chaos Hound are extinguished as soon as he moves into range due to the fetid, oxygen-deprived breath he spews from his slaving maw.

Flawless Tracker: The Chaos Hound can designate a single individual as his prey, and thereafter will never fail to catch the creature's trail. As soon as he designates his prey, he knows the prey's birthplace and can use his *plane shift* and *teleport without error* abilities to go there. Thereafter he can use these abilities to follow the creature's "emotional scent," even tracking the entire fabric of their lives until he catches up with them at the present time. He does all of this with amazing speed, once tracking four years of Kelemvor's life in just one hour. Once Kezef picks up a creature's scent, it is impossible to hide from him. He can track across worlds and planes as easily as a hunter tracks a bleeding deer.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*air walk*, *improved invisibility*, *plane shift* (DC 20), *teleport without error**. Caster level 30th.

*The Chaos Hound does not use *teleport without error* in the conventional sense, but he becomes an insubstantial ghost and runs with near-limitless speed. While in this state he can run across or through any substance or barrier, and moves as fast as he likes, often moving between two points as if he had teleported. When in this form, he is perceived as a ghostly blur that leaves behind a lingering scent of decay and a vague dread of darkened corners and howling in the night. Spells that prevent teleportation, such as *dimensional anchor*, do not prevent Kezef from using this ability.

Superior Initiative: Kezef has a +10 racial bonus on initiative checks, and is always considered to have rolled a 20 on his initiative check. In addition, he can never be surprised.

Terrifying Howl (Su): The Chaos Hound is so named for his terrifying howl that causes panic and confusion to all who hear it. Kezef can howl as a standard action, and all creatures within 100 feet must make a DC 29 Will save or suffer from *confusion* for 2d6 rounds. Even if a character makes this save, a second DC 29 Will save must be made or else he runs away in panic as if hit by a *fear* spell. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

history

Kezef the Chaos Hound, the Ravager of Heavens, is as old as Faerûn itself, although some believe that the god Jergal created him to deny the other gods the souls of their followers. It is said that Jergal created the Chaos Hound in a fit of madness when he realized that, though he held sway over death and the dead, the souls of the Faithful went to live with their respective gods—not with him. He unleashed this terrible evil to punish the mortals and gods alike, whom he saw as usurping his domains. It is thought that the backlash from this moment of rage is what caused him to divide his portfolio among Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul, and his willingness to do penance for the

creation of the Chaos Hound keeps him servile to the god of death to this day.

Kezef roams the Outer Planes devouring the souls of the Faithful before they can reunite with the gods in their respective planes. He finds their taste intoxicating, and does not discriminate between the gods when he feasts. The souls of the Faithless and the False are disgusting to him, as is the flesh of living beings, which is why he rampages across Faerûn from time to time, leaving a wake of destruction and devoured souls. Any souls devoured by Kezef are truly and forever destroyed, beyond even the reach of the gods to restore.

This terrible being was imprisoned for a time by a compact of Faerûnian deities, who wanted to protect their worshipers from the depredations of his evil. The story of his imprisonment is well known, and is a popular tale in alehouses across the continent. Centuries ago, somewhere in the Barrens of Doom and Despair, several deities challenged the Chaos Hound to a contest. They had forbidden mortals and deities alike to traffic with the Chaos Hound, and they would lift the ban if the evil beast could escape bonds crafted by Gond the Wonderbringer. Kezef agreed, but in order to dissuade any treachery, he demanded that Tyr place his right hand inside his mouth. The gods strapped him into the chains, and then Mystra surrounded him with an invulnerable nimbus of pure magic that resisted all attempts to dispel or destroy it. Realizing he had been successfully bound, the Chaos Hound squeezed his powerful jaws shut and severed Tyr's hand, the divine essence of which the beast feasted upon for hundreds of years.

It took the twisted plans of the newly ascended Cyric to release the hound again, although his plans backfired and helped to ensconce Kelemvor as the new god of the dead.

Since that time, the Chaos Hound has spent his time feeding on souls and chasing down Mask, whose enmity he gained during the Cyric debacle. Mask would certainly have risen back to greater power by now had he not been constantly on the run from this deadly and tireless opponent. Because the Chaos Hound has been distracted by this hunt, he has not yet shown himself to be the enemy that he once was. The gods are all aware that one day he will once again feed on their followers, and they know

that the time will come when they will be forced to deal with his threat again.

Appearance

The Ravager of Heavens appears to be a huge mastiff whose flesh crawls ceaselessly across his body. Upon closer inspection, the creature can be more accurately seen as a jet-black skeleton covered by millions of bloated maggots that crawl and squirm as they wait for their next meal. He searches for the Faithful with malevolent red eyes, and his jaws drip with the secreted essence of a thousand souls. The maggots that make up his flesh and sinew ooze yellow-green pus at all times; this pus is left in swirling pools wherever the Chaos Hound goes, as his gigantic paws burn prints into the ground. His teeth flash like obsidian daggers as he snarls at his prey.

The Chaos Hound's blood is a corrosive ooze, and he radiates a pestilent aura of decay. His reek can be detected for miles, and lingers for days upon his passing. Demons and paraclementals are often spawned from the pools of ichor he leaves behind. His breath stinks of hatred and lost souls, and it extinguishes nearby fires by smothering them in its stench.

When the Chaos Hound feeds upon a soul, the maggots from his body swarm out like bees and feast upon the soul's essence. Gorged and bloated, they fly back to the hound and reattach, causing him to look fat and agitated. When he speaks, his voice resonates in a low, rumbling growl.

Kezef



Illustration by Thomas M. Baxa

kezef the chaos hound in your campaign

For centuries, gods and mortals alike believed that the Ravager of Heavens had been defeated forever, locked away in the Barrens of Doom and Despair never to hunt the Outer Planes again. The mad god Cyric proved them wrong. Now that Kezef has been released and spends his time chasing Mask across the planes, his presence has been noted on Faerûn from time to time. While these "sightings" amount to little more than rumors, those who know the Chaos Hound understand that just the lingering aura of hatred he leaves wherever he goes is enough to cause concern.

Kezef has been temporarily frustrated in his hunt for the Lord of Shadows by the god's procurement of the sword *Houndsbane*, which hides him from the Ravager of Heavens. He spends quite a bit of time on the Outer Planes hunting souls, but occasionally he makes forays onto Faerûn in an attempt to discern Mask's location. Kezef terrorizes Mask's clergy where he can find them, and has taken to destroying holy artifacts and temples of the faith in order to try to draw the god out and weaken his following. Powerful thieves dedicated to the masked god might find themselves stalked in the night by an invisible foe who radiates hatred for them and their god.

Kezef has no organized following on Faerûn, and most of Mask's enemies would never think of using such an evil against him. That's not to say that Kezef hasn't left a lasting impact upon the world, however. During one of his hunts, he happened across an evil node that bent heavily toward planar magic because it sat in a region where travel between the planes was easier than normal. In this place, the Chaos Hound's footprints became pools of acidic filth through which creatures from the paraelemental planes could emerge. It has become known recently as the Death Shallows.

the death shallows

This shallow, flat depression lies about 25 miles east of Waterdeep along the River Dessarin, surrounded by high cliffs. It is an area rarely seen except by those traveling along the river, who must sometimes walk along its edge to help their vessels navigate the shallow water. Kezef rested here while hunting Mask in the city of Waterdeep, and now foul creatures rise from the slime he left in his wake. Several ooze and acid paraelementals have taken up residence in the pools and the surrounding cliffs, giving rise to new tales of ghosts and an area along the river haunted by those who have died in its strong currents. Riverboats and trading vessels have been coming under attack by the paraelementals lately, and Waterdhavian merchants are beginning to worry about this new threat.

THE DEATH SHALLOWS EVIL NODE

Class: 7

Granted Spells: *blink, contact other plane, ethereal jaunt, lesser planar ally, plane shift*

A. POOLS OF ACID

These pools of acid were created by the Chaos Hound when he rested here during his hunt for Mask. Normally they would have evaporated quickly, but this area happened to contain strong planar magic that not only perpetuated the pools but also allowed elemental creatures to take up residence in them. The acid has weakened to the point that it does not harm the paraelementals living inside the pools, but it still deals 1d12 points of acid damage to other creatures that enter them, unless these creatures are somehow resistant or immune to acid normally.

The paraelementals that live here do not always jump out to attack anyone that visits the shallows. They often wait until a group is split or sleeping, and sometimes they might simply ignore visitors (which serves to keep the rumors as just that). Any spellcaster who tries to tap into the evil node draws their ire, however, and is attacked immediately. The paraelemental weird that lives in the nearby subterranean cavern commands them for its own purposes from time to time as well.

Characters who run, engage in combat, or perform other strenuous activities in the shallows must make a DC 12 Balance check each round or fall down. Characters on the edge of an acid pool have a 50% chance of slipping into the pool if this occurs.

Ooze Paraelementals (6): CR 3; Medium elemental (earth, water); HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 50 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk or Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 acid, slam); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA acid; SQ darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16 Dex 12 Con 17 Int 4 Wis 11 Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +5; Alertness, Power Attack.

Acid (Ex): Any time an ooze paraelemental makes a successful slam attack, it deals acid damage. Its acid deals 40 points of damage per round to metal or wooden objects. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds on a DC 13 Reflex save. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes the paraelemental also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds on a Reflex save. If the ooze paraelemental successfully grapples an opponent, the foe's armor takes a -4 penalty on the Reflex save.

B. CAVES

These caves are home to several ooze mephits that were summoned to the node but prefer not to live in close proximity to the paraelementals. Should combat erupt in the shallows, however, the mephits are likely to swoop in to help the paraelementals, especially if it looks like they can save any interesting treasures from being eaten away by the acid. The mephits fear the weird, however, and hide in their caves anytime it is active.

Ooze Mephits (6): hp 19 each; see *Monster Manual* p. 183.

C. LAIR OF THE PARAELEMENTAL WEIRD

The most dangerous creature to appear through the planar conflux is a paraelemental weird residing in a pool and a submerged cavern just to the south of the shallows. This creature is not normally

hostile to passing boats, but it takes great offense at efforts to poke around the shallows or to try to use the node's magic.

Ooze Paraelemental Weird: CR 12; Large elemental (Earth, water); HD 15d8+45; hp 112; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +11; Grp +20; Atk +15 melee (2d6+7 plus 2d8 acid, slam); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+7 plus 2d8 acid, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA acid, elemental command, spells; SQ damage reduction 10/cold iron, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, ooze pool, prescience, regeneration 10, spell resistance 25; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 23, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +6, Sense Motive +13, Spot +5, Swim +13; Alertness, Power Attack.

Languages: Aquan, Terran.

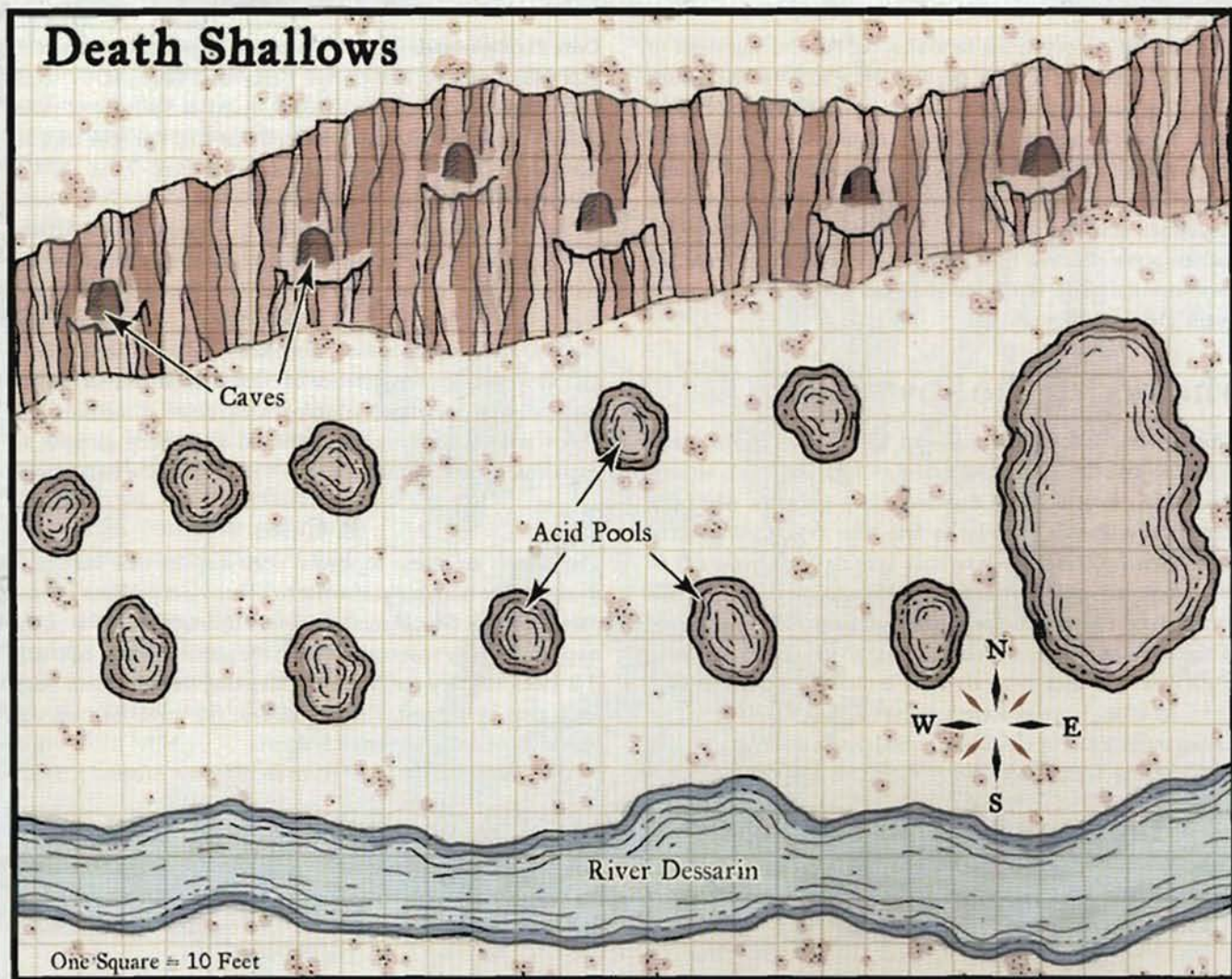
Acid (Ex): Any time the ooze paraelemental weird makes a successful slam attack, it deals acid damage. Its acid deals 60 points of damage per round to metal or wooden objects. Armor or clothing dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless it succeeds at a DC 20 Reflex save. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes the

paraelemental weird also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save. If the ooze paraelemental weird successfully grapples an opponent, the foe's armor takes a -4 penalty on the Reflex save.

Elemental Command (Su): The ooze paraelemental weird can attempt to gain control over any elemental within 100 feet, regardless of the latter's elemental type. The elemental must make a DC 23 Will save or succumb to the weird's control. An elemental that saves against this attack is immune to that weird's elemental command ability for 24 hours. There is no limit to the number of elementals that a weird can control.

Once under the weird's control, an elemental serves the weird until it or the weird dies, until the weird dismisses it, or until the duration of its summoning expires. It obeys the weird explicitly, even if ordered to attack the being who originally summoned it. The weird does not need to concentrate to maintain control over any elemental it commands.

Ooze Pool (Su): The ooze paraelemental weird's pool floats atop a submerged cavern at the southern end of the shallows. Three times per day, the weird can summon forth 2d4 Huge, 1d2 greater, or 1 elder ooze paraelemental through its pool. Any nonelemental creature entering the pool without the weird's permission must



succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save each round or be irrevocably transformed into elemental ooze.

The weird cannot leave its pool, although it can rise up 10 feet above the ooze's surface, always keeping its body in contact with the pool. It can retreat through a portal to its native plane, which exists at the bottom of its pool, but once it does so, the portal closes and the pool loses its special traits.

Prescience (Su): At will and as a free action, a weird can duplicate the effect of any of the following divination spells: *analyze dweomer*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *contact other plane*, *detect thoughts* (DC 18), *discern location*, *find the path*, *foresight*, *greater scrying* (DC 23), *legend lore*, *locate creature*, *locate object*, *tongues*, *true seeing*, *vision*. Caster level 18th.

Regeneration: Fire and sonic deal normal damage to a ooze paraelemental weird.

Spells: The ooze paraelemental weird casts all arcane spells, as well as divine spells from the Earth and Water domains, as an 18th-level sorcerer.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/7/7/7/6/5/3 per day; caster level 18th): 0—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *flare*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue* (+15 melee touch, DC 16); 1st—*cause fear* (DC 17), *chill touch* (+15 melee touch, DC 17), *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *shield*; 2nd—*fog cloud*, *gust of wind*, *Melf's acid arrow* (+12 ranged touch), *scare* (DC 18), *soften earth and stone*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *stone shape*, *wind wall*; 4th—*confusion* (DC 20), *control water*, *Otiluke's resilient sphere* (DC 20), *spike stones* (DC 20); 5th—*cloudkill* (DC 21), *mind fog* (DC 21), *transmute rock to mud*, *telekinesis*; 6th—*acid fog*, *flesh to stone* (DC 22), *repulsion* (DC 22); 7th—*control weather*, *mass hold person* (DC 23); 8th—*horrid wilting* (DC 24), *incendiary cloud* (DC 24); 9th—*elemental swarm* (ooze paraelementals only).

Skills: An ooze paraelemental weird has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

player characters and kezef the chaos hound

Followers of Mask, especially his priests, have much to fear from the Chaos Hound, for the closer they get to their god, the more attention they are apt to draw from the Ravager of Heavens. Kezef has been known to hunt down Mask's most powerful followers in an attempt to glean information on the god's whereabouts. Once a character has been tagged by the hound, he might start seeing signs of being followed: a fetid stench in the air, an aura of hatred that permeates those around him, or an angry baying in the middle of the night from somewhere nearby.

A loose affiliation of Faithless friars travel Faerûn seeking artifacts of the Chaos Hound. They believe (rightly) that their souls will be safe from the Chaos Hound's depredations only if they worship no god, and that they will become chosen souls after their

death if they can get close enough to him. They try to achieve that by pursuing relics of Kezef's history, including the pieces of the chain that once bound him in the Barrens of Doom and Despair, and any material objects that have, upon his passing, captured his innate hatred.

ityak-ortheel, the elf eater

Colossal Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 42d8+462 (660 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 60 ft. (12 squares)

AC: 35 (–8 size, +4 Dex, +29 natural) touch 6, flat-footed 31

Base Attack/Grapple: +42/+73

Attack: +50 melee (1d10+15, tentacle) or +49 melee (4d8+15, kick)

Full Attack: +50 melee (1d10+15, 8 tentacles) and +47 melee (4d8+15, kick)

Space/Reach: 40 ft./30 ft. (50 ft. with tentacles)

Special Attacks: Constrict 2d8+7, improved grab, maw of destruction, tentacle grappling

Special Qualities: Blindsight 100 ft., carapace defense, damage reduction 15/adamantine and good, regeneration 10, immunity to acid, cold, petrification, and poison, immunity to charm, death, and fear magic, resistance to electricity 10 and sonic 10, sense life, spell resistance 36

Saves: Fort +34, Ref +29, Will +28

Abilities: Str 40, Dex 18, Con 33, Int 6, Wis 21, Cha 19

Skills: Bluff +31, Climb +32, Hide +15, Intimidate +31, Jump +32, Listen +32, Move Silently +31, Search +25, Sense Motive +32, Spot +32, Survival +25

Feats: Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Crush, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor (3), Improved Overrun, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Climate/Terrain: The Abyss

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 22

Treasure: None

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: —

Ityak-Ortheel is a terrible creature that lurks in the Abyss, waiting for its master, the god Malar, to call it forth to destroy life.

combat

The Elf Eater is a machine of pure destruction. It charges its enemies, no matter their number, wading in and strangling them one by one. If it is surrounded by more than a hundred enemies, it flails its tentacles wildly, slapping as many foes as possible. When

confronted by small groups or larger foes, it uses as many tentacles as necessary to grapple, and slams its foes with the rest. It attempts to eat foes as quickly as possible in order to forever extinguish their life from the world.

Carapace Defense (Ex): Ityak-Ortheel's carapace is nearly indestructible, so attacking from on top of the creature is fruitless in most cases. It has a damage reduction of 50/epic and good, which affects only direct attacks to the carapace, and the carapace itself has immunity to fire. In times of dire need, Ityak-Ortheel can retreat into its shell, effectively shielding its body from further attacks. If its enemies continue to damage it even after it retreats in this way, it rears back up and lashes out for a final attack.

Constrict (Ex): The Elf Eater deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check. It can constrict with more than one tentacle, as outlined under Tentacle Grappling, below.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Ityak-Ortheel must hit a creature with one or more tentacle attacks (see Tentacle Grappling below). It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Maw of Destruction (Ex): While it cannot effectively bite with its huge, toothy maw, the Elf Eater can transfer grappled creatures to it with its tentacles. Any creature that falls unconscious or dies while grappled by the Elf Eater is automatically transferred to its mouth at the beginning of its next turn. Once inside its maw, the creature is utterly destroyed by the acidic juices within as if it had been successfully targeted with a *destruction* spell.

Tentacle Grappling (Ex): Ityak-Ortheel the Elf Eater is a monstrous creature with forty tentacles flailing out around its body. It can attack with all of them in a single round as a full round action, but only eight tentacles can attack a single target. It can use its improved grab ability on a Large or smaller creature as long as it hits the creature with a single tentacle. It must hit with at least two tentacles to in order to use improved grab on a Huge creature, four tentacles to grab a Gargantuan creature, and all eight to attempt an improved grab on a Colossal creature. It must use this many tentacles to maintain its hold or initiate a normal grapple as well.

A grappled creature can attempt to break free of the Elf Eater normally, or it can try to cut its way out of the tentacles. Each tentacle has 15 hit points and an AC of 23, and if the creature manages to sever all of the tentacles grappling it, it falls to the ground (taking 1d6 points of falling damage in the process). Severed tentacles grow back at the rate of one per round.

If a creature attempts to escape the tentacles normally, it must contend with the sheer number of grasping limbs. The Elf Eater's tentacles grapple as the largest size of creature it could grapple with the number of tentacles being used. For example, if it is grappling with a single tentacle it grapples as a Large creature, but if it has four tentacles attached it grapples as a Gargantuan creature.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire deals normal damage to the Elf Eater. The creature regrows tentacles at the rate of one per round in addition to its normal regeneration. It regrows other lost limbs

(its legs) in 1d6 minutes, although it can reattach a severed leg instantly by holding it to the stump.

Sense Life (Ex): Although Ityak-Ortheel's blindsight extends only to 100 feet, it can sense all living beings within a radius of five miles, and it can instantly differentiate sentience and race (which allows it to hunt down the elves whom it hates so much).

History

The Elf Eater has existed since the dawn of Abeir-Toril's history, having been spawned directly from the mingled blood of the orc god Gruumsh and his hated rival, Corellon Larethian. It was in the aftermath of their titanic struggle that the creature known as Ityak-Ortheel came into being, and it immediately fled to a deep layer of the Abyss, where it hides in solitude to this day. Ityak-Ortheel has plagued the elves from the time of its creation. The Beastlord, Malar, summons it to the Material Plane on occasion to punish the elves, and it never fails to wreak havoc and destruction wherever it goes. Although it might go hundreds, or even thousands, of years between trips to the Material Plane (it cannot go of its own volition, and thus must rely on others to transport it between planes), it slowly digests the souls of those it eats over a long period of time, keeping it satisfied and further torturing those whose lives it has ended.

The creature has not always been under the control of Malar, however. It once relied on other deities and powerful mortals to transport it from its home. Now that the Beastlord has begun to favor it as an instrument of terror, it has begun to visit Faerûn at least once per century, sometimes more often, on rampages that spell death to many elf communities across the world. The elves have not taken this lightly, however, and have built a *portal* on the isle of Gwynneth in the Moonshae Isles known as Fey-Alamtime. This *portal* in the kingdom of Synnoria can be accessed by anyone holding a platinum "Alamtime" triangle, one of which was given to each elf community on Faerûn. When the Elf Eater attacked, whole villages and tribes would retreat to the Moonshae, and often on to Evermeet from there. This plan worked for centuries, until Malar divined the location of their *portal* in 1365 DR and sent Ityak-Ortheel to deal with it once and for all. The creature rampaged across Gwynneth and destroyed the *portal*, the capital city of Chysalis, and the timeless Palace of Ages before being banished back to the Abyss.

Ityak-Ortheel has not made an appearance on Faerûn since, but some believe another rampage is imminent, especially with the reemergence of the elves on the continent.

Appearance

Ityak-Ortheel is a monstrous creature, standing 30 feet tall on three trunklike legs. Its body is a flat, round blob of flesh with an incredibly hard, domed carapace sitting atop it. On the underside of the creature is a huge, toothless maw with wet flaps of skin sucking in and out of the blackness within. A slurping noise can be heard coming from the maw at all times as it awaits its next meal of elf

flesh and bone. This mouth is the color of blood, surrounded by the tannish-brown flesh of the creature's body. It can expand to a great width in order to accommodate huge prey, or it can extend downward into a long, probing snout similar to that of an anteater. The inside of its mouth is filled with hard plates of cartilage that constantly rub together with bone-crushing force, making instant work of anything the Elf Eater puts inside.

The creature's body is surrounded by forty 100-foot-long tentacles that thrash and grapple any living being that comes within its awesome reach. These tentacles are lined by large suckers that help the creature grab and hold onto its prey before it inserts the unfortunate victim into its horrible maw. The tentacles are fully capable of independent action, and the creature can use them to fend off and grapple multiple creatures on all sides of its body.

Ityak-Ortheel has no eyes or ears but is keenly aware of its surroundings, and can sense life in all its forms, out to a distance of five miles. This sense is discerning as well, allowing the Elf Eater to track down and destroy as many of its hated enemies as possible during a rampage.

ityak-ortheel in your campaign

The Elf Eater has made appearances only at the behest of Malar in the past few centuries, but that could change at any time. Most gods want nothing to do with the unbridled destruction that Ityak-Ortheel represents, and those who do probably do not know where to find him. Faerûn is much safer that way.

A group of Malarites in the Forgotten Forest have come across one of the Alamantine triangles that their god used to track down the elven *portal* the last time he summoned the Elf Eater to Faerûn. They treat the triangle as a holy relic, not understanding its true significance (even though it is now powerless). The Malarites, led by a fiendish werewolf named Tagress, worship the triangle and offer it blood sacrifices at least four times every moon cycle in order to call forth the Elf Eater to destroy the lands of Evereska and the elves who reside there. So far their efforts have proven fruitless, but that has not stopped their plotting against the elves who live in the hills beyond their home's eastern frontier.

This group works feverishly to figure out exactly how the triangle is related to the summoning of the Elf Eater. They go

out of their way to kidnap mages and other loremasters to torture information out of them before sacrificing them the relic. The Malarites diligently perform all of the rites of Malar and attempt to bring back a double bounty every time they hunt. So far nothing has worked, and Tagress has even considered going outside the tribe for help. He has amassed a large quantity of treasure that he has nothing to do with, so the idea of hiring adventurers to track down other relics or information related to the triangles seems appealing and expedient.



Ityak-Ortheel

Tagress: Half-elf werewolf rogue 4/barbarian 3; CR 8; Medium humanoid (elf, shapeshifter); HD 4d6+4 plus 3d12+3 plus 2d8+6; hp 55; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d12+4, +1 greataxe); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d12+4, +1 greataxe); SA rage 1/day, sneak attack +2d6; SQ low-light vision, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Climb +10, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +11, Gather Information +6, Jump +9, Listen +10, Search +4, Spot +8, Survival +10, Swim +8; Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Languages: Chondathan, Elven.

Rage (Ex): +4 to Str, +4 to Con, +2 on Will saves, -2 to AC for up to 6 rounds.

Hybrid Form: As half-elf form except: Init +3; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d12+4, +1 greataxe); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d12+4, +1 greataxe) and +6 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +11 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA curse of lycanthropy, rage 1/day, sneak attack +2d6; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, low-light vision, scent, trapfinding, uncanny dodge, wolf empathy; SV Fort +10, Ref +11; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 17.

Wolf Form: As hybrid form except: Spd 50 ft.; Atk or Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+3, bite).

Possessions: +2 leather armor, +1 greataxe, amulet of natural armor +2, boots of speed.

player characters and ityak-ortheel

Although Ityak-Ortheel hasn't been seen on the face of Faerûn in decades, his presence is felt in every elf community from Evereska to Evermeet. Elf leaders worry about the creature's return and plot

a way to rebuild the Alamantine *portal*, or at least emulate its former success. In the meantime, the elves have launched an all-out war on the followers of Malar, and while some argue that this only exacerbates the issue, others believe it is the only way to be free of the monster. Of course, the Malarites have not taken this lightly, and are waging their own war against elves wherever they can find them. While most of their plots are not as ambitious as that of Tagress, this has meant trouble for elf communities from the High Forest to the North.

Bazim-Gorag, The Firebringer

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 25d8+225 (339 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 40 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +6 insight, +22 natural), touch 18, flat-footed 37

Base Attack/Grapple: +25/+40

Attack: +46 melee (2d8+20/19-20/x3 plus 1d6 fire plus 2d10 flaming burst plus 2d6 unholy, +4 *flaming burst unholy glaive*) or +41 melee (2d8+11, claw)

Full Attack: +46/+41/+36/+31 melee (2d8+20/19-20/x3 plus 1d6 fire plus 2d10 flaming burst plus 2d6 unholy, +4 *flaming burst unholy glaive*) and +36 melee (2d10+5, 2 bites), or +41 melee (2d8+11, 2 claws) and +36 melee (2d10+5, 2 bites)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with glaive)

Special Attacks: Incandescent aura, incinerating strike 3/day, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: All-around vision, change shape, darkvision 60 ft., double mind, damage reduction 15/epic and lawful, fast healing 10, immunity to fire, petrification, and poison, outsider traits, pernicious fire, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, and sonic 10, spell resistance 30, summon slaad, telepathy 100 ft.

Saves: Fort +25, Ref +17, Will +18

Abilities: Str 32, Dex 17, Con 28, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 24

Skills: Balance +23, Bluff +27, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +33, Disguise +19 (+21 to act in character), Gather Information +27, Hide +24, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Knowledge (religion) +24, Listen +29, Move Silently +23, Search +26, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +26, Spot +29

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (glaive), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (glaive)

Climate/Terrain: The Supreme Throne

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 21

Treasure: Double standard, plus Large +4 *flaming burst unholy glaive* and +5 *ring of protection*

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: —

Larger than an ogre, this hulking creature combines the features of a muscular human and a frog or toad. Its skin is a mottled red-gold, and two froglike heads sprout from its shoulders, each with a gaping maw full of sharp teeth. It carries a huge glaive of black iron, wreathed in dark flame.

In the Year of Oaths Forsaken (-626 DR), a cabal of wizards cast out from Netheril formed an arcane college atop a ruined dwarf stronghold, Andalbruin, in the foothills of the Forest Hills. They built a village and a tower to hold their college of magic, which they called Selskartur, the Tower of the Star. But in the Year of Rumbling Earth (-585 DR), a troll warlord named Harska Thaug amassed an army of savage humanoids and descended from the north upon the elves of Rilithar, and the Tower of the Star stood directly in the troll lord's path.

In his desperation, the master of the tower, the Ar-Magus Ilvi-roon, cast a *gate* spell and summoned the slaad lord Bazim-Gorag to destroy Harska Thaug's army. Bazim-Gorag obliged, driving the troll horde from the valley. But the price the slaad lord demanded in payment for his services was high, and when Ilvi-roon balked, Bazim-Gorag attacked, razing the Tower of the Star and slaying several of its senior wizards. Ilvi-roon retaliated by luring Bazim-Gorag into a trap and imprisoning him, via a powerful binding spell cast in cooperation with several of the surviving wizards, in a chamber beneath the burned-out tower. As part of the binding, he set the conditions for Bazim-Gorag's rite of unbinding, but he told no one the formula.

The following winter, Harska Thaug returned with an even greater army, and once more the ar-magus was forced to turn to Bazim-Gorag for aid. But when the slaad lord demurred, Ilvi-roon was forced to confront the troll horde alone, and in the ensuing battle he was slain. With him died the secret rite of unbinding needed to free Bazim-Gorag from his prison. Harska Thaug completed the destruction of the tower that Bazim-Gorag had begun.

In the centuries since the fall of the tower, numerous adventuring parties have explored the upper levels of the citadel, which has come to be known as the Dungeon of the Ruins, without ever discovering Bazim-Gorag's prison. Then, seventeen years ago, a group called the Company of the Riven Orb unearthed his hidden vault but were unable to free him from his magical prison. Since that time, Bazim-Gorag has managed to lure dozens of evil beings into his service. Calling themselves the Acolytes of the Hidden Flame, they have been working diligently to discover the rite of unbinding that will free their lord.

Bazim-Gorag is a slaad lord, one of the most powerful slaadi in existence, tainted by the same malignant forces that transform gray slaadi into death slaadi. Like the other slaad lords, Bazim-Gorag is a champion of chaos. He hungers to spread chaos through unchecked destruction, murder, woe—and fire. Bazim-Gorag creates conflagrations and wields fire with all the malevolent glee of a mighty red dragon.

Bazim-Gorag has come to hate Faerûn, the realm of his long imprisonment, with a vitriolic ire that can only be sated with a

burning the likes of which the North has never seen—if only he can be freed to wreak his vengeance.

combat

Bazim-Gorag does not attack those who wander into his reach if he believes the would-be foes can be turned to the purpose of freeing him from his prison. The slaad lord often uses his change shape ability to approach potential allies in a nonthreatening guise, usually that of a tall, handsome lord with red hair and bronze armor. He is willing to offer power, wealth, even a promise of future service to attain his freedom (although honoring promises is not Bazim-Gorag's strong suit). Only when he is certain that intruders into his lair cannot or will not help him does he attack. After twenty centuries of imprisonment, Bazim-Gorag is inclined to toy with his victims and draw out a fight simply for its entertainment value.

In a deadly contest, Bazim-Gorag uses his double mind ability to launch repeated fire attacks with his spell-like abilities, while hacking his foes to pieces with his physical attacks. He saves his incinerating strike for use against an opponent who has managed to seriously annoy or injure him. Bazim-Gorag's natural weapons, as well as any weapon he wields, are treated as chaotic-aligned and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. He also receives a +6 insight bonus on any attacks (this bonus is factored into the statistics above).

Change Shape (Su): Bazim-Gorag can shift between his natural form and any humanoid form at will as a standard action. He gains the size, natural weapons, movement modes, and extraordinary special attacks of his new form, but loses those of his original form. He retains all other special attacks and qualities of his original form. Bazim-Gorag retains the ability scores, hit points, and saves of his original form. He remains in one form until he chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but he will revert to his natural form if killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals his natural form. When he assumes another shape, his magical glaive automatically adjusts in size to suit the new shape. Its base damage adjusts to the new size, but its other enhancements remain the same.

Bazim-Gorag gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks if he uses this ability to create a disguise. However, when he speaks, his voice often changes in pitch as his two heads (one hidden by magic but there nonetheless) finish each others' sentences.

Incandescent Aura (Su): Bazim-Gorag can wreath his body in a flaming aura as a free action. Anyone within 20 feet of the slaad lord takes 6d6 points of fire damage per round and must make a DC 31 Reflex save or catch fire (see page

303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Incinerating Strike (Su): Three times per day, Bazim-Gorag can declare an incinerating strike with a melee attack. If the attack hits, he deals 100 points of fire damage (Fortitude save DC 31 for half) in addition to his normal melee damage. Any creature slain by this attack is utterly consumed in fire, as if subjected to a *destruction* spell. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*animate objects*, *chaos hammer* (DC 21), *cloak of chaos*, *deeper darkness*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *fear* (DC 21), *fire storm* (DC 25), *greater dispelling*, *invisibility*, *shatter* (DC 19), *telekinesis* (DC 22), *teleport without error*, *wall of fire*, *word of chaos* (DC 24); 3/day—*dispel law* (DC 22), *divination*, *hold monster* (DC 22), *meteor swarm* (+27 ranged touch, DC 26), *power word stun*, *true seeing*; 1/day—*geas/quest*, *power word kill*, *vision*, *weird* (DC 26). Caster level 20th.

All-Round Vision (Ex): Bazim-Gorag gains a +4 racial bonus to Search and Spot checks (already included in the statistics), and he cannot be flanked.

Double Mind (Ex): Bazim-Gorag has two brains and two personas. One brain can direct his body while the other engages in a completely unrelated activity, such as conversation or the use of his spell-like abilities. In combat, Bazim-Gorag gains a bonus standard action each turn, which can be used only to perform a mental activity, such as using a spell-like ability or a skill based on a mental ability score.

Bazim-Gorag is treated as two independent creatures for purposes of targeting him with a mind-affecting effect. A spell that affects only one target can affect one of Bazim-Gorag's minds but not both. If one of Bazim-Gorag's minds is incapacitated or affected in some way, Bazim-Gorag loses his bonus action. If Bazim-Gorag is subjected to a mind-affecting effect that can affect two or more creatures at once, each of his two minds saves separately and is affected separately.

As long as one of Bazim-Gorag's minds remains unaffected by a particular effect, the affected mind gains a new saving throw each round to shake off the effect. If both minds are affected by the same effect, Bazim-Gorag is affected normally.



Bazim-Gorag

Pernicious Fire (Su): Bazim-Gorag's spell-like abilities with the fire descriptor are empowered, and thus deal 50% more damage than would normally be indicated.

Summon Slaad (Sp): This ability is currently unavailable to Bazim-Gorag in his binding. If free, Bazim-Gorag can automatically summon 1 death slaad or 1d4+1 blue slaad once per day.

Telepathy (Su): Bazim-Gorag can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

Bazim-Gorag's Lair

Deep below the Dungeon of the Ruins lies the prison where Bazim-Gorag has waited out the centuries. It consists of two chambers connected by a portal.

The entrance to the first chamber is marked by an archway of red stones scribed with lawful runes. Bazim-Gorag cannot pass through it by any means, and his spells and powers cannot affect anyone standing beyond it. Within this chamber, he holds audience with his Acolytes, who often bring him captives with which to amuse himself, usually by tossing them into the lava pool at the room's center.

The second chamber can be accessed only via the portal, and consists of a double hall, each with its own row of columns and lava pit, with a third lava pit between the two. Bazim-Gorag can temporarily block this portal (5 rounds) to prevent others from following close on his heels if he needs to retreat. This chamber is Bazim-Gorag's private sanctum, where he keeps his rather considerable treasure including the scepter of the ar-magus.

Enemies

Bazim-Gorag's ancient enemies have been dead for many centuries. As yet, the actions of the Acolytes of the Hidden Flame have not attracted the attention of powerful rivals that could threaten their plans. Their evil is small and localized. The greatest threat to Bazim-Gorag might actually come from others of his kind. The slaad lords Ssendam and Ygorl tolerate Bazim-Gorag's destructive nature as long as Bazim-Gorag refrains from overtly challenging their rule over the race. Bazim-Gorag naturally schemes to advance the power of the death slaadi over the rest of their kind. Doubtless Bazim-Gorag would have been lured into a fatal confrontation against his more powerful fellows long ago—but for the better part of two thousand years, he has been imprisoned in a mighty binding beneath the Dungeon of the Ruins.

Recruitment

Bazim-Gorag's followers are always on the lookout for new recruits, especially for spellcasters who could help them complete the rite of unbinding. Bazim-Gorag himself might attempt to recruit any adventurers who wander into his lair if he thinks they could be of service to him and they are capable of assisting in his release. He might even offer the treasure located in his

chamber as payment to anyone who can release him from his prison—of course, the treasure has also been promised to many of his current followers.

Anyone approaching the cult with a professed interest in joining it is taken to one of its leaders, Flame Lord Moskogg, to be questioned thoroughly by both magical and mundane means. Those who pass this initial test and might be of use in releasing Bazim-Gorag are then passed on to Flame Lord Durzhul before finally being brought before the Firebringer himself.

The Acolytes of the Hidden Flame

Bazim-Gorag has gathered a cult of nearly fifty evil followers who have dedicated themselves to freeing him from his magical prison. Some are drawn by his promises of reward, both in treasure and power, while others are simply attracted by the prospect of chaos and destruction that his freedom would release upon the North. Some even hope to one day bend Bazim-Gorag to their own will and use him to further their own goals.

The group consists of human brigands who act as foot soldiers and guards; several monsters, including a trio of formorian giants; and several slaadi of various types. The leaders are spellcasters, fiends, or powerful outsiders. Three of the highest-ranking leaders are Flame Lord Moskogg, Flame Lord Durzhul, and High Conflagration Jendar Tholm.

Flame Lord Moskogg (CE male half-fiend/half-minotaur cleric 9 of Kossuth): Moskogg oversees the group's raiding and recruiting efforts and functions as the commander of the lower-level guards and warriors; he answers only to High Conflagration Jendar Tholm. Moskogg lives in the barracks house near the Dungeon of the Ruins and is usually attended by a young human female named Dregadzel (Female Gray Slaad in human form), who serves as his secretary and lieutenant. She also participates in the questioning of new recruits, especially human males.

Flame Lord Durzhul (CE male durzagon^{MM2} wizard 13): Durzhul is the chief arcane spellcaster of the Acolytes of the Hidden Flame, and the architect of the efforts to free Bazim-Gorag. It was he who discovered the particulars of the rite of unbinding. Arcane spellcasters seeking to join the cult are eventually brought to him for questioning. He spends most of his time in an area of the Dungeon of the Ruins called the alchemist's cove, busily researching the details of Bazim-Gorag's prison. He is always attended by two red slaadi bodyguards.

High Conflagration Jendar Tholm (CE advanced death slaad): Jendar is the leader of the Acolytes of the Hidden Flame. As the leader, he coordinates the activities of his lieutenants to make certain they support one another in the ultimate goal of freeing Bazim-Gorag. He is the liaison between Bazim-Gorag and his followers, as well as the paymaster, keeping a tight control over the group's funds. His residence is deep within the Dungeon of the Ruins, and he is always attended by a 6th-level troll barbarian.

The Rite of Unbinding

Ar-Magus Ilviroon gave his *binding* spell additional strength by specifying a rite of unbinding—a set of conditions that must be met to set Bazim-Gorag free. The specifics of the rite—including its arcane phrases and invocations—were lost when Ilviroon died, but might be rediscovered via *legend lore* or similar magic. The requisite conditions for the completion of the rite are as follows:

Three wizards—one chaotic, one neutral, and one lawful—must perform the rite.

The rite must be performed in an area uncovered by the Company of the Riven-Orb called the Chamber of Binding, which lies deep beneath the Dungeon of the Ruins.

Each participant in turn must recite a specific set of arcane phrases and invocations in Loross, the ancient language of High Netheril.

One of the three wizards must hold the *scepter of the ar-magus*, currently located in Bazim-Gorag's lair. The scepter is a +1 *light mace* that also functions as a variant of a *brooch of shielding* (absorbing 20 points of magic missile damage per day). Three times per day, it can also be used to cast a *minor globe of invulnerability*, and twice per day it can fire a *prismatic ray*. Any magic item with identical properties can be used in its place, if it happens to be destroyed or lost.

All three wizards must cast *dismissal* at the end of the rite.

Malkizid, the Branded King

Large Outsider (Baatezu, Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 33d8+363 (511 hp)

Initiative: +9

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 120 ft. (good)

AC: 48 (–1 size, +5 Dex, +7 mithril shirt, +6 insight, +21 natural) touch 20, flat-footed 43

Base Attack/Grapple: +33/+47

Attack: +45 melee (2d8+12/17–20 plus 2d6 unholy, +2 *silver unholy bastard sword*) or +42 melee (2d6+10, tail)

Full Attack: +51/+46/+41/+36 melee (2d8+12/17–20 plus 2d6 unholy, +2 *silver unholy bastard sword*) and +43 melee (2d6+5, claw), or +48 melee (2d6+10, tail) and +47 melee (1d8+5, 2 claws)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Brand, fear aura, prismatic disruption, spell-like abilities, spells

Special Qualities: Baatezu traits, damage reduction 15/good and silver, immune to fire, immunity to poison, regeneration 8, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, spell resistance 38

Saves: Fort +29, Ref +23, Will +27

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 21, Con 32, Int 31, Wis 28, Cha 31

Skills: Balance +23, Bluff +46, Concentration +47, Diplomacy +46, Gather Information +46, Hide +37, Intimidate +46, Knowledge (arcana) +46, Knowledge (history) +46, Knowledge (nature) +28, Knowledge (the planes) +46, Knowledge (religion) +46, Listen +45, Move Silently +41, Search +46, Sense Motive +45, Spellcraft +46, Spot +45, Survival +27, Tumble +23

Feats: Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Climate/Terrain: The Barrens of Doom and Despair

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 27

Treasure: Quadruple standard, plus +3 *mithril shirt* and +2 *silver unholy bastard sword*

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: —

This mighty fiend stands nearly 10 feet tall. Its skin is marble-white, and it has two huge wings that shed shabby-looking gray feathers. Its hands and feet are gray with scaly, birdlike talons; a long, serpentine tail writhes behind it. Small black horns curl from the sides of its head, and a long mane of disheveled hair cascades down its back. The creature's humanoid-shaped face would be noble and handsome, but the eyes are cold black pits, and a large, complex sigil or mark has been branded across its face. The raw brand weeps trickles of foul blood.

Lord of the fiends of Myth Drannor and an outcast archduke of Hell, Malkizid was once a solar who stood high in the service of the Seldarine. Long ago he was seduced into betraying Corellon Larethian by Araushnee (the goddess who became Lolth, Queen of Spiders) and fell. When Araushnee's rebellion failed, Malkizid was branded for his treachery and cast down into the Hells. He arose as a devil prince, and quickly carved out his own kingdom.

However, Malkizid earned the disfavor of Asmodeus thousands of years ago and was exiled from the Nine Hells, along with a small host of devils who followed him. The Branded King settled for building his infernal realm in the nameless pits of the yugoloths. Malkizid is therefore both a yugoloth lord and an archdevil in exile, and his servants include the devils who followed him into exile as well as the yugoloths of the pits.

Malkizid is a clever, hateful, and patient devil of surpassing power. He absolutely despises Lolth and her drow, blaming Araushnee for his fall from grace. Likewise, he hates and fears Corellon, since he feels that Corellon might have shown him mercy, but instead cast him down from Arvandor into the Hells. Since Lolth and Corellon Larethian are both above his reach, Malkizid exercises his enmity against their mortal followers—the surface elves and the drow.

Over thousands of years, Malkizid has played a subtle role in many of the troubles of the elves. He was a secret patron of the Vyshaanti overlords of Aryvandaar, teaching them many secrets of powerful magic and encouraging their aggression against the other elven realms of the First Flowering. Later, he sought to ensnare the sun-elf realm of Siluvanede in his plots. Malkizid's greatest success came in The Weeping War of 711–714 DR, when three of his servants—powerful nycaloths he dispatched to Faerûn long before—brought about the destruction of Myth Drannor. Malkizid returned to Faerûn in 1355 DR, positioning himself as

the hidden lord of the devils of Myth Drannor while pursuing his dark schemes.

combat

Malkizid was formerly a solar of unusual power, and he retains many of the abilities and characteristics of his original form. He is an awesome foe, capable of besting all but the most powerful archdevils or demon princes in personal combat, but Malkizid's favorite weapons are honeyed words and seductive promises. He delights in using gifts of power to ensnare those whom he wishes to defeat, leading his enemies down the paths of their own destruction. He resorts to open battle only when directly threatened by a foe who refuses to be caught in his snares.

Malkizid's natural weapons, as well as any weapon he wields, are treated as lawful-aligned and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. He also receives a +6 insight bonus on any attacks (this bonus is factored into the statistics above).

Baatezu Traits: Malkizid can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language. In addition, he can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a deeper darkness spell.

Brand (Su): Malkizid's face is marked by a horrible, weeping brand. Any creature within 30 feet that meets Malkizid's gaze is paralyzed for 1 hour and takes 2d6 points of Wisdom damage (Will DC 36 negates the paralysis and reduces the Wisdom damage to 1 point). Baatezu and yugoloths are affected only if Malkizid uses his brand as a gaze attack. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, Malkizid can create an aura of fear in a 20-foot radius. It otherwise functions as a *fear* spell (caster level 15th, save DC 36). If the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the aura for 24 hours. Baatezu and yugoloths are immune to the aura.

Prismatic Disruption (Sp): Three times per day, Malkizid can create a prismatic disruption that affects all creatures within 30 feet currently under the effect of a spell or spell-like ability. Malkizid makes a dispel check against each spell or effect on each creature in the area as if casting greater dispelling; Malkizid's dispel check modifier is +24 for these checks, and includes a racial +4 bonus. Creatures using magic items that grant constant bonuses are not affected, but magic items that replicate or grant spell effects and are actively doing so when Malkizid uses this ability are subject to the disruption.

For each spell or effect that is dispelled, one randomly determined ray of a prismatic spray spell strikes the target creature (save DC 29). The save DC is Charisma-based. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Regeneration (Ex): Malkizid takes normal damage from good-aligned silver weapons, and spells or effects with the good descriptor.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*aid*, *animate objects*, *bestow curse* (DC 23), *contagion* (DC 24), *continual flame*, *dimensional anchor* (+37 ranged touch), *greater dispel magic*, *unholy blight* (DC 24), *imprisonment* (DC 29), *invisibility* (self only), *lesser restoration*,

polymorph (self only), *power word stun*, *resist energy*, *summon monster VII*, *teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *waves of fatigue*; 3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 26), *earthquake* (DC 27), *heal*, *mass charm monster* (DC 28), *permanency*, *resurrection*, *waves of exhaustion*; 1/day—*greater restoration*, *power word blind*, *power word kill*, *prismatic spray* (DC 27), *wish*. Caster level 25th.

Spells: Malkizid casts divine spells as a 20th-level cleric with access to the domains of Destruction and Evil. While Malkizid no longer serves a deity, he is a servant of the universal forces of evil and woe.

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 20th): 0—*detect magic* (3), *light*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1st—*comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*^E, *divine favor* (2), *doom* (DC 20), *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*^{D,E}, *protection from chaos*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*align weapon* (2), *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *desecrate*^{D,E}, *bold person* (DC 21), *undetectable alignment*, *zone of truth*; 3rd—*animate dead*^E, *create food and water*, *deeper darkness*, *invisibility purge*, *locate object*, *magic circle against good*^{D,E}, *speak with dead*, *wind wall*; 4th—*cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *dismissal* (DC 23), *giant vermin*, *inflict critical wounds*^D, *sending*, *spell immunity*, *summon monster IV*; 5th—*dispel good* (+42 melee touch, DC 24), *greater command* (DC 24), *mass inflict light wounds*^D (DC 24), *plane shift*, *screaming*, *slay living* (+42 melee touch, DC 24), *true seeing*, *wall of stone*; 6th—*banishment* (2) (DC 25), *create undead*^{D,E}, *geas/quest*, *mass cure moderate wounds*, *symbol of fear* (DC 25); 7th—*blasphemy*^E (DC 26), *destruction* (DC 26), *disintegrate*^D (+37 ranged touch, DC 26), *greater screaming*, *mass cure serious wounds*, *repulsion* (DC 26); 8th—*antimagic field*, *discern location*, *fire storm* (DC 27), *shield of law*, *summon monster VIII*, *unholy aura*^{D,E}; 9th—*energy drain* (+37 ranged touch), *gate*, *implosion*^D (DC 28), *mass heal*, *soul bind* (DC 28), *summon monster IX*.

D: Domain spell. **Domains:** Destruction (smite good 1/day, +4 on attack, extra 20 damage); Evil (cast evil spells [^E] at +1 caster level).

malkizid's schemes

One can never be sure where and how Malkizid is attempting to influence elven affairs. A number of scholars have speculated on a link between their ancient foe and the drow invasion of Cormanthor, though few would suggest that an actual alliance exists between the archdevil and Jezz the Lame, or any of the other drow. More likely, Malkizid seeks to create divisions within the drow ranks by encouraging independent thought, while at the same time promoting conflict between the surface drow and the elves.

It is also possible that Malkizid has been sponsoring elements within the Eldreth Veluuthra and encouraging their wars against humanity. The organization has seen a recent influx of new magical, logistical, and monetary support, the source of which remains a mystery. If the Vel'Nikeryma (the ruling council of the Eldreth Veluuthra) ever suspected the interference of Malkizid in their affairs, they would surely seek to purge any evil extraplanar influence from their ranks.

Because he views them as the perfect corruption of the elven ideal, Malkizid has been seeking an alliance with the daemonfey. Though he has managed to recruit a few individuals, the daemonfey are reluctant to subject themselves to such a powerful creature as Malkizid. Today, he might prove a valuable ally—but tomorrow he would surely declare himself overlord of all daemonfey. Nevertheless, Malkizid is patient and feels that, sooner or later, the daemonfey will come to realize the advantages of his rulership.

Recruitment

Malkizid carefully recruits disgruntled members of the elf race. His spies exist within nearly every elven realm above and below the ground, as well as in Toril's seas. His trusted lieutenants spy and pass information back to their lord, distribute aid to allied organizations, and subvert any efforts toward elven unity. They also recruit or corrupt powerful elves and sow the seeds of dissention wherever practicable. The following are two agents that characters might encounter.

Niss'nley (LE female half sun elf/half yugoloth fighter 5):

Niss'nley is more than just a paid agent. She's a member of the family, so to speak. Her father was Tremmor, a powerful yugoloth in Malkizid's service. He bedded a captive thrall elf in his lord's dungeon and set his vile seed to growing inside her. When the fiendish child erupted from its mother, Tremmor named his daughter after the sound of her dead mother's organs spilling across the scalding hot stones of his bedchamber floor. Niss'nley grew from a cruel hellion to an enchantingly beautiful fiend at the feet of Malkizid, learning evil from one of its most accomplished masters. In time, her lord developed a brief infatuation with her. Her father, Tremmor, dared to protest and was slaughtered for his impertinence. Niss'nley watched her father's murder with delight, but Malkizid soon grew weary of her overeager attentions. No amount of evil could completely eradicate her underlying elf nature. But rather than kill her, he sent her to recruit among the daemonfey, promising that if she should succeed, she would prove herself a worthy object of his lust once more. Niss'nley gladly took on this mission, and has been seducing and murdering her way through the daemonfey leadership ever since.

Dheemleth (CE male draegloth rogue 7/assassin 2): When Lolth turned her back on his matron mother for some long-forgotten offense, Dheemleth survived a disastrous war in which his patron family was wiped out, narrowly escaping the drow hunting parties sent to destroy him. After a century of wandering the Underdark, he was captured by Malkizid's minions. Malkizid delighted in completing the corruption of this former chosen of Lolth and making him one of his own. Now, Dheemleth is one of Malkizid's most trusted assassins and agents. Scouting the fringes of drow society, he keeps tabs on several enclaves, striking silently and swiftly when the opportunity arises, slaying female clerics and capturing powerful males to take back to his lord.

Illustration by Raven Mimura



Malkizid

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