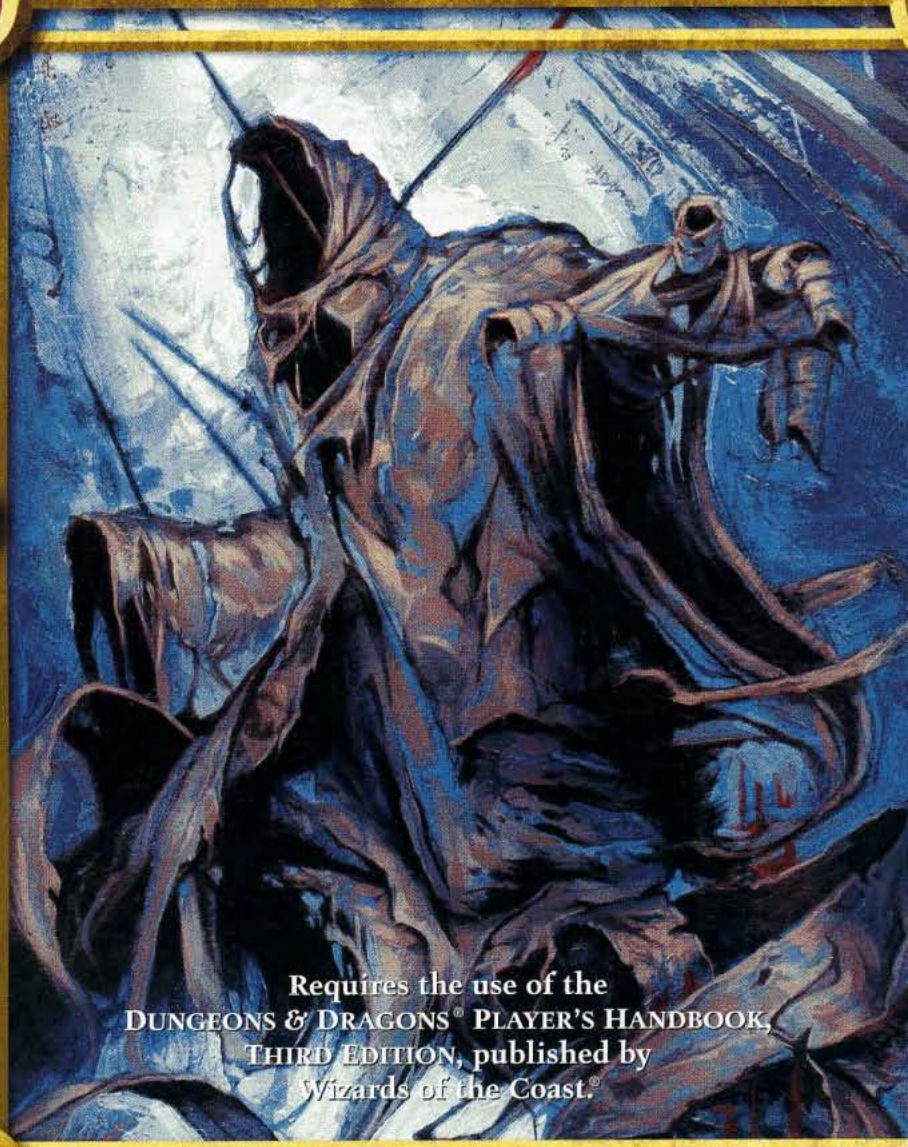


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The texts I seek are neither well-known nor widely distributed, Thraxxes. Were they to become so, the information they hold would shake this world to its foundations. Names long forgotten. Magic thought extinct. Knowledge, events, and information swallowed by the dusty leagues of history. They were buried in hopes that no one would ever find them again; to read them is to recast the cosmos in a new and terrible light. They are secrets, Thraxxes, and all secrets are powerful. He who controls them holds a mighty and terrible weapon. Imagine that weapon in my hands, Thraxxes. And now imagine it in the hands of our adversary.

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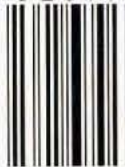
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To the late Douglas Adams, who always knew where his
towel was.

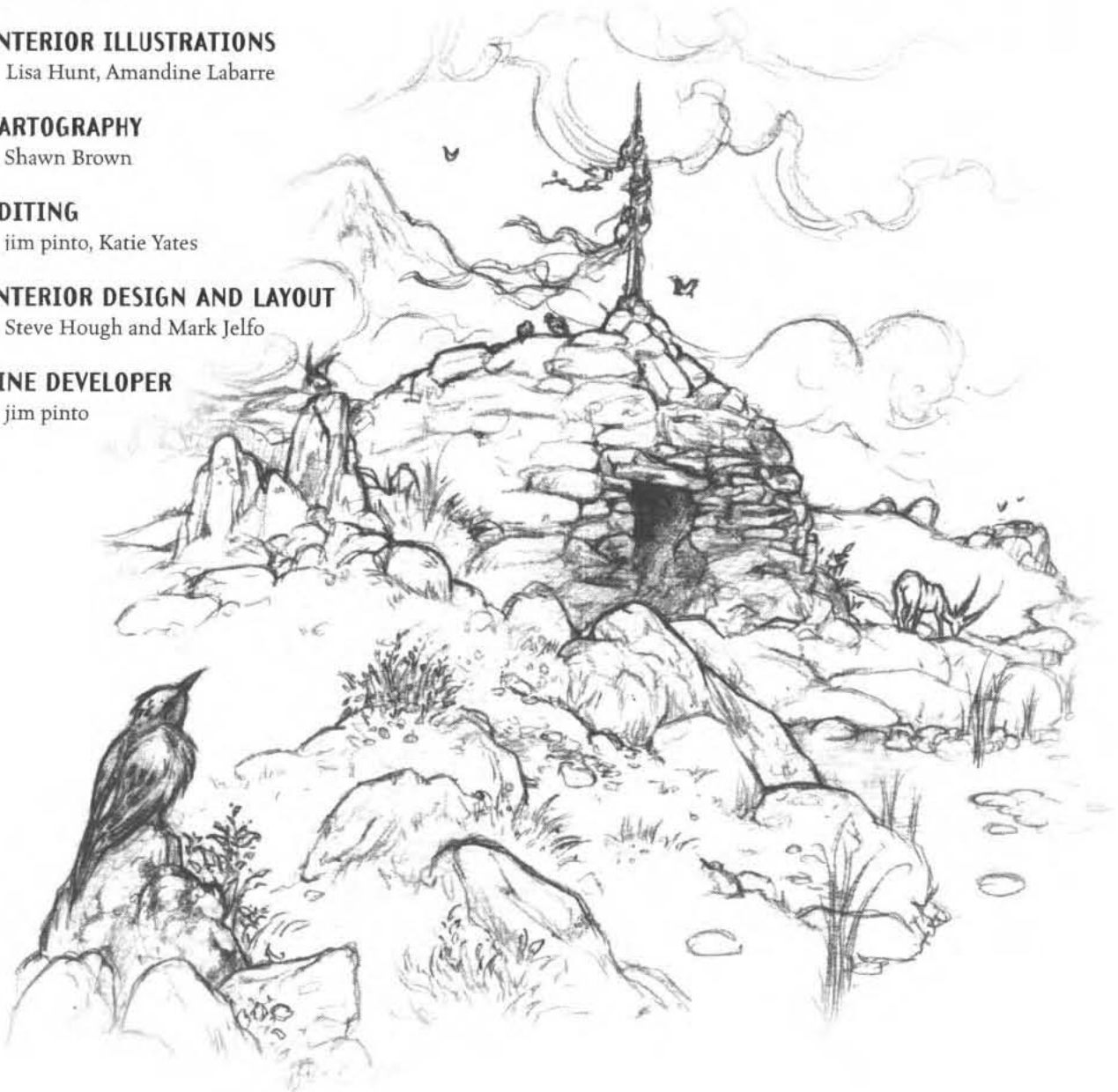


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INTRODUCTION

My Lord,

If this letter reaches you, it means I have failed. The forces of our Adversary have tracked me too closely, and I have been unable to elude them. They have found me before I was able to obtain all of the manuscripts you tasked me to uncover. I pray that I may die with enough honor to atone for my shortcoming.

With this note, you will find what number of the twelve hidden texts I secured before my doom befell me. The servant who carries them knows nothing of their content, though his fate is, of course, subject to your whim. A brief summation of each follows.

As Brother Gerin promised, the Order of the Seven Headed Dragon maintained copies of his journals which he had hidden amongst their stacks. Like him, I needed to infiltrate their brotherhood in order to gain access. It took six months of faithful service before I finally learned the location of the key to their library. Brother Gerin's instructions proved most useful in escaping the monastery before my "brothers" noticed the absence. The journals will provide mystic knowledge the likes of which your mighty kingdom has never seen.

The works of Gilibran the Old and Fazzil ibn Kardun thankfully lay in the same man's hands... may his soul rot in Perdition! We negotiated a fair price for the pages, but he duped my companion and gave us false manuscripts in exchange for our hard-won gold. Long did we pursue the treacherous snake — through fire and mist, and the War of Maker's Hand itself until we finally uncovered him in the midst of a caravan of pilgrims. The last of his blood stained their holy relics black. Sadly, he did not have the texts with him, but by the time our ministrations concluded, he was most eager to share their locale with us. I uncovered them in a forgotten grave, dug on the roadside by their former owner. It was a miracle that looters did not uncover them first.

As you feared, the Veritas Majere had been found by the Adversary before I could claim it. His minions took it by ship to Woeweather Isle, where they hoped to spirit it directly into his hands. I intercepted the vessel with a crew of pirates and send them to the bottom, claiming the book as my sole share of the booty. Countless other treasures went down with the ship, and I had hoped that the Adversary would count his precious text among their number. Sadly, his thirst for knowledge did not die as easily as his servants.

Some five copies of Kynvok's Testament still exist, scattered throughout the libraries of the civilized world. I purchased this one at auction, outbidding a most determined trio from the Bervedane Wizard's Guild. Thankfully, they harbored no grudges after I told them what I knew of the remaining four copies. Hopefully, they will give the Adversary some vexation should he try to claim one for himself.

There is no known translation of The Wisdom of Jiao Wu Shen; the text itself lay in a forgotten corner of an old man's curio shop; I obtained it for the price of a loaf of bread. Less easily obtained was the stone which holds the translation. Border goblins had sacked the city which held it and razed the ambassador's home to the ground. I arrived far too late; the ruins stretched out before me for miles, taunting me to find a needle in the heart of a still-smoldering haystack. At first, the goblins returned to trouble me during my search, but they soon left me in peace. After all, who but a madman would brave so much for a worthless piece of stone? The translation is included in this bundle along with with Jiao's original text.

Alexander Draus Rho's work proved perhaps the most difficult to trace. I feared the Witchfinders would have burned his text by now, but Rho's friends among the fey ensured that his knowledge outlived those cursed theocrats. Their price for its location was high — I undertook deeds which would trouble even your worldly brow. But I also saw much of the Fey and their power, and I know now why Rho's words are so precious. May you use them more wisely than he did, my Lord.

Such was my quest, sought across the corners of this world for these fifteen years. Would that I could complete the task you set for me. Alas, my Lord, the Adversary has finally deduced my identity. His servants stalk me from the shadows, smelling my blood with every step. I fear I shall never leave this lonely tower alive... but I have ensured that the fruits of my labor will reach your waiting hands. Forgive me, My Lord, that I must leave your service so soon. A more worthy servant, perhaps, will finish what I have begun.

The enemy approaches. The hour grows short. My life and soul to you, My Lord. May my death be their equal in devotion.

Your Most Loyal Servant,
Thraxxes Sunchaser

A VOICE FROM ABOVE

You hold what we consider a unique and groundbreaking tome. While the d20 environment has seen a glut of material in the last four years, 99% of it follows “the new classes, new feats, new spells, new magic items paradigm.” And while this book may look no different at first, we hope its format provides you with something you’ve never seen before.

First off, the chapters are purposely mis-matched and puzzling. This was done with style in mind and if you find it confusing, we apologize now. The sage who put together this tome was not the most adept nor intelligent of loremasters. His cryptic and scattered notes are designed to enhance game play, storytelling, and epic adventuring. It was our intention from the beginning to take advantage of an often overlooked tool — numerous writers on one book. For once, if the book feels disjointed, it was intentional.

Our scholar-to-be is just a convenient scapegoat. In fact, if he’d realized what he’d had, this material would have remained hidden and lost. After all, the secret of true elves should never be revealed and any man foolish enough to utter a single word about the Fist of Fury monk fighting style, is asking for death.

Each page of this tome is a secret for your campaign world. Each page provides secrets to races, classes, magic, and so on that can only be woven into a game world carefully. A DM who casually introduces the Barbarians of the Frozen Wastelands from page 18 without first making the PCs fight one, is giving away these treasures.

This book cements years, decades, and even centuries of untold secrets; secrets that left unchecked have the potential to topple kings, ravage entire species, reshape history, or possibly unravel the universe.

But doesn’t that sound like every d20 book?

In order for this book to succeed, you must deal out the ingredients in meager portions. The secrets in this book are not fact until the DM makes them so. They are not canon until the surprise villain at the end of an epic unleashes powerful fey magic upon the unsuspecting heroes. The secrets in this book are not true until a monk completes his training in a secret underground monastery after years of meditation and practice and only if he can pull the proverbial pebble from his master’s palm. They are not and can not be mysteries without an air of suspense.

If you haven’t noticed already one chapter is missing, another is misplaced, and each is attributed to a sage or man of wisdom rather than a topic or area of expertise. Instead, we’ve given each chapter its own voice. Each sage has a unique way of revealing secrets — real or otherwise

— to the reader. Each chapter opens in a fictitious voice either educated, misguided, enraged, or insane. Whose voice you believe is ultimately up to you.

Each chapter includes style and substance, form and function. This book is a gateway to campaign potential and plot twists that DMs can use in new or ongoing campaigns without skipping a beat.

From imaginary new places to lost barbarian tribes; from godless worlds to impossible magic, *Secrets* is like no other book from AEG. Although not unbalancing, the new races, classes, feats, spells, weapons, domains, and magical orders break the conventional stereotypes and put a new spin on how we game. It would be easy to hold your hand and tell you exactly how to use this book; but in reality we suspect you’ll come up with something we hadn’t thought of.

We realize this book may just be another wolf in sheep’s clothing, but we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed making it.

Good gaming.

SECRETS UNEARTHED

Each chapter in this book opens with fictitious text in the voice of its author. This text can easily be adapted for game play — either paraphrased or photocopied — for adventurers to discover in order to piece together existing clues or complete an unfinished puzzle. You can not always trust these riddles and veteran PCs will certainly suspect the worst when rumors of infinite power fall into their hands. We recommend DMs prey upon these trepidations and twist meanings and interpretations whenever possible.

However, this book does include game mechanics, new rules and specialty classes to support these sometimes founded and unfounded fables. It should not be uncommon for an NPC to possess these secrets first, forcing willful adventurers to oppose these powerful secrets before earning the right to wield them. No matter how the PCs uncover these secrets, we encourage DMs to make them work for it.

Finally, the last few pages of this book can be used and reused as you see fit. We’ve included a chart of 100 secrets and 100 secret keepers as a springboard to creating adventures. Also included are pages of indiscernible script and notes that are perfect for photocopying and use as red herrings, end of the world prophecies, or mysterious plot hooks in your game world. In addition, we’ve included a “blank” scroll and a map for DMs to create their own mysteries and hidden secrets.

INTRODUCTION

TABLE I-1: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN

1d20 Trigger

- 1 A book of impossible power rests in the belly of an extinct dragon species.
- 2 Cryptic sigils appear on the coins of a local barony marking directions to secret cabals to only those capable of deciphering the language.
- 3 Dwarves and elves gather together for a sacred holiday, unwritten in any book.
- 4 A dying monk's last words are "halls of Julesca."
- 5 Graverobbers unearth a skeleton still clutching an ancient scroll.
- 6 Hunters of the dead stake everyone from a cursed village, leaving the dead to rot. The bodies are burned and cleansed, but one body cannot be destroyed forcing the hunters to erect a tomb around it — where it fell.
- 7 A holy order, having recently lost a member, approaches the party asking for aid in their noble quest.
- 8 Hundreds of pigeons hurl themselves to the earth, plummeting to their death in a sick, ironic omen.
- 9 Locals speak of a crazed wizard living in the hills above the town.
- 10 Minotaur slavers begin collecting strange bones, exchanging all their valuables for any hints or rumors alluding to their quest.
- 11 Mysterious lights appear one night a year near a forgotten mine.
- 12 Orc dead mysteriously crawl up from their graves only to die again half buried in earth.
- 13 Orc raiders razed a village recently carrying a weapon far beyond their primitive intellect.
- 14 A priest wakes from horrifying visions of a possible future.
- 15 The scales of an ancient dragon are found buried with a lich and a tome, untouched by time.
- 16 Strange tattoos and brands mark the bodies of dead wizards only after burial.
- 17 The town quilting circle is actually a witch coven with secret messages and incantations sewn into the quilts.
- 18 Unmarked gravestones circle a blotchy patch of earth where a single gold ring lies untouched.
- 19 Villagers engaged in quiet conversation grow silent when strangers near.
- 20 Whispers of a fallen god, angel, devil, or something worse come from the lips of children too young to know anything of their secrets.



Chapter 1:

The Lore of Fazzil ibn Kardun

RACIAL SECRETS

I have studied much of the world. I know less than I should, yet still a great deal more than you, dear reader. If you're reading this, chances are, I have passed on. But my wisdom is yours should you desire to open your mind and embrace the truth.

And would that I should still breathe, then you are holding books that do not belong to you and may the heavens protect you from my wrath should I find you in custody of my personal possessions.

BLEEDING ORC

Among the many humanoid races, none are more of a nuisance than the orcs. Unfortunately, I fear we have not yet seen the last of them, for these savages are not only ruthless aggressors who carelessly invade our lands, but they breed like maggots.

Who among us have not faced an orc in battle? I have never met an adventurer who didn't, and most travelers eventually encounter such a fiend. Everywhere I went during my long years of travel, I heard the tales of bloodthirsty orc raids against villages, towns, and cities. I learned of remorseless destruction and of merciless murders committed by the savage tribes of the orcish people. And like many would-be heroes, I too, saw such things. Though I killed many of them — more, in fact, than I care to recall — I fear my contribution to rid the world of these pests is but a meaningless drop of water in this vast problematic ocean.

But I digress, for the true purpose of this journal is about to unfold.

One fact few people are aware of, concerns the existence of a special breed among the orcs — one said to be much more lethal than its mundane kin. Although I have never encountered such

a specimen myself, I heard first hand accounts of eyewitnesses believing in the existence of this rare creature. My research led me to the discovery of two mentions of this breed in ancient tomes I found buried at the Imperial Library; volumes that substantiated and supported the rumor of these malevolent beasts.

Born among typical orcs, these strange specimens are considered blessed by the gods by their people, but at the same time are seen as a nuisance the tribe would do best to avoid. One orc out of a 100,000 is born thus. Many of them are abandoned by their mothers and don't survive past infancy, but some are nurtured by their tribe and mature into respected warriors. What follows is the result of my research on the breed the old texts referred to as "bleeding orcs".

Personality: Uncouth, unpredictable, and untrustworthy — even by orcish standards — the bleeding orcs are ferocious, intense, and reckless in every way imaginable. They are more astute and ambitious than lesser orcs, but their cruel and explosive nature turns them into loners. Many bleeding orcs are abandoned by their mothers at birth, and those who survive are either cared for by other humanoids that were foolish enough to nourish them or taken in by a band of bleeding orcs living in exile. Most of the abandoned ones develop a passionate hatred for their people. Those who were fortunate enough to remain with their tribe, however, are feared and mistrusted by their peers, but usually earn enough respect to become productive members of society.

People who meet them and survive believe that the bleeding orcs fear nothing and welcome death, for it is said their bodies are so weak that they suffer incessantly.

Physical Description: Typical bleeding orcs stand between 6 to 7 tall, weighing anywhere between 100 to 160 pounds. Males are somewhat heavier than females, but the size difference between the sexes is minimal. Bleeding orcs are thin, and most other orcs would perhaps find them emaciated or even of elf-like build. Unlike most of their kin, bleeding orcs appear frail and unhealthy. Mostly, this is due to their weird red hued skin, which is marked with countless sores, blisters, and lesions. The flesh of these fiends is so raw it bleeds constantly — hence their name. These ailments are terribly painful to them, but they learn to cope with their sufferings.

Bleeding orcs achieve adulthood quickly, usually at around age ten, and their lifespan is extremely limited. Those few specimens reaching 60 years old are considered venerable elders and are highly respected by their peers. Because they are born with the bloodlust of their people and welcome death, most die in brutal combat before reaching age 20.

Relations: Bleeding orcs are angry and hate everyone, even the gods. Those who live among other orcs remain with them out of necessity rather than loyalty, while those who were abandoned take a particular joy in slaughtering the orcs that left them to die.

Alignment: Bleeding orcs have no respect for law or tradition, nor do they care about ethics. They do not believe in any code of behavior save what is necessary for them to survive amidst the harsh and unforgiving world they were born into. Sages believe the bleeding orcs are incapable of developing a conscience. These creatures tend to be chaotic and evil.

Bleeding Orc Lands: Bleeding orcs have no lands of their own. Many live among typical orcish tribes and share their territories. Those abandoned few sometimes regroup, preferring to live in distant hills where they make their homes in hidden natural grottos, forming communities of their own.

Religion: Bleeding orcs do not worship anyone. In fact, most hate the gods who let them incarnate in weak bodies and blame them for their woes.

Language: Orc.

Adventurers: Bleeding orcs are ferociously uncouth but cunningly determined. The rare individuals among them who became adventurers made their mark upon the world. After all, bards still sing the tale of Bleeding Bheerg, whom many sages believe to be the first bleeding orc in recorded history.

Bleeding Orc Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution, -4 Charisma: Bleeding orcs are not as powerful as the majority of their kin, but they are still stronger than most humans. Lithe and smart, these specimens are cursed with extremely precarious health.

They are hideous, angry louts. It is nearly impossible for them to learn civilized etiquette and manners.

- Medium-size: As medium-size creatures, bleeding orcs have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Bleeding orc base speed is 30 ft.
- +2 racial bonus on Will saves and +4 racial bonus against enchantment and charm spells and effects: Bleeding orcs are strong willed and difficult to beguile.
- +4 racial bonus to all check and saves to resist pain or intimidation. Bleeding orcs live with chronic pain, and are accustomed to the numbness that replaces any remote chance of sensitivity.
- Hideousness: Bleeding orcs are so grotesque most people recoil from them. No initial reaction toward a bleeding orc can ever be better than neutral, no matter what the conditions.
- Distracting Banter: Bleeding orcs use their appalling appearance to their advantage. When engaged in combat, they can, as a free action, utter raspy moans to whisper insults at their opponents. All foes within 30 ft. suffer a -4 penalty to their Concentration checks.
- Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day — *daze*. A bleeding orc with an Intelligence score of 12 or higher gains the following spell-like abilities: 1/day — *cause fear*, *daze monster*, *hideous laughter*, and *rage*. Caster level 1st. The save DCs are Intelligence based.
- Darkvision: Like most of their kind, bleeding orcs can see in the dark up to 60 ft. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and bleeding orcs can function just fine with no light at all.
- Light Sensitivity: Bleeding orcs are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.
- Orcblood: For all special abilities and effects related to race, a bleeding orc is considered an orc.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Orc. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, and Infernal.
- Favored Class: Wizard. A multiclass bleeding orc's wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty (see PHB). Though they seldom have the chance to learn and practice this craft, the true nature of the bleeding orc lies within the magical arts. If your campaign includes rules for a shaman class, replace wizard with shaman.
- Level Equivalent: Class level +1.

ENDEMIC

Endemic is the name given to a creature hailing from deep in the jungles of the Southern Lands. Long have these eerie human look-alikes been restricted to a secluded environment, but they found a way to leave their ancestral prison. And now they walk among us.

For thousands of years now, the endemics inhabit our land, consume our food, and take advantage of our wealth. For count-

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN

less generations they mingle with mankind unnoticed, occasionally mixing their blood with ours but most often breeding among themselves to ensure the purity of their race. None of them has thus far learned that I discovered their secret, and what I am writing now may very well be my last entry — for my life will undoubtedly be in great danger once they know. But someone has to warn the world. Someone needs to prevent the fall of mankind.

The endemics are malevolent beings who betrayed and slaughtered their creator. According to their sacred texts — which I was able to translate into the Common tongue — this betrayal brought them the enmity of the other deities, which put a curse upon them. I am uncertain of the true nature of this divine curse, but the endemic homeland fell from the “rhythm” of the real world, as if a pocket universe imprisoned them. The endemics were forever forbidden to leave their home and their existence soon passed from memory.

Confined to their pocket universe for centuries, the endemics devoted themselves to the study of the magical arts, pooling their resources in hope of finding a way to break out of their imprisonment. They eventually did and returned to our planet. Though the gods who had originally cursed them died or forgot about them, part of their curse still weighs heavily on the endemics: For it has now become almost impossible for them to produce children.

Many long years have passed since their return to our world, and the endemics have worked long and hard to pass themselves off as human and infiltrate our societies. Though they do look like us, they are much more devious and vile. Since they rarely produce offspring, their ambition is to gradually take over the world by posing as humans.

The endemics' infiltration into human societies is so subtle that none know of their existence. Today, many endemics hold positions of power, and many a kingdom's ruler is such a being standing in for a human.

Personality: Endemics are intelligent, determined, and patient. They believe they are superior to humans in all aspects, save for the fact that it has become extremely difficult for them to reproduce. They are fundamentally cruel, haughty, and proud, but have a firm grasp on manipulation. Since most are blessed with great beauty as well as a strong sense of self-preservation and a keen understanding of human behavior, they appear highly charismatic.

Physical Description: Physically, endemics are identical to humans. Their height and weight have human proportions, and the color of their eyes, hair, and skin are within the range of those associated with humankind. Like humans, endemics have hairy bodies and the males grow facial hair. Unlike them, however, endemics do not sleep. Instead, they enter a comatose-like state from which they shut out the world. They are extremely hard to rouse when they are in this state, but two hours a night is enough to replenish them. This trance is close to a sleep state and the casual observer would assume the endemic is asleep.



Since their return to our world, the endemics have had great difficulty reproducing. Though some have spawned with humans, true endemic children are rare. When born, an endemic develops as fast as a human child, but these beings live much longer lives than the humans they resemble. For an endemic, maturity is reached at twenty, but old age does not catch up with him before he turns four hundred. Some endemics live to be seven hundred years old.

A child born of an endemic and a human has no outstanding powers and is in every way identical to humans. The endemic parent usually rejects such an offspring, but some endemics use these lowly children in their scheme of world domination, never revealing their true heritage. **Relations:** Endemics are usually born and raised among humans, but their endemic parents supervise their progress and teach them to keep their inhuman abilities in check. An endemic quickly learns to be deceitful; an art the endemic culture has perfected over the years. Because they are proud and strongly believe in their superiority, endemics do not make friends easily — not true friends anyway. Though they often act as though they are friendly and loyal companions — to blend into human society — endemics rarely develop strong feelings for people outside of their race.

Though they look exactly like humans and most often act like them, endemics have the ability to automatically spot others of their kind. Endemics are most attracted to other members of their deceitful race, and because they recognize each other so readily they are able to form strong bonds among themselves.

If an endemic truly befriends a member of another race, it is usually after the individual has not only shown he shares the same basic philosophies (such as similar alignment) as the endemic, but also because he has proven his worth to him. Endemic respect power, and so they are more inclined to bond with strong or powerful people.

Alignment: Endemics are fundamentally evil, but they adhere to a strict code of conduct. They harbor great respect for laws, lineage, and traditions — for those are the only remnants of their once great civilization. Though they do not all agree with each other and are far from living in harmony, no endemic has ever killed another. For most of them, this is a matter of personal honor, but they are also motivated by their need for survival.

Endemic Lands: The endemics no longer have territories of their own. This was before they murdered their creator and turned their backs upon the gods, before the great curse befell them, and before their terrible exile. Today, they are forced to live among humankind, but they hope to rectify the situation. Because they pose as humans and live long lives, endemics have worked their way into positions of power, often becoming part of the ruling body of entire nations. Some conceal their long lives by

periodically assuming the identity of their human-born child. They do so by murdering their child or grandchild, usually when approaching adulthood by simulating their own death. At first, they use their ability to alter their face, but gradually return to their true form.

Religion: Endemics have forsaken their gods. Since they were cursed and exiled by them, they have trouble putting their faith in any deity.

Language: Endemic. Though all endemic speak the Common tongue, they do have their own language. Combining a vast array of clicking sounds and subtle breath intakes, Endemic is strange and incomprehensible to the other races. The endemics are fanatically devoted to keep their tongue — like their existence — a secret.

Adventurers: If endemic children are inconceivable, the existence of endemic adventurers is even more sporadic. Mostly, the members of this race who choose the adventuring professions have dissimilar ideas and views than the rest of their peers.

Endemic Racial Traits

- +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma, –2 Strength: Endemics are smart, physically appealing, and adept at manipulation. However, they consider physical labor beneath them and their lack of exercise makes them weaker than most humanoids.
- Medium-size: As medium-size creatures, endemics have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Endemic base speed is 30.
- Undetectable Alignment: Endemics have a supernatural aura that prevents anyone from discovering their alignment, as if they were permanently imbued with the spell *undetectable alignment*.
- Modify Features: Endemics are able to mold their faces and alter their eye, hair, or skin color. This supernatural ability allows them to change their appearance, but only slightly. An endemic may, for instance, grow his hair several inches, turn it gray, or make it curly. He may also alter the pigmentation of his eyes and darken or whiten his skin. Additionally, he may alter his facial features, but he may not take on an entirely new face. Thanks to this ability, many endemics have lived among humans for generations, passing themselves off as their children or grandchildren. This ability is usable once per day and remains in effect for 24 hours. An endemic may choose to discard the alteration to his face, skin, eyes, and hair at anytime before the end of the duration. Endemic effectively gain a +6 racial bonus to Disguise checks. This does not stack with bonus from magical disguises such as *disguise self* or *alter self*.
- Resistance: Endemics have acid resistance 5, cold resistance 5, and electrical resistance 5. This is due to the manipulation of the great magical spells that allowed them to escape imprisonment long ago.

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN

- +2 racial bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks when dealing with humans. Endemics know how to manipulate the emotions of others, and have a great sense of the humanity mystique. Elves and dwarves are another matter, however.
- +2 racial bonus on Sense Motive and Spot checks. Living a lie makes the endemics paranoid and more intuitive of their surroundings.
- Natural Spellcasting Ability: Endemics are naturally adept at weaving arcane spells. For the purpose of determining bonus spells and the DCs of his spells, an endemic arcane spellcaster adds +2 to his primary spell casting ability.
- Low-Light Vision: An endemic can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under such conditions.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Endemic. Bonus Languages: Any.
- Favored Class: Wizard. A multi-class endemic's wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty (see PHB). Thousands of years spent weaving magical energies made them expert mages.
- Level Equivalent: Class level +1.

HALF-DWARF

Rare are the occasions when a dwarf and a member of another race mate. To most dwarves, the idea of an intimate union with a human or an elf is ludicrous and repulsive. The concept even is taboo in most dwarven societies. I recently put my hands on a complex dwarven article of law, written some two thousand years ago. The article stipulated that if a dwarf mates with a human, he must be charged with criminal intent. If proved guilty, he may be banished from his clan and never allowed to return to his people. Additionally, if a child was spawned from this ungodly union, the infant must be killed.

From what I learned from Kurdun Ironfist, the renown dwarven justicar, this particular law was abolished hundreds of years ago, but its effect on dwarven society remains nevertheless still important to this day. Rare are the dwarves willing to discuss the possibilities of such a bond with a member from another race. Though friendship is possible between a dwarf and a person belonging to another humanoid stock, most dwarves entertain the possibility of true bonds with a non-dwarven kin unlikely.

According to them, mating is impossible. And all dwarves I talked to sneered at me when I asked what they thought.

What truly amazed me was the fact that even the most intelligent and educated among them — like Justicar Kurdun of the Ironfist Clan — refused to accept that coupling between a dwarf and a female from another humanoid race was not unheard of. In fact, many songs have been written about the beautiful Darva, a human female, who won the heart of the dwarven champion Turdin. But there is more to the story than just a fairy tale.

Although the dwarves seem unable to produce offspring with most other races, human females can bear their children.

Half-dwarves are a rarity, but they do exist.

Believe me, I've meet a few.



Personality: Like their fathers, half-dwarves tend to be suspicious of strangers, but their human side makes them more open to laughter, jest, and relaxation. Once they get to know a person, they can be quite generous and friendly, so for the most part they make friends easily.

Physical Description:

Half-dwarves stand only 4 to 4½ tall, but they are not as stout as their dwarven fathers. Though they are powerfully built given their height, they are slimmer and more agile than dwarves. They resemble humans and, like them, come in a range of hair and skin color. Male half-dwarves tend to be broader than females. They also grow healthy beards and their skin is covered with a thick layer of body hair.

Relations: Most half-dwarves live in human lands and blend smoothly with this race. In fact, most of them deny their true identities and pass themselves off as pure humans. Half-dwarves have no particular love or hatred of other folks, but they do tend to be curious about the dwarven heritage, which was refused them. Given the chance, most would probably embrace dwarven cultures. However, since the dwarves consider them pariahs — and generally even go as far as denying their existence; or at the very least the dwarven blood flowing in their veins — no half-dwarf in history ever had the chance to learn more about its dwarven ancestry.

Alignment: Half-dwarves enjoy order and most value the law, cherishing and respecting it above all things. Like humans, they neither favor good nor evil.

Half-Dwarf Lands: There are too few half-dwarves for them to have lands of their own. The majority lives among humans and share their territories.

Religion: Half-dwarves have no preferred religion. Like humans, they worship an amalgam of gods, but do find lawful churches more appealing to their orderly nature.

Language: Common. Half-dwarves have no language of their own; they learn their mothers' tongue.

Adventurers: Many half-dwarf adventurers are motivated by their curious and acquisitive nature. Though they love to find and accumulate wealth — especially in the form of gems and precious metals — they also love to spend it.

Half-Dwarf Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, –2 Charisma: Half-dwarves are strong and fast, but they are also gruff and uneasy around strangers.
- Medium-size: As medium-size creatures, half-dwarves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Half-dwarf base speed is 30 ft.
- Darkvision: Half-dwarves can see in the dark up to 30 ft. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and half-dwarves can function just fine with no light at all.
- Limited Stonecunning: This ability grants a half-dwarf a +1 racial bonus on Search checks to notice unusual stonework, such as sliding walls, stonework traps, new construction (even when built to match the old), unsafe stone surfaces, shaky stone ceilings, and the like. Something which isn't stone but that is disguised as stone also counts as unusual stonework. A half-dwarf who merely comes within 10 ft. of unusual stonework can make a Search check as if he were actively searching, and a half-dwarf can use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can. Although not formally trained, the dwarven blood running in the half-dwarves' veins make them especially competent with any sort of stonework.
- Stability: A half-dwarf gains a +2 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground (but not when climbing, flying, riding, or otherwise not standing firmly on the ground).
- +1 racial bonus on saving throws against poison. Like dwarves, half-dwarves are hardy and able to resist toxins.
- +1 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects. Half-dwarves are slightly more resilient to magic than their human parents.
- +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks. The greedy nature of half-dwarves make them especially good at evaluating treasures.
- +2 racial bonus on Bluff checks. Although most half-dwarves rarely lie, they are especially adept at hiding their identity, passing themselves off as short humans most of the time. This helped develop their wit.
- +1 racial bonus on Craft checks related to stone or metal. Like their fathers, half-dwarves are skilled with metal and stone craft.
- Dwarfblood: For all special abilities and effects related to race, a half-dwarf is considered a dwarf.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Dwarf. Bonus Languages: Any (with the exception of secret languages). Like humans, half-dwarves meet all sorts of people and live in all manner of lands.
- Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass half-dwarf's fighter class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty (see PHB). Like their dwarven fathers, half-dwarves make competent warriors and learn the craft of warfare more easily than most other races.
- There is no level equivalent for half-dwarf.

PURE ELVES

In my youth, I met a creature I mistook for a god. I know better now, but most who encounter these formidable beings are left with the same impression that struck me once long ago. These graceful, godlike entities are not only made from flesh and blood, but they are humanoids like most of us. There is a distinction, however: They are ageless.

These tall and splendid beings call themselves pure elves, for they are indeed born of elvenkin. Immortal and godlike in appearance, these extremely rare specimens are representative of what the first elves were like, millennia ago. Although my expertise in elven history is limited, I uncovered the secret of this race long ago — ever since I had met one of their kind, I wanted to learn more about them.

The birth of an elf is somewhat of a rarity compared to that of a human being. The birth of a pure elf is so unusual that it is an event celebrated by all elves. And the event is planned long before the actual birth, for prophets can predict the occasion years in advance. It is said that one elf out of half a million is a pure elf, but there are probably slightly more than that — for I have had the occasion to meet two of these wonderful beings in my lifetime.

Personality: Pure elves are stern yet gentle. They lack the sense of humor and joie de vivre so many of their kind are known for; a trait making them appear haughty or beyond the trivialities of a simple humanoid life. In truth, most are kind and generous beings who would give up their immortal life to save another. Because they are blessed with great charm and an innate ability to weave fascinating magic, most people are attracted to them. Pure elves, however, prefer to keep their distances, if only to spare them grief in the future.

Physical Description: The pure elves are tall, ranging from 7 to 8½ in height. Like elves, they are slender and agile. Because of their hollow bones, pure elves rarely weigh over 175 lbs. Although they do not seem emaciated, they are obviously lean, with elongated rather than bulky muscles. Their unearthly grace is legendary.

The most unusual trait of a pure elf are his hollow eyes. All pure elves are born with deep-set colorless white eyes, which makes them not only stand out but also look eerily different. They have pale skin and splendid dark hair, which they prefer to wear long and tidy. Like mundane elves, they have no facial or body hair. The face of a pure elf is smooth and youthful, and most are handsome beyond belief.

The beauty of a pure elf is eternal, for the members of this breed do not age. They attain maturity at the age of 110 years and never die of natural causes. Because they are ageless, many believe pure elves are immortal. In truth, pure elves can be killed, just as any other creature. The death of a pure elf, however, is as mourned as his birth was celebrated.

Relations: Pure elves live so long they have a hard time connecting with people. A young pure elf might befriend others more willingly than one who has lived for some time. Because they are kind and sensitive beings, seeing friends or loved ones wither with old age and die is unbearable to pure elves. So most of them learn the hard way not to get emotionally attached to mortals though inevitably some do. And once a solid bond is formed between a pure elf and another, it lasts for close to an eternity.

Alignment: Pure elves are connected to nature and the cycle of life. Unlike most elves, who tend to enjoy freedom above all else, the pure elves' connection with nature makes them tend towards equanimity. Most pure elves do not enjoy chaos, though they appreciate the gentler aspects of it, such as art. Pure elves tend to recoil from official codes of law or behaviors, and most of them refuse to adhere to humanoid-based authorities since they see them as imperfect and easily corruptible. The only code they readily follow is their own personal honor, in which peaceful relationships and kindness are highly regarded. Pure elves are kind, gentle, and sensitive creatures.

Pure elf Lands: Pure elves possess no territory of their own. They live among the elves as full-fledged members of their societies. Because of their mythical birthright, most pure elves hold positions of leadership among elves. Religion: Due to their bond with nature and their unbelievably long lives, pure elves tend to pay tribute to nature deities. They rarely worship gods who are chaotic or too rigid, and never pay any homage to gods who recently claimed their godhood.

Language: Elven. All pure elves speak the language of their people. However, there is an old form of Elven called High Elven, which many pure elves speak.

Although most people familiar with Elven would recognize many of the intonations of High Elven, the language is too different for them to make any sense of. High Elven is a closely guarded secret mastered only by ancient pure elf sages.

Adventurers: Most pure elves who are seduced by the adventuring life have the potential to become heroes. Since they rarely crave the approbation or friendship of others, they adventure more out of a need to understand the world around them than out of a will to seek out wealth or glory. Many pure elf adventurers seek to protect and nurture the environment, and their adventure often bring them the enmity of those who would want to harm nature.

Pure Elf Racial Traits

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, +6 Charisma, -2 Constitution: Although lithe, wise, and undeniably charming, pure elves are considerably less hardy than humans.
- Medium-size: As medium-size creatures, pure elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Pure elf base speed is 30 ft.
- Immunity to magic sleep effects. Like elves, pure elves do not sleep. To recuperate, they must meditate for four hours each night.
- +4 racial saving throw bonus on Will saves. Pure elves are resolute and their will is extremely tough to break.
- Spell Resistance equal to 11 + Wisdom bonus (if any) + class levels. Pure elves are magical beings and have the extraordinary ability to counter magical effects thrown at them.
- Weapon Proficiency: Like elves, pure elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the longbow (including composite longbow), longsword, rapier, and shortbow (including composite shortbow) as bonus feats. Pure elves follow the age-long martial traditions of the elves they live with.
- +4 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. A pure elf who merely passes within 5 of a secret or concealed door is entitled a Search check to notice it as if he were actively looking for it.
- +4 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks. Pure elves are keen observers of humanoid behaviors.
- Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day — *detect magic*, *read magic*, *obscuring mist*. A pure elf with Charisma score of at least 12 also has the following spell-like abilities: 1/day — *detect thoughts*, *see invisibility*, *whispering winds*. A pure elf with a Charisma score of 16 or higher may also use the following: 1/week — *geas/quest* and *mass suggestion*. Caster level 10th + pure elf's Charisma modifier + spell level.

- **Low-Light Vision:** A pure elf 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.
- **Darkvision:** In addition to having low-light vision, a pure elf can see up to 60 ft. in the dark. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and a pure elf can function just fine with no light at all.
- **Elfblood:** For all special abilities and effects related to race, a pure elf is considered an elf.
- **Automatic Languages:** Common and Elf.
Bonus Languages: Draconic, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Orc, and Sylvan. Pure elves may also choose High Elven as a bonus language. High Elven is a secret tongue, like the special language of druids, and the pure elves guard its secret closely.
- **Favored Class:** Druid. A multiclass pure elf's druid class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty (see PHB). His intimate connection with nature makes the pure elf especially well suited for the druid class.
- **Level Equivalent:** Class level +3.

THE SECRET OF DWARF CHILDREN

Tales from the dwarven halls abound. Dwarves are proud of their traditions, their culture, and their heroes. Many songs and poems have been written to honor the memory of their most notable achievements, of their glorious battles, and of their greatest monarchs. Countless of their artisans have become renowned jewelers and metal smiths. Scores of heroic adventurers who made their unique mark upon the world have hailed from their great sub-mountain fortresses. But what do we truly know about dwarves?

The answer is: Very little. For one thing, although most dwarves like to boast the accomplishments of their kind, their clan, and dwarven law, very few of them speak openly about their every day lives or their family ties. Many of us great thinkers believe the dwarves are strange xenophobic beings which we know next to nothing about. And we are right.

Have you ever heard a dwarf speak about his mother? Have you ever known a dwarven child? Have you ever met a female dwarf? Of course you have not, because dwarves have no mothers, no sisters, no wives. And they have no childhood — at least not in the sense most humanoid races see it.

Some twenty years ago, I had the unfortunate opportunity to visit one of the most reputed ancestral halls deep inside dwarven territory. The underground complex fascinated me, and the dwarf who had invited me — a loyal traveling companion with whom I had shared many adventures — was a gracious host. During my visit, my companion showed me wonders beyond belief, from

fine statues carved from all sorts of stones and metals to richly decorated and elaborately designed rooms and corridors. He made me visit vast mines and grand forges where various artisans fashioned wondrous arms and armors. He introduced me to the men of his clan, to the members of the royal council, and to the king under the mountain. In essence, he revealed to me what most people already know about the dwarves.



Had my visit ended there, I would have returned home none the wiser. I probably would not have asked about the role of the women in their society or where they hid all their children and females when visitors like myself were around. I probably would never have dared to inquire about such things, for fear of insulting my host and his king. Unfortunately for the dwarves — but fortunately for me —, there was trouble stirring in the underworld. At the time of my visit, a large host of deep dwarves, goblins, and other loathsome creatures stormed the dwarven city of Kar'Duril, which I was visiting. By attacking the underground city of Kar'Duril, the evil forces broke a treaty that had existed for decades between the dwarven citizens and their neighbors, so the dwarves failed to anticipate the attack and were caught off guard.

The siege of Kar'Duril is now a famous event; one which will be known by all students of history for generations to come. Most people understand that the forces of the enemy outnumbered the dwarf army three to one, that the city was besieged for a month and a half, and that the dwarves finally drove off their would be conquerors by the sheer force of determination. What people do not realize is that I — Fazzil ibn Kardun of the Order of the Righteous Star Magi and the Twelve Stones of Carrvaak — was there, stuck inside the fortified city with no means of escape. But my stay was most revealing, for I not only had the privilege of witnessing first hand the dwarven art of war, but I also uncovered one of their most important secrets.

One day during the great siege I was forced into the fray. I soon found myself in a position where I was unable to fallback, and the brave but foolish dwarven warriors who had led me into this situation were losing ground — fast. Their commander then stopped shouting orders and stared at me for long seconds. His eyes were so intense I still remember the inner conflict burning within them, even years after the event. He then made what I suspect was the most important decision of his life. He opened a hidden panel in the wall behind us and ordered us to fall back inside the narrow corridor behind it. The warriors then sealed off the wall again, successfully blocking our attackers on the other side. The commander then they led his men and me through a maze of natural grottos, where I uncovered the best-kept secret in dwarven history.

Our path opened into a wide natural chamber where hundred — if not thousands — of boulders sprouted from the rocky ground. A closer look made me realize all these rocks were formed in the shape of a dwarf curled in a fetal position. The dwarves urged me onward, but I found myself enthralled and unable to move. All I could do was gaze at the marvelous stones lying in the great chamber. There, before me, was the answer to all the questions I did not dare ask the dwarves directly.

There are no dwarven females. There are no dwarven children. The dwarves were not born like most other humanoid; they were hewn out of the rock!

I stayed for several minutes in this cave, observing the various boulders in the form of fully-grown dwarves. I contemplated how each and every one of them was different from the next.

I was amazed how precisely sculpted the stones were — and how much they seemed real. These were obviously not inanimate statues, but living beings in the development stage of their existence. These were dwarves waiting to be born.

When we returned to safety, the dwarven council of Kar'Duril had many meetings to discuss what to do with me. My companion — the adventurer who had invited me to the great dwarven city in the first place — spoke in my defense, even though this might have cost him exile. The king and his councilors finally decided there was not much they could do. They could not erase the memory of what I had witnessed, nor could they deny the secret I had uncovered. So they summoned me to a meeting and spoke truthfully.

What I learned from them was that dwarves were spawned from sheer rock. For decades, the rocks from which they emerge gradually shape themselves into the form the dwarves will take when they reach the proper age. When the time comes, dwarf younglings break the stony shell imprisoning their bodies and emerge from their cocoons as full-grown men — flesh and blood creatures who look exactly like their stone cocoons. Though they have infantile minds, they appear as any other adult dwarf; some of them are even born with beards.

What is most fascinating is that the dwarves have no control over the conception or the development of their kin. In fact, the rocks from which they are born can appear anywhere in the underground maze-like grottos. This, they say, is the manner in which the gods made things; thus is how the All-Father created the dwarves.

In their society, a special clerical order is in charge of seeking out these birth-rocks and bringing them to a safe place where they can insure their protection. The members of this secretive yet important order are called Seekers. From what I can gather, the Seekers are responsible for the survival of the race, and thus are undoubtedly the most important members of dwarven society.

When I left Kar'Duril, the royal council made me promise never to speak a word about what I had seen and understood. Out of respect for the dwarves and the loyal companion who had invited me to the dwarven underground city, my lips have always been sealed.

THE NOBLINGS

The elves are a truly fascinating people. They live longer lives than most other humanoid races, they have been around for millennia uncounted, and their culture is one of the richest and most diverse ever to grace the planet. Among the many elves I encountered, some were friendly beings who enjoyed the company of others and some were haughty creatures who believed they were superior to most; some were cheerful individuals whose passion for the art, nature, or even laughter was beyond anything imaginable, yet there were those who were stern and detached, whose passions and emotions they kept bottled up inside them.

There are several elven subcultures, many which have their own ancient and glorious histories. Like humans, elves come in many varieties. Individual elf characters are as distinct as

human beings. Their tastes, talents, and personalities range from a myriad as diverse as any other race. Amidst this plethora are many different groups sharing similar ideas or philosophies. Some have earned my full support and greatest respect, but others I have come to loath.

One such group calls itself the Noblings. A secretive sect regrouping elves from all over the globe, this order has been around for innumerable generations. Its members are known as the Noblings, and their goal is to reclaim what they believe is rightfully theirs: The world.

I crossed path several times with members of this fanatical order in the course of my numerous adventures. And each time I was appalled by their audacity, by their lack of scruples, and by their horrible cruelty. During my adventuring career, I probably learned more about the Noblings than any other group. Although I risk bearing their enmity by writing these lines, I share with you now the secrets of this ghastly order.

The Noblings believe the elves once ruled the world. Though other races gradually came into existence, they believe elves were the first humanoids created by the gods. In ancient times, they say, elves were the dominant species and governed the other races — a fact which may very well be true, as elven history is much more elaborate and ancient than men's. In their minds, elves are superior to other beings and should thrive to reclaim their birthright, which is the entire planet.

Although Noblings despise all non-elven races, they especially loath humans and half-elves. Their hatred of humans is based on the fact that they reproduce quickly and have evolved, in a relatively short time, into the dominant race of the world. The fact that the majority of human society care so little about the environment irritates most elves, but what truly unnerves the Noblings is that human civilization is constantly evolving. Year after year, humankind becomes stronger and more numerous. Month after month, human begins claim more territories, destroying forests and stepping all over what was once considered elven lands. Day after day, they are pushing back the elves further away.

What insults the Nobling even more is that many humans breed with elves. The prodigy of these unions are especially despised, for they remind the Noblings that their blood — elven blood — can be easily diluted. Not only do humans take over ancestral groves and claim lands which once belonged to elves, but they pollute a bloodline already on the decline. For a Nobling, a half-elf deserves nothing more than death. And so do most humans.

Surprisingly, the Noblings do not harbor serious resentment towards the orcs. In their version of history, the elves and orcs once lived in harmony. One of the most ancient races after the elves, the orcs learned a lot from the elven masters they once served. Though things have changed and the orcs are now a great menace to the elves, the Noblings view them as a potential ally in their war against mankind. Though most orcs loathe elves, they also scorn humans. And the Noblings hope they can use this hatred to turn the orcs into allies in their fight against mankind.

Other races are not as much the target of the Noblings' antipathy as humans and half-elves, but they do believe these other "lowly" beings are as much as a nuisance as the humans. Though they do not actively seek the destruction of the dwarves, the gnolls, and other important humanoid species as they do with humankind, the Noblings believe that one day these races will either kneel before them or fall.

The ultimate goal of the Noblings is to eradicate humans and their descendants — such as half-elves and half-dwarves — for the world. Once they have accomplished this goal, they can concentrate on the other races and ensure they take their rightful place as servants of the elves.

The Noblings realize their task is great, but they believe the elven god of holy war and retribution appointed it to them. In fact, many who led the Noblings are either clerics or fervently devoted followers of this deity, but not all of them follow the teachings of this elven god. When they are summoned to the secret meetings of their order, Noblings wear the fine silken blood silken red robes to signal they are followers of the god of retribution. The meetings take place at different times and never twice at the same place. When away from each other, the Noblings use magic to communicate.

The Nobling Order is well organized and difficult to pinpoint, mostly because its various cells work independently from one another and only a handful of members know the existence, location, and leaders of the other cells; and even then their knowledge is usually limited to a cell or two. A score of the ruling individuals, known as the Head of the Order, has access to privileged information such as who is part of the Noblings and where to find them. Most of these leaders are part of the elven nobility. If you ever stumble upon a group of elves dressed in blood-colored robes, your existence is forfeit — unless you are an elf, but even then your life might be at risk; for the Noblings do not tolerate dissent among their brothers, and anyone who oppose them is their enemy.

Though I am not at liberty to divulge any names here, let me mention that once I discovered this group and its agenda, I took it upon myself to inform the highest elven authorities, hoping they would put a stop to the Noblings ghastly menace. The authorities in question informed me that the Noblings were part of the darkest period of elven history, that no such order existed today, and that they were positive no elven cult was actively preparing to destroy of mankind. They nevertheless assured me they would look into the matter. To my knowledge, nothing has yet been done.

THE ORC-ELF WAR

There is so much animosity between the elves and the orcs that the question of the age-old hatred between the two races requires an answer. Why do elves despise orcs so much? Why do most of their rangers specialize in seeking out and killing orcs? Why do orcs especially relish destroying elven settlements? Why are the orcish tribes of the northland so eager to conquer elven territories? Though there are many theories on the subject, these two



races have been enemies for so long that the real answer is known only by a select few.

I am not an expert on elven history, but I am a scholar who enjoys solving enigmas. My research on the subject of the relations between elves and orcs led me to the discovery of a little-known volume titled “The Story of Varnamen of the Woodland and Erk’Mardakai True Heart,” which relate the story of a simple elven woodsman who fell in love with the daughter of the orc king.

The tale of Varnamen and Erk’Mardakai was once legendary and predates elven written history. The story, however, was ruled as ungodly by the elven monarchs of old and the ancient volume in which it appeared was banned, its copies burnt or otherwise destroyed. A weakened oral tradition prevented stories from being passed on from generation to generation thus, the legend which once inspired great love and romance was forgotten. The orcs, for their part, deemed the story unfit for their children and soon the name of Varnamen disappeared from their oral history. Today, very few orcs even remember the name Erk’Mardakai, and most of those who do remain unaware that the daughter of one of the most revered orcish kings fell in love with a lowly elf woodsman.

“The Story of Varnamen of the Woodland and Erk’Mardakai True Heart” reveals that in the old days, elves and orcs lived peacefully together. Though the orcs were less evolved than their elven neighbors, the two races found common ground in their fight against the countless mythical beasts haunting these ancient times. Moreover, the elves provided the more primitive orcs with great knowledge, revealing great technological discov-

eries as well as sharing their history and traditions. Though the orcs perhaps never truly appreciated elven laws, they did approve of their art, their crafts, their potent magic, and their solid steel. On the other hand, the orcs were excellent manual laborers and often traded foodstuff and raw materials, such as quarried stones and iron, with the elves, who benefited from such an agreement.

The privileged relations between the two races were solidified when the significance of other humanoid races rose. When such races stormed elven fortresses or delved too deeply into orc lands, the two races joined forces to drive back the armies of the would-be conquerors. The text is also filled with details on how the orcs and the elves appreciated their neighbors’ culture and, to some extent, even each other’s company. But what about the central story featured in the old tome? The tale of Varnamen and Erk’Mardakai?

According to the legend, Varnamen was a poor elf who earned a living foraging for food and hunting for pelts. One day, while he was exploring in a wood at the edge of orcish territory he stumbled upon the retinue of princess Erk’Mardakai, daughter of the great orc king Mardak. The princess had never met an elf outside of her father’s court and she was curious as to what a commoner such as Varnamen was thinking, about what was troubling the common elven folks. She invited the woodsman for dinner and the two shared many tales of their respective peoples. The evening dragged on, and Erk grew gradually more fascinated with the cunning elf. She asked him to remain with her retinue while she journeyed through elven lands. Varnamen accepted her invitation.

As the days wore on, the bonds of friendship between the princess and the commoner solidified. Though it did not take long for the two to fall in love, Varnamen knew that Erk's station would not permit her to marry a commoner. When her retinue arrived at their destination, at the elven capital, Varnamen bid her farewell and took his leave. He traveled back to the woods and, for several weeks, tried in vain to forget his infatuation with the orcish princess.

Fate, however, would have it otherwise. On her way back to her homeland, Princess Erk'Mardakai and her retinue journeyed close to where Varnamen lived. Once he was made aware of their passage, the woodsman followed the retinue to make sure the woman he loved reached her home safely. He avoided any contact, however, for fear the princess would be forced to reject his ever-blossoming love.

One night, Varnamen awoke to the cries of an angry chimera. The three-headed monsters of the time were not the mere lowly beasts we now consider them, but truly magnificent creatures able to hold their ground against any dragon. The woodsman quickly realized the chimera was attacking Erk and her followers, so he charged to the rescue. After a fateful combat in which most of the princess' guards were slain, Varnamen murdered the creature. It was then that Erk revealed her love for him. Varnamen knelt and asked for her hand, swearing never to leave her side again, and the princess readily accepted.

With the surviving members of her retinue, Erk and Varnamen journeyed to the orcish capital. News of the princess' pledge to an elven commoner traveled quickly throughout the kingdom. It also angered her father, who refused to bestow his daughter's hand to Varnamen. A few days after their arrival, the king ordered his elite guards to escort Varnamen out of his kingdom. As soon as the guards liberated him, the woodsman kept his promise to his love and, stealthily, returned to her. He helped Erk escape her father's fortress and they returned to his home, deep in the elven woods, where they were married.

King Mardak was furious, for he loved his daughter and could not bare her betrayal. He pursued her and caught up with the two at Varnamen's humble cottage. Erk confronted her father, but the old king did not heed her pleas. He was blinded by his rage and unable to see the love shared by the couple. Varnamen then told Mardak he would never leave his daughter's side. This enraged the king even more. Mardak charged Varnamen, but his daughter docked in front of her lover just at the king's axe fell down. Mardak slaughtered his own flesh and blood, and in the process severed the circlet she wore upon her head in two. Varnamen then attacked the king and killed him, but Mardak's men avenged his death. Varnamen did not live to mourn the loss of his new wife.

News of King Mardak's murderous rage reached to the four corners of the world. The elves were outraged at the king's action, and especially offended because his men had killed an elf. The orcs, on the other hand, argued that an elf had murdered their king.

War broke out.

A war that still rages on today, though none really understand what precipitated the aggression. Yet there is hope, for the book tells of the broken circlet Varnamen had given to Erk'Mardakai. According to the legend, if the two pieces of this artifact are found and brought back together, there will finally be peace between the two races. Whether this is true or not, however, I know not.

CLASS SECRETS

Paieous and I were enjoying a discussion of late. Well, I think I'm using the word enjoy flippantly, as I mean her no disrespect, but that woman's head is of a bad sort. She honestly tried to tell me that water and air were of the same ilk. I cannot understand her at times, but I can only imagine how difficult it is for her small mind to understand me. I shall remain patient with her, and guide her mind back to the real worldly.

Now. Where was I in my studies?

Editor's Note: In order to conserve space, the original abilities of these classes were NOT reprinted. It is highly recommended that you keep both this book and your *Player's Handbook* open when referring to these classes.

BARBARIAN OF THE FROZEN WASTELANDS

The barren wilderness of the far north is home to but a few species. Among those unfortunate few are the rugged human barbarians of the frozen wastelands. Living in the midst of the barren glacial plains, these tribal people are reclusive to the point of xenophobia. Despite their cruel and uncouth nature, I must admit I have grown to respect their abilities. Even I would not care to encounter one of these brutes in battle.

Few people are aware of the existence of the small clan of human barbarians thriving amidst the frozen wastelands of the northern steppes. In my youth, I had the unfortunate experience of meeting these savages when they stormed our campsite. I was lucky enough to survive the encounter, but my traveling companions did not fare as well. Years later, as I was searching for a great artifact believed to be buried in the far north I met one of these brutes. The meeting was a peaceful one, for the man was curious — if not fearful — of my magic, and I learned then that the people who live in the northern wastes were a smarter and wiser lot than I originally imagined.

Following our long exchange, I hired the barbarian as a guide, and with his help we were eventually able to uncover the item I was searching for. My time with him showed me there was more to these people than met the eye. For one thing, the barbarians of the frozen wastelands are as cunning as the white foxes found in the northland. They learned how to navigate the land, they developed methods to survive the harshest of environments, and — most of all — they have a fighting style that would shame most disciplined warriors.

In the northland kingdoms, the fierceness of these disquieting savages is legendary.

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Class Features

All of the following are class features of the barbarian of the frozen wastelands.

Northland Life (Ex): Due to the extreme nature of his native environment, the barbarian of the frozen wastelands is a tough survivor capable of thriving amidst the harshest of climates. At 1st level, he gains a +4 insight bonus to all Survival skill checks made in any cold environment.

At 5th level, the barbarian of the frozen wastelands' familiarity with his native land is so attuned that he gains a +2 insight bonus to all Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks made in cold terrain.

By the time he reaches 10th level, the barbarian learns how to move swiftly through his homeland while tracking. He can move at his normal speed while following tracks in any cold environment without taking the normal -5 penalty. Furthermore, he only takes a -10 penalty (instead of the normal -20) when moving at up to twice his normal speed while tracking in such terrain.

Northland Rage (Ex): Like most barbarians, the savages from the north can fly into a fit of rage a number of times per day. Their frenzy, however, is quieter and more controlled. Indeed, the men from the far north also learned to keep their voice and emotions in check during their outbursts.

While raging, a barbarian of the frozen wastelands gains extraordinary physical power and strength of will. In a rage, the barbarian gains a temporary +4 enhancement bonus to Strength as well as a +4 morale bonus to all Will saving throws. In addition, they do not suffer an AC penalty while enraged.

Additionally, the northland rage produces a fear effect. Any foe with fewer Hit Dice than the barbarian within 30 ft. of him must succeed at a Will save (DC 15 + barbarian's

level) or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. Those who have witnessed this rage before gain a +2 bonus to their Willpower saving throw. An opponent who successfully saves against the fear effect of the northland rage cannot be affected by the same barbarian's rage for a period of 24 hours.

A fit of rage lasts for 4 rounds plus the character's Constitution modifier. A barbarian may prematurely end his rage. At the end of the rage, he loses the rage modifiers and becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, unable to charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

A barbarian can fly into a fit of rage only once per encounter. At 1st level, he can use his rage once per day. At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, he can use it one additional time per day (up to a maximum of six times per day at 20th level). Entering a rage is a free action, but the barbarian must do so on his own initiative action.

Resist Cold (Ex): At 3rd level, the barbarian of the frozen wastelands become so accustomed to the harsh elements of his native homeland that he gains the extraordinary ability to shrug off some of the damage he receives from cold energy. Effectively, the barbarian gains energy resistance 3 against cold, meaning each time he is subjected to cold damage, whether from natural or magical source, this damage is reduced by 3 points before being applied to his hit points. The value of the cold resistance increases by 3 every three levels thereafter (6 points at 6th level, 9 points at 9th, and so on).

Greater Northland Rage (Ex): At 13th level, a barbarian of the frozen wastelands' rage bonus to Strength, as well as his morale bonus on Will saves, increases to +6.

Northland Stride (Ex): Starting at 15th level, a barbarian of the frozen wastelands may move through any sort of snowy and icy terrain at his normal speed and without

TABLE 1-1: THE BARBARIAN OF THE FROZEN WASTELANDS

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Illiteracy, northland life (survival), northland rage 1/day
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Uncanny dodge
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Resist cold 3
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Northland rage 2/day
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Improved uncanny dodge, northland life (stealth)
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Resist cold 6
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Damage reduction 1/—
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Northland rage 3/day
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Resist cold 9
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Northland life (swift tracker)
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Damage reduction 2/—
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Northland rage 4/day, resist cold 12
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Greater northland rage
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Indomitable will
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Resist cold 15
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	Damage reduction 3/—, northland rage 5/day
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Tireless rage
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Resist cold 18
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	Mighty northland rage
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Improved northland stride, northland rage 6/day

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taking any damage or suffering any other impairment. However, enchanted or magically manipulated frost, ice, and snow restricting movement affect him normally.

Mighty Northland Rage (Ex): At 19th level, a barbarian's bonuses to Strength during his rage, as well as his morale bonus on Will saves, increase to +8.

Improved Northland Stride (Ex): When he attains 20th level, the frozen waste barbarian can move upon any snowy or icy surface unhindered, regardless of whether it is natural or not.

BARD OF THE BLACK CROW

Most people enjoy bards. Why wouldn't they? They are charming, fun loving, and possess every sort of interesting information you can think of. Some are highly educated and, among their kind, even considered respected scholars. Others are wonderful performers who delight in entertaining crowds. Many, however, are charlatans and swindlers, so I would never turn my back on one of these smiling troubadours. There is, however, more to this profession than the average adventuring musician or poet.

I heard of a small cabal known as the Society of the Black Crow, which specializes in the art of dread rather than in charms and enchantments. Although I never met a character belonging to the Black Crow Society, tales of their frightful deeds abound. These eerie bards are also believed to delve in the dark necromantic arts, and many say their hearts are of the purest of evil. Whether these stories are true or not, I could not confirm, but their existence is documented.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bard of the Black Crow.

Demoralize (Su): A bard of the Black Crow with 3 or more ranks in a Perform skill can use songs or poetics to demoralize his enemies, instilling them with doubt and weakening their combat abilities. To be affected, a target must be able to hear the bard sing. The effect lasts for as long as the enemy hears the bard sing and for 5 rounds thereafter. While using demoralize, all foes within hearing range must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 15 + bard's level) or be affected by this ability. An affected creature receives a -1 morale penalty to attack rolls and armor class. At 8th level and every six bard of the Black Crow levels thereafter, this penalty increases by 1 (-2 at 8th, -3 at 14th, and -4 at 20th). Demoralize is a mind-affecting ability.

Induce Fear (Sp): A bard of the Black Crow with 3 or more ranks in a Perform skill can use his music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fearful of him. Each creature affected by this ability must be within 90 ft., able to see and hear the bard, and able to pay attention to him. The bard must also be able to see the creature. The distraction of nearby combat or other dangers prevents the ability from working. For every three levels a bard of the Black Crow attains beyond 1st, he can target one additional creature with a single use of this ability (two at 4th level, three at 7th, and so on).

To use this ability, the bard makes a Perform check. His check result is the DC for each creature's Will save against the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to instill fear in that creature again for a

TABLE 1-2: THE BARD OF THE BLACK CROW

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day						
						0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, demoralize -1, induce fear	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3		3	0	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Instill Doubt	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4		3	2	0	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4		3	3	1	—	—	—	—
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Confusion	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5		3	3	2	0	—	—	—
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Demoralize -2	3	3	3	1	—	—	—
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Spook	3	3	3	2	—	—	—
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7		3	3	3	2	0	—	—
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7		3	3	3	3	1	—	—
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Croak of fear	3	3	3	3	2	—	—
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8		3	3	3	3	2	0	—
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9	Demoralize -3	4	3	3	3	3	1	—
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	Inspire guile	4	4	3	3	3	2	—
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10		4	4	4	3	3	2	0
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10		4	4	4	4	3	3	1
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	Mass confusion	4	4	4	4	4	3	2
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11		4	4	4	4	4	4	3
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Demoralize -4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

period of 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature stops moving and stares at the object of his fear, taking no other action (other than perhaps moving away from the bard) for as long as the bard continues to play and concentrates (up to a maximum of 1 round per bard of the Black Crow level).

While the fear of the bard remains in effect, a creature does anything in its power to remain at least 30 ft. away from him. Furthermore, while concentrating its attention upon the bard of the Black Crow, the target takes a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat, such as an ally of the bard approaching the fearful creature, requires a new saving throw against a DC equal to a new Perform check result. Any obvious threats (such as someone drawing a weapon, casting a spell, or aiming a ranged weapon at the target) automatically breaks the effect. Induce fear is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Instill Doubt (Su): A bard of the Black Crow of 3rd level or higher and with 6 or more ranks in a Perform skill can use his music or poetics to hinder the awareness of a single creature. The target affected by the bard must be within 30 ft. and able to hear his voice. Furthermore, the bard of the Black Crow must be able to see the target. When this ability is used, the targeted creature begins to doubt himself and suffers a -1 morale penalty on all saving throws. Instill doubt is a mind affecting ability.

Confusion (Sp): A bard of the Black Crow of 6th level or higher with 9 ranks in a Perform skill can instill *confusion* (as per the spell of the same name) in a creature he has already induced with fear (see *induce fear* above). Using this ability does not break the bard of the Black Crow's concentration on the induce fear effect, nor does it allow the target a second saving throw against it. Throwing *confusion* into a foe's mind doesn't count against a bard of the Black

Crow's daily limit on bardic music performances. A Will saving throw (DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ bard's level + bard's Cha modifier) negates the effect. This ability affects only a single creature (but see *mass confusion*, below). *Confusion* is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Spook (Su): A bard of the Black Crow of 9th level or higher with 12 or more ranks in a Perform skill can use music or poetics to spook a single enemy, thus impairing his combat capability. For every three levels a bard attains beyond 9th, he can target one additional creature with a single use of this ability (two at 12th level, three at 15th, and four at 18th). To spook, a bard must sing and an enemy must be able to hear his song. The effect lasts for as long as the target hears the bard sing and for 5 rounds thereafter. A spooked creature must attempt a Will save (DC $15 +$ bard's level) or suffer a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls and damage, a -2 morale penalty to armor class, as well as a -4 morale penalty on all Will saves. Additionally, the spooked creature loses all temporary hit points he currently has, if any. Spook is a mind-affecting ability.

Croak of Fear (Sp): A bard of the Black Crow of 12th level or higher with 15 or more ranks in a Perform skill can use his voice to utter a dreadful croak, which creates an effect equivalent to the *fear* spell upon a single creature. The targeted creature is allowed a Will save to avoid the worst of the effect, but a successful save still results in the target being shaken for one round. The DC of the Will saving throw is equal to a Perform check result from the bard of the Black Crow. Using this ability requires a standard action, and it functions on a single target within 90 ft. of the bard.

Inspire Guile (Su): A bard of the Black Crow of 15th level or higher with 18 or more ranks in a Perform skill can use music or poetics to inspire tremendous cunning and deceitfulness in himself or a single willing ally within 30 ft. For every three bard levels the character attains beyond 15th, he can inspire guile in one additional creature. To inspire guile, a bard of the Black Crow must sing and his target must be able to hear his song for a full round. A creature inspired by this ability gains a $+4$ enhancement bonus his to Intelligence and Charisma scores. In addition to the normal benefit granted by these enhanced ability scores, the inspired creature gains an additional $+2$ insight bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks. The effect lasts for as long as the ally hears the bard sing and for up to 5 rounds thereafter. Inspire guile is a mind-affecting ability.

Mass Confusion (Sp): This ability functions like *confusion*, above, except that a bard of 18th level or higher with 21 or more ranks in a Perform skill can target the confusion effect simultaneously with any number of creatures already under the influence of his induce fear ability (see *induce fear* on previous page). *Mass confusion* is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

TABLE 1-3: BARD OF THE BLACK CROW SPELLS KNOWN

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1st	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	5	21	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	6	3	—	—	—	—	—
4th	6	3	21	—	—	—	—
5th	6	4	3	—	—	—	—
6th	6	4	3	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4	4	21	—	—	—
8th	6	4	4	3	—	—	—
9th	6	4	4	3	—	—	—
10th	6	4	4	4	21	—	—
11th	6	4	4	4	3	—	—
12th	6	4	4	4	3	—	—
13th	6	4	4	4	4	21	—
14th	6	4	4	4	4	3	—
15th	6	4	4	4	4	3	—
16th	6	5	4	4	4	4	21
17th	6	5	5	4	4	4	3
18th	6	5	5	5	4	4	3
19th	6	5	5	5	5	4	4
20th	6	5	5	5	5	5	4



CLERICS

Every religion has its own beliefs, its rituals, and its history. Every faith has its mythos, its intrinsic secrets, and its endemic clergy. There are countless cults. Some are major religions playing an active and concrete role in shaping of the world's history, while others are small cults standing in the shadow waiting to take their place in the sun. Among the various entities worshiped by mortals are those who bestow their most devoted followers with uniquely interesting divine powers. Although I am certain there are many god-given abilities I am unaware of — for there are so many different churches on the planet — I have nevertheless come across a few which truly intrigued — or even impressed — me.

Acts of Faith

Some truly devoted men and women of the cloth have the ability to channel the power granted to them by their god, creating inimitable supernatural effects. Although most clerics never in their lifetimes figure out how to manipulate such potent energies, the secret of molding the power granted to them by their deity is known by a select few. I once went on a grand adventure with a man known simply as Felan. A kindly man, Felan — a priest dedicated to the god of light — displayed abilities I never expected from a cleric. Evidently, there is more to these blind followers of the faith than meet the eye.

A cleric of at least 5th level can perform an act of faith. Once per day, he may choose to forgo his highest level domain spell in order to carry out an action that not only proves his devotion to a particular deity and its ethos, but that also truly displays the potency of the divine power granted him by his god. At 10th level and every five levels thereafter (15th and 20th level), the cleric gains access to more impressive acts of faiths. Although he may be able to choose from two, three, or even four different acts of faith after 10th level, the cleric may still use only one each day.

Acts of faith vary according to the cleric's alignment.

Chaotic Evil

A chaotic evil cleric of 5th level or higher can *animate dead*, per the spell, as an act of faith.

A 10th level, the chaotic evil cleric gains the ability to summon any chaotic evil creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 12th level, he could summon a babau demon since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster VI* spell. At 17th level, he could use this ability to summon a hezrou demon, per the *summon monster IX* spell by foregoing his 9th level domain spell.

At 15th level, the chaotic evil cleric can tap into the life essence of living beings within 30 ft. of him. When this act of faith is triggered, all living creatures within the area of effect must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + cleric's level + cleric's Wisdom modifier) or take 1d4 points of damage for every two cleric levels. The cleric gains the total amount of damage delivered as temporary hit points, which dissipate at a rate of 1 per minute. To use this ability, the cleric must spend 50 XP per living creature within the area of effect.

A 20th level chaotic evil cleric may instantly slay any living creature with a successful melee touch attack. The deadly effect of this act of faith remains active for up to a number of rounds equal to 1 plus the cleric's Wisdom modifier or as soon as it is discharged, whichever comes first. If the cleric is unable to hit a foe with a successful touch attack by the end of this time period, his act of faith is lost for the day. A living creature hit by this deadly attack dies immediately, with no saving throw allowed. The cleric must spend 100 XPs for each Hit Die of the creature he kills in this manner.

Chaotic Good

At 5th level, the chaotic good cleric gains the ability to walk on thin air, as per the *air walk* spell, but with the exception that the ability functions only on himself.

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At 10th level, the chaotic good cleric gains the ability to summon any chaotic good creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 11th level, he could summon a celestial dire lion since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster VI* spell. At 16th level, he could use this ability to summon a lillend or 1d3 djinni, per the *summon monster VIII* spell by foregoing his 8th level domain spell.

When he attains 15th level, the chaotic good cleric can cause greater harm to undead creatures around him. The use of this ability functions as per a turn undead attempt, except that the cleric affects twice as many undead as he would normally. Additionally, all undead creatures affected by his turn suffer 1 hit point of damage per cleric level. The use of this ability costs the cleric 50 XPs for every undead he affects in addition to those he would have normally turned.

The 20th level chaotic good cleric can attempt to kill any non-good creature with a successful melee touch attack. When this act of faith is triggered, it remains in effect for a number of rounds equal to 1 plus the cleric's Wisdom modifier, or as soon as it is discharged, whichever comes first. If the cleric is unable to hit a foe with a successful touch attack by the end of this time period, his act of faith is lost for the day. When this deadly ability is discharged by the cleric's touch attack, the target instantly disintegrates into dust, regardless of whether it is living or undead. No saving throw is allowed. The cleric must spend 100 XPs per Hit Die of the creature slain in this manner.

Chaotic Neutral

Beginning at 5th level, the chaotic neutral cleric can slow those around him, as per the spell of the same name.

At 10th level, the chaotic neutral cleric gains the ability to summon any chaotic or neutral creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 12th level, he could summon a chaos beast since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster VI* spell. At 13th level, he could use this ability to summon a 1d4+1 medium elementals, per the *summon monster VII* spell by foregoing his 7th level domain spell.

As an act of faith, the chaotic neutral cleric may gain tremendous resilience. In effect, his body gains a Hardness equaling half his caster level + his Wisdom modifier for a period of up to 1 hour per level. This ability requires the cleric to spend 50 XPs for every hour he keeps this act of faith in effect.

A 20th level chaotic neutral cleric can manipulate probabilities and, as an act of faith, he can change the result of any one roll of the die. Whenever the cleric misses an action due to a die roll (such as a failed attack roll, saving throw, or skill check), he can declare the action a success just as if he had taken 20, and thus ignoring the actual die

result. The use of this act of faith is a free action. He must spend 50 XP for every point separating his actual roll of the dice and 20; thus changing the result of a 5, which could be a failed save for instance, would cost the cleric 750 XPs.

Lawful Evil

Beginning at 5th level, a lawful evil cleric may trigger a fear effect once per day. This ability functions as per the spell of the same name at a caster level equal to the cleric's level.

At 10th level, the lawful evil cleric gains the ability to summon any lawful evil creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 12th level, he could summon a chain devil since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster VI* spell.

At 15th level, the lawful evil cleric can boost the effectiveness of undead under his control. This act of faith allows him to instill a +2 divine bonus to the attack and damage rolls of a number of undead. To determine the amount of undead affect, the cleric must attempt to command undead. The number of undead that would normally be affected by this action is the amount of undead benefiting from his act of faith. The use of this ability costs the cleric 50 XPs per undead affected and lasts for a number of minutes equal to his cleric level.

At 20th level, the lawful evil cleric can permanently destroy the spirit of a dead creature, thus preventing it from being raised. The use of this ability requires the expenditure of 100 XPs per Hit Dice of the creature affected. It takes a full round action for the cleric to permanently destroy the essence of a victim, and such a target must already be dead when he initiates this act of faith. The creature returns in the form of an undead creature based on the manner in which he died (madness creates an allip, hopelessness creates a ghost, fire creates a skeleton, and so on).

Lawful Good

At 5th level, a lawful good cleric may walk upon water, as per the water walk spell with the difference that this ability functions only for himself and lasts for a number of hours equal to his cleric level.

At 10th level, the lawful good cleric gains the ability to summon any lawful good creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 10th level, he could summon a celestial black bear since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster V* spell.

At 15th level, the lawful good cleric's act of faith allows him to cure an undead creature from its abominable state. To determine the highest level of undead the cleric can cure, he must attempt to turn undead. The maximum Hit

Dice he would normally affect with his turning attempt is the amount he can instantly cure. This is not considered the use of a Turning check, but is considered the use of a domain spell. The use of this ability costs the cleric 50 XPs per HD cured. Once cured, the body is turned to dust, the creature's soul is returned to the realm of the death, and any benign effects that were a result of the undead's presence are removed (haunted house becomes livable, etc.,).

At 20th level, the lawful good cleric can raise the dead regardless of the manner in which they were killed, or how long ago. The use of this ability requires the expenditure of 100 XPs per Hit Die of the creature brought back to life. If a lawful evil cleric has used his 20th level act of faith to destroy the creature, the expenditure is 250 XP per Hit Die.

Lawful Neutral

As an act of faith, the lawful neutral cleric of 5th level or higher can discern lies, as per the spell of the same name.

A 10th level, the lawful neutral cleric gains the ability to summon any lawful or neutral creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 12th level, he could summon a janni since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster* VI spell.

The 15th level lawful neutral cleric can channel positive energy more efficiently. When this act of faith is used, all cure spells cast thereafter restore twice as many hit points as usual. This ability remains in effect for up to 1 hour for every four cleric levels. For each enhanced cure spell boosted by this act of faith, the cleric must spend 50 XPs in addition to the regular spell slot.

At 20th level, the neutral cleric can gain a number of temporary hit points equal to twice his Wisdom modifier for every cleric level he has (thus a 20th level cleric with a Wisdom modifier of +4 would gain 160 temporary hit points) for as long as he does not attack or use harmful spells against anyone. The use of this act of faith costs 200 XPs for every point of Wisdom the cleric has.

Neutral Good

The 5th level neutral good cleric can produce mass quantities of food and water. This act of faith functions exactly as per the create food and water spell.

At 10th level, the neutral good cleric gains the ability to summon any neutral good creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 11th level, he could summon a celestial orca whale (so long as he was in an aquatic or watery environment) since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster* VI spell.

At 15th level, the neutral good cleric can remove the ailments of any or all creatures within 30 ft. of him. This act of faith functions as per the combined effects of a remove

blindness/deafness, remove curse, remove disease, remove fear, and remove paralysis spell and can affect a maximum of one creature per cleric level, all of which must be within 30 ft. of the cleric. The cleric must spend 50 XPs for each benefactor of this ability.

When he reaches 20th level, the neutral good cleric can free any creature from an imprisonment spell, as per the freedom spell. Alternately, he may imprison any evil creature as though using the imprisonment spell. The use of this act of faith requires the expenditure of 100 XPs for every Hit Dice of the freed or imprisoned creature.

Neutral Evil

The neutral evil cleric can, as an act of faith, create deeper darkness, as per the spell of the same name except that the cleric can see normally within this divine darkness.

A 10th level, the neutral evil cleric gains the ability to summon any neutral evil creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 14th level, he could summon a huge fiendish monstrous scorpion since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster* VII spell.

The neutral evil cleric of 15th level or higher can instill rage in all allies within 30 ft. of him. Allies affected by this act of faith gains a +4 morale bonus to Strength and Constitution as well as a +2 morale bonus on Will saving throws, but suffer a -2 morale penalty to AC. Up to one target per cleric level can be affected by this act of faith, but the cleric must spend 50 XPs for each enraged ally.

A 20th level neutral evil cleric gains the ability to slay any creature with 100 or fewer hit points. The creature targeted by the cleric is not allowed a saving throw to resist this effect, but it must be able to hear the cleric's voice and be within 90 ft. of him. The neutral evil cleric must spend 100 XPs for each Hit Dice of the creature slain with this act of faith.

'True' Neutral

At 5th level, the true neutral cleric's act of faith allows him to cause blindness/deafness or remove blindness/deafness, per the spell.

At 10th level, the neutral cleric gains the ability to summon any chaotic neutral, lawful neutral, neutral good, or neutral evil creature as the *summon monster* spell equal to the level of his highest domain spell. At 18th level, he could summon a leonal guardinal since he could trade his highest domain spell level for a *summon monster* IX spell.

The true neutral cleric of at least 15th level can turn a group of creatures invisible, as though casting the mass invisibility spell. Additionally, for as long as this effect remains active, all invisible allies gain the benefit of both a mage armor and a shield effects, as per the spells. The cleric must spend 50 XPs per creature affected by this act of faith.

SEASONAL DRUID

Druids are often regarded as the defenders of the wild, as the guardians of the fragile balance between the natural order and the civilized world. In some societies, druids are revered or elevated to the ranks of leaders of their church or state. In other regions, they are considered pariahs who oppose technological growth and, to some extent, the development of mankind. Inevitably, their ability to change their shape and assume the form of animals or beasts strikes fear into the hearts of most who would oppose them. The majority of druids are indeed able to alter their form, but there exist a secret cabal whose members specialize in the seasonal cycle and do not possess the ability to shape change.

Although still closely tied to wild animals, druids who specialize in the study and control of the seasons are more interested in the flora than the fauna. One of these seasonal druids once told me the cycle of the seasons is a constant even the gods could not hope to alter. This wise old man believed that the most important task he could endeavor was to ensure the planet continued to thrive during all the various times of years — even under the harshest conditions. My friend, as I came to call him, was a winter druid from this secretive cabal. His power was greatest in the winter, but waned during the summer months. He revealed to me some of the most important secrets of his order.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the seasonal druid.

Nature Sense (Ex): A seasonal druid gains a +2 insight bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks. During his preferred season, this bonus is augmented to +4. During his off season, however, it is reduced to +0. For example, an autumn druid would gain a +4 bonus to his Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks during the autumn, but this bonus would be reduced to +2 during the summer and winter months, and to +0 during the spring.

Preferred Season: There are four types of seasonal druids, and each type has a season of preference. During their season of choice, seasonal druids gain extra benefits to their spellcasting or other abilities. However, they might not be as well equipped during their “off season”. The four seasons are autumn, spring, summer, and winter. Summer and winter are opposed to one another, as are autumn and spring. In other words, a winter druid is at his best in winter and at its worse during the summer months, and vice versa.

The four types of seasonal druids, each of them part of the same cabal and as essential as their counterparts, are: the autumn druid, the spring druid, the summer druid, and the winter druid.



A true neutral cleric of 20th can imbue an object or location (up to a 10-ft. cube/level) with either antipathy or sympathy (cleric's choice) as per the spell of the same name. The chosen effect remains active for up to one week per cleric level, but the cleric must spend 100 XPs for the first week plus 50 XPs for each additional week he wants the power of this act of faith to remain in effect.

ALTERNATE RULE FOR TURNING

All attempts to turn undead deal damage instead of turning. Each undead that would have been turned by the cleric, instead suffer an amount of damage equal to the maximum level of undead affected by the turning. Thus, if a cleric's turning check determines he can turn undead of up to 5 Hit Dice with this attempt, the undead facing him suffers 5 hit points of damage instead. Turning damage is still rolled to see how many undead are affected by the cleric's faith.

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN

Druids of autumn are called wind bringers or breath shapers, and they specialize in manipulating air currents and electrical energies. Their favorite elemental is made of air and they have an in depth understanding of electricity. A wind bringer's off season is spring, and it is during this time his powers are at their weakest.

Druids of spring are called renewers or rebirth druids, and their area of expertise is the element of water. They have a superior understanding of water elementals and the energy of acid, which is in great part comprised of water. The off season of a renewer is autumn.

Druids of summer are called growth druids or, more rarely, fire masters. They are experts at shaping the energies associated with the element of fire. A growth druid is weakest during the winter, which is his off season.

Druids of winter are called white druids or masters of the dead season, and they command cold elements and energies. During the summer, a master of the dead season's powers are diminished.

Seasonal Spellcasting (Su): The seasonal druid's powers are enhanced during the three months making up his season of choice. Starting at 2nd level, all spells he casts during his preferred season are at a +2 caster level. Although this does not change the number of spells per day the druid can cast, it affects any numerical modifiers associated with these spells (such as range, number of targets, duration, the DC of the saving throw required, damage die, etc).

In campaigns where there are two seasons (summer and winter for instance) that are 6 months each or more, the druid cast spells as a +1 caster level.

Seasonal Stride (Ex): Also at 2nd level, a seasonal druid may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment all year round except during his off season. When in his season of choice, in addition of being able to move through such terrain normally, he may add 10 ft. to his base overland movement. It is important to note that thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

A summer druid, for instance would gain the benefit of this ability during the spring, summer, and autumn (nine months per year) and gain an additional +10 ft. to his overland movement speed during the three months of summer. However, he would lose the seasonal stride ability during the winter, when the summer druid's connection with nature is at its weakest.

Energy Resistance (Ex): Starting at 4th level, a seasonal druid gains the extraordinary ability to resist one specific type of energy. Since each season has a specific type of energy associated with it (*see preferred season, above*), a seasonal druid's energy resistance varies according to the type of druid he is: autumn druids are able to resist electricity, spring druids are well equipped to resist acid,

TABLE 1-4: THE SEASONAL DRUID

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day													
						0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th				
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Nature sense, preferred season, wild empathy	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Seasonal spellcasting, seasonal stride	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Trackless step	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Energy resistance 5	5	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Summon small elemental	5	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Seasonal fortitude (10)	5	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Summon medium elemental	6	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Energy resistance 10	6	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Seasonal vigor (+2), summon large elemental	6	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Endure elements	6	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Summon huge elemental	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Energy resistance 15, seasonal fortitude (20)	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Summon greater elemental	6	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Summon elemental 2/day	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Summon elder elemental, timeless body	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Energy resistance 20	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Summon elemental swarm	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Seasonal Fortitude (30), seasonal vigor (+4)	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Summon elemental 3/day	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	—	—	—	—
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Energy resistance (immunity), energy storm	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

summer druids gain fire resistance, and winter druids are well adapted to cold. In effect, the seasonal druid gains either electricity resistance 5, acid resistance 5, fire resistance 5, or cold resistance 5.

At 8th level and every four levels thereafter, the seasonal druid's resistance augments by 5 (10 at 8th level, 15 at 12th, 20 at 16th). When the druid reaches 20th level, he becomes totally immune to all forms of attacks from this specific type of energy and ignores all damage received from such energy sources.

Summon Elemental (Su): Once per day, a seasonal druid of 5th level or above can summon a small elemental of the type he is most familiar with. The elemental acts as his servant for a number of hours equal to one-fifth the druid's level plus his Charisma modifier (one hour minimum). At 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th, and 15th level, the elemental serving the druid becomes gradually more powerful, as shown in Table 1-4: The Seasonal Druid. When the seasonal druid reaches 14th level, he may use his summon elemental ability twice every day. When he becomes 19th level, he may use this supernatural ability three times each day.

An autumn druid can summon only air elementals with this ability, while the spring druid can only summon water elementals. The summer druid must summon fire elementals and the winter druid frost elementals*.

* A frost elemental is an extremely rare type of elemental. Made out of pure cold energy, frost elementals share the same basic statistics as the fire elementals with the exception that they deal cold damage rather than fire damage. Additionally, they possess the frostbite extraordinary ability, which functions as the fire elemental's burn ability, but the victim suffers from cold rather than fire damage. A victim who takes the time to care for the frostbite can follow the same rules detailed under the burn ability of the fire elemental, but instead of attempting to put out the flames he tries to diminish the effect of the frost upon his skin.

Seasonal Fortitude (Su): From 6th level and higher, the seasonal druid becomes even more intimately linked with his preferred season. He now knows how to tap into the mystical energies of his season of choice and gains extra temporary hit points during this time of year. These extra hit points are lost first and regenerate at a rate 1 per hour. At 6th level, the seasonal druid gains 10 extra temporary hit points. At 12th and 18th level, he gains the benefit of an addition 10 temporary hit points for the duration of the three months that make up his preferred season.

Seasonal Vigor (Su): At 9th level, the seasonal druid's relationship with his season of choice becomes more intimate and his ability to draw upon its energies improves. At 9th level, during the three months comprising his preferred season, the seasonal druids gains a +2 enhancement

bonus to both his Strength and Constitution scores. At 18th level, these bonuses are doubled. He loses this benefit as soon as his preferred season ends.

Endure Elements (Su): At 10th level, the seasonal druid gains the benefit of a permanent *endure element* spell. This supernatural ability is always in effect.

Summon Elemental Swarm (Su): This ability, gained at 17th level, improves the seasonal druid's ability to summon elemental servants. He may now summon a whole *elemental swarm*, as per the spell of the same name. The druid's summoning, however, is still restricted to the type of elemental determined by his season of choice (air, water, fire, or frost).

Energy Storm (Sp): Once per day, the 20th level seasonal druid can create a major energy storm. This spell-like ability functions as per the *fire storm* spell, but the type of damage delivered varies according to the druid's preferred season. An autumn druid creates an *electrical storm* that deals electricity damage; a spring druid fashions an *acid storm*, which delivers acid damage; a summer druid generates a *fire storm*, which works as per the spell; and the winter druid summons a *winter storm* dealing cold damage.

FIGHTER FEATS

In my educated opinion, fighters are an unfortunate necessity in our day and age — especially for the notorious or the rich. Among the dreg of the warrior classes are those rare individuals who have mastered the art of combat, knowing the difference from the haft and blade of their weapon.

How urbane.

To those exceptional few who have mastered their art of cutting fiber from muscle, I tip my hat.

Damage Reduction [Fighter]

You have the ability to shrug off some of the damage you receive with each blow.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Diehard, fighter level 6th.

Benefit: Each time you receive a wound from a weapon or natural attack, you reduce the amount by 1. Effectively, you gain damage reduction 1/—.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XP and 2 weeks in meditation in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the fighter level prerequisite.

Defensive Stance [Fighter]

When engaged in melee combat, you can take a special stance in order to improve your defenses.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Dex 13, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: In melee combat, you may adopt a special defensive stance allowing you to add half your Strength or Dexterity bonus, round down, to your AC (minimum of 1). Your Strength and Dexterity modifier for your own

melee attacks, however, is then reduced by half (and by one quarter for your off-hand weapon).

Special: You may only use defensive stance while fighting defensively. In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XPs and 2 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in training, does not suffer the Strength and Dexterity penalty to melee attacks.

Distracting Stance [Fighter]

When you fight in melee, your quick movement and unpredictable feints distract your opponents.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Combat Expertise, Improved Feint

Benefit: All opponents in threatened squares receive a -4 penalty to their Concentration checks as well as a -2 penalty to their Will saves when you use this fighting stance in combat.

Special: You may only use defensive stance while fighting defensively. In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 200 XPs and 2 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 400 XP and 4 weeks in training increases the penalty for Concentration checks to -8.

Greater Maiming Strike [Fighter]

You are now extremely adept at delivering crippling strikes that you deal greater damage when using such a maneuver in combat.

Prerequisites: Dex 17, Int 15, Maiming Strike, Improved Maiming Strike, Weapon Specialization (any), fighter level 16th.

Benefit: You no longer suffer any penalty to your attack rolls when attempting a maiming strike and you can add half of your Strength bonus (if any), round down, to the damage you deal to an ability score with such an attack. Also, if you deliver a critical hit with a maiming strike, it deals 1d8+1 points of temporary ability score damage.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 1000 XPs and 4 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 1,500 XP and 8 weeks in training, may increase the effective range of this feat to 120 ft. A fighter who spends 4,000 XP and 20 weeks in training, increases his critical hit damage with a maiming strike to 1d8+3.

Greater Damage Reduction [Fighter]

You are able to shrug off more damage easily.

Prerequisites: Con 17, Damage Reduction, Diehard, Improved Damage Reduction, fighter level 12th.

Benefit: Your damage reduction against weapons and natural attacks is now 3/—.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XP and 2 weeks in meditation in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the fighter level prerequisite. A fighter who spends 1,000 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the Constitution score prerequisite.

A fighter who spends 1,500 XP and 6 weeks in meditation may forgo the fighter level and Constitution score prerequisites.

Greater Stunning Strike [Fighter]

You are now an expert at dealing stunning strikes and may temporarily reduce your victim's health.

Prerequisites: Str 17, fighter level 12th, Improved Stunning Strike, Power Attack, Stunning Strike.

Benefit: When you successfully deliver a Stunning Strike, in addition to being stunned for 1d3+1 round, your victim must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC equal to the damage dealt) or lose one temporary point of Constitution.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 500 XPs and 3 weeks in training in order to learn this feat.

A fighter who spends 1,000 XP and 6 weeks in training increases the DC of the Fortitude saving throw by his Strength bonus. A fighter who spends 1,500 XP and 8 weeks

in training increases the temporary Constitution damage of a successful stunning strike to 1d3. A fighter who

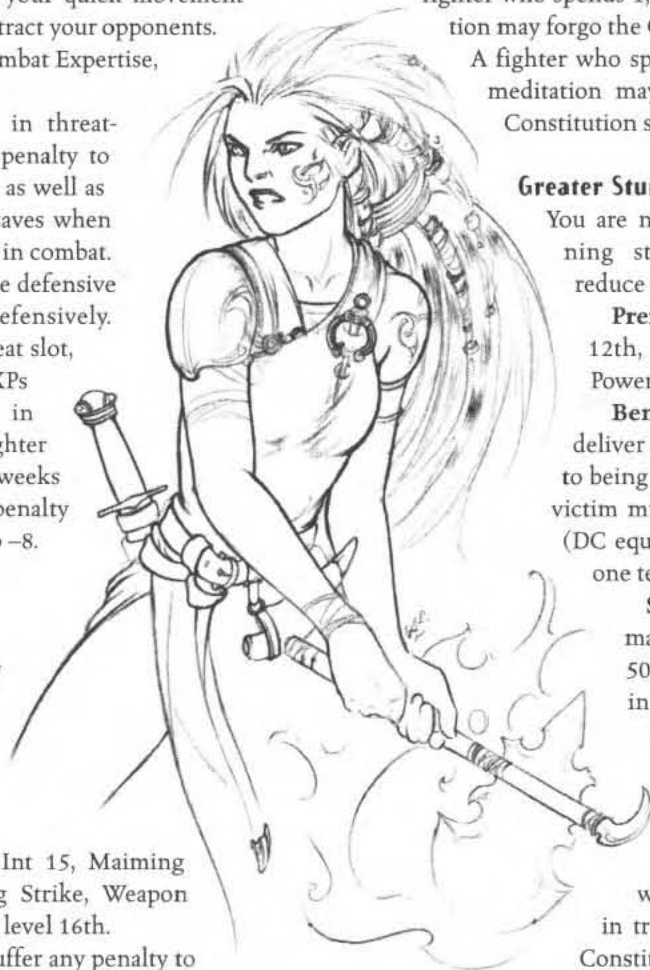
spends 3,500 XP and 12 weeks in training, increases the DC of the Fortitude saving throw by his Strength bonus and increases the temporary Constitution damage of a successful stunning strike to 1d3.

Improved Damage Reduction [Fighter]

You can ignore a greater amount of damage from each blow you receive.

Prerequisites: Con 15, Damage Reduction, Diehard, fighter level 9th.

Benefit: Your damage reduction improves to 2/— against weapons and natural attacks.



Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XP and 2 weeks in meditation in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the fighter level prerequisite. A fighter who spends 1,000 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the Constitution score prerequisite.

Improved Defensive Stance [Fighter]

Your ability to fight defensively improves and you are even more adept at using your superior strength to defend yourself more properly.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Str 13, Combat Expertise, Defensive Stance.

Benefit: In melee combat, you may adopt a special defensive stance allowing you to add your Strength or Dexterity bonus to your AC. Your Strength and Dexterity modifier for your own melee attacks, however, is then reduced by half (and by one quarter for your off-hand weapon).

Special: You may only use improved defensive stance while fighting defensively. In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XPs and 2 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in training, does not suffer the Strength and Dexterity penalty to melee attacks.

Improved Maiming Strike [Fighter]

Your ability to cripple your foes increases.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Int 13, Maiming Strike, Weapon Specialization (any), fighter level 12th.

Benefit: Your penalty to your maiming strike attack rolls is reduced to -2, but you can still only attempt a maiming strike once per round and only with a weapon in which you are specialized. Furthermore, the damage you deliver with any type of maiming strike (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) improves to 1d3 for simple weapons and 1d4 for martial and exotic weapons. Finally, critical hits delivered with a maiming strike deal 1d6+1 points of damage.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 750 XPs and 4 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 1,000 XP and 6 weeks in training, may increase the effective range of this feat to 90 ft. A fighter who spends 2,500 XP and 14 weeks in training, only suffers a -1 penalty to his attack roll when performing a maiming strike.

Improved Stunning Strike [Fighter]

You can now stun a foe for a longer period of time.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Power Attack, Stunning Strike, fighter level 8th.

Benefit: When you successfully deliver a Stunning Strike, your victim is now stunned for 1d3+1 rounds.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter

must spend 250 XPs and 2 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in training, increases the duration of the stun to 1d4+1 rounds.

Maiming Strike [Fighter]

You have the ability to strike an opponent's ability scores, rather than deal normal damage.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Int 13, Weapon Specialization (any), fighter level 8th.

Benefit: When you select this feat, choose an ability score: Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. When using a weapon with which you are specialized, whether in melee combat or using it at a range of no more than 30 ft., you can attempt a maiming strike that delivers Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution damage. As a full round action, you can declare a maiming strike. You suffer a -4 penalty to your attack roll and deal 1d2 temporary ability score damage with a simple weapon or 1d3 temporary ability score damage with a martial or exotic weapon in lieu of regular hit point damage. Increase the damage by 1 if you are using a two-handed weapon. This damage cannot be augmented by any other means. If you score a critical hit during a maiming strike, this target suffers 1d4+1 damage instead, regardless of the type of weapon you use.

Normal: You cannot normally deal damage to an ability score.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times. Each time, you must choose which ability score your maiming strike will affect: Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. Once you have taken this feat for each ability, you can no longer take this feat.

In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 500 XPs and 4 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 750 XP and 6 weeks in training, may increase the effective range of this feat to 60 ft. A fighter who spends 1,000 XP and 6 weeks in training, only suffers a -3 penalty to his attack roll when performing a maiming strike.

Multiple Stunning Strike [Fighter]

You may now attempt to stun your foes more frequently, and more than once in any given round.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Str 13, Power Attack, Stunning Strike, fighter level 9th.

Benefit: You may attempt a stunning attack once per day for every three levels you have attained, and no more than once per round.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 500 XPs and 3 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 1,500 XP and 8 weeks in training, may attempt a stunning attack once per day for every two levels, and still no more than once per round.

Stunning Strike [Fighter]

When you deal damage with a weapon you are proficient with, you can attempt to stun your victim.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Power Attack, fighter level 6th.

Benefit: You must declare that you are using this feat before you make your attack roll (thus, a failed attack roll ruins the attempt). Stunning Strike forces a foe damaged by your attack made with a weapon with which you are proficient to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + $\frac{1}{2}$ your fighter level + your Str modifier), in addition to dealing damage normally. A defender who fails this saving throw is stunned for 1 round (until just before your next action). A stunned character can't act, loses any Dexterity bonus to AC, and suffers a -2 penalty to AC.

You may attempt a stunning attack once per day for every four levels you have attained, and no more than once per round. Constructs, incorporeal creatures, oozes, plants, undead, and creatures immune to critical hits cannot be stunned.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XPs and 2 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in training, increases the DC of the Fortitude saving throw by 2.

Superior Maiming Strike [Fighter]

You may now cause permanent harm the victims of your maiming strike attacks.

Prerequisites: Dex 19, Int 15, Maiming Strike, Greater Maiming Strike, Improved Maiming Strike, Weapon Specialization (any), fighter level 20th.

Benefit: You may now add all your Strength modifier (if positive) to the ability score damage you deal with a maiming strike. Additionally, when you score a critical hit with a maiming strike, your target may be crippled for life. Every day, when he would normally regain 1 point of lost ability score, your victim must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your fighter level + your Strength modifier) or lose the point from the ability score permanently.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 1,500 XPs and 6 weeks in training in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 2,500 XP and 12 weeks in training, may increase the DC of the Fortitude saving throw by twice his Strength modifier. A fighter who spends 4,000 XP and 20 weeks in training, automatically deals at least one point of permanent ability score damage.

Superior Damage Reduction [Fighter]

You are so tough that you ignore a good portion of the damage dealt to you.

Prerequisites: Con 19, Damage Reduction, Diehard, Greater Damage Reduction, Improved Damage Reduction, fighter level 16th.

Benefit: Your damage reduction improves to 5/— against weapons and natural attacks.

Special: In addition to the normal feat slot, a fighter must spend 250 XP and 2 weeks in meditation in order to learn this feat. A fighter who spends 500 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the fighter level prerequisite. A fighter who spends 1,000 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may forgo the Constitution score prerequisite. A fighter who spends 1,500 XP and 6 weeks in meditation may forgo the fighter level and Constitution score prerequisites. A fighter who spends an additional 1,000 XP and 4 weeks in meditation may increase the damage reduction to 8/—.

MERCENARY RANGER OPTIONS

Among the various professions in the world, that of the mercenary has always been a mystery to me. Not only do I fail to understand why a person would willingly risk his life to serve a country, a lord, or a cause, but to do it exclusively for money is beyond my comprehension. For most mercenaries, loyalty to a great master, a powerful deity, or even a noble cause is not enough to motivate them. Nor are they much concerned with their own survival — otherwise why would they trade gold for their soul? In truth, I believe most men and women who become mercenaries are either extremely bored or totally insane.

There are exceptions, of course, and the mercenary ranger is one of them. Among all the people I have met during my long years of travel, those who called themselves mercenary rangers were among the most versatile, unpredictable, and resourceful. In fact, no two such individuals share the same abilities, which — to me at least — is in itself remarkable.

Note: The following options are designed to be used with the mercenary ranger class, as presented in AEG's *Mercenaries*. The first 10 options for this class were printed in that book. These new ranger options are intended to supplement them. Refer to *Mercenaries* for more details on the mercenary ranger class.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the mercenary ranger.

Ranger Option: A mercenary ranger can select one Ranger Option at 2nd level, another at 5th level, and every 3 levels thereafter. (8th, 11th, 14th, etc.). The options are listed below and unless otherwise stated, the same option may be chosen more than once.

Option 11: The mercenary ranger may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

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Option 12: From this point forward, the mercenary's HD improves to d12.

Option 13: The mercenary ranger can now move at his normal speed while following tracks without taking the normal -5 penalty. He takes only a -10 penalty (instead of the normal -20) when moving at up to twice normal speed while tracking.

Option 14: If the mercenary ranger already has the Alertness or Light Sleeper feat, he can take the new feat, Extremely Light Sleeper (see below).

Option 15: The mercenary ranger is good at setting ambushes. In such situations, the mercenary ranger and his allies receive a +2 competence bonus when determining awareness to see if the enemy perceives them.

Option 16: The mercenary ranger is such an expert that, once per day, he can choose a specific creature that is within one of his favored enemy category to become his quarry. To do so, he must study the target for a period of at least 10 minutes minus his Intelligence bonus (if any). Once this is done, the mercenary ranger gains a +2 bonus to his Favored Enemy score against this particular monster for a number of hours equal to 1 + his Intelligence bonus (if any).

Option 17: Once per day, the mercenary ranger can choose to *talk with animals*. This ability functions as the spell of the same name cast by a cleric of a level equal to his mercenary ranger level.

Option 18: The mercenary ranger can function normally without food and water for a period of 1 day for every two mercenary ranger levels. As long as he gets proper nourishment for a 48-hour period in between uses, the mercenary ranger can use this ability as often as he likes.

Option 19: The mercenary ranger can survive damage that might kill less hardy men. Massive damage for you is considered 50 + your Constitution score.

Option 20: The ranger is an opportunist. Once per round, he can make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. This attack counts as the mercenary ranger's attack of opportunity for that round. Even a mercenary ranger with the Combat Reflexes feat can't use the opportunist ability more than once per round.

NEW RANGER FEAT

Extremely Light Sleeper [Ranger]

When resting, you remain fully aware of your surrounding and can react quickly to potential danger.

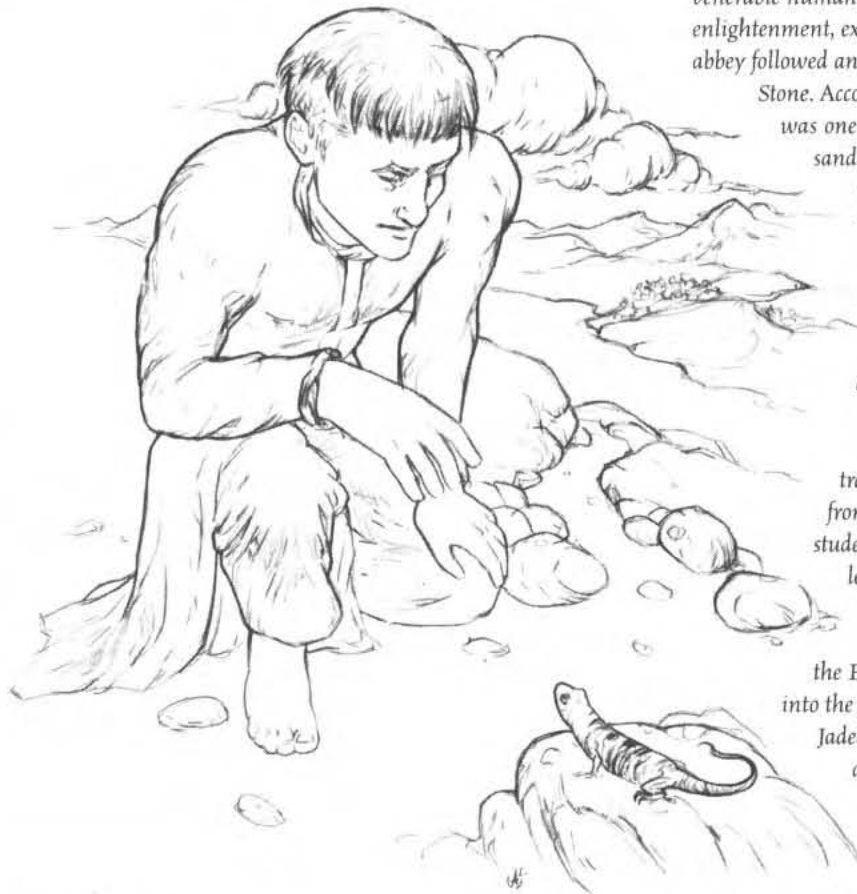
Prerequisite: Light Sleeper.

Benefit: You gain a +5 insight bonus to Listen checks while sleeping to determine if a noise has roused you.

Normal: Sleeping characters suffer a -10 circumstance penalty to Listen checks.

Special: This feat is especially designed for guerrillas, hunters, mercenary rangers, scouts, and similar character classes.





venerable human male who had reach what can only be called enlightenment, explained to me that the monks studying in his abbey followed an ancient method called the School of the Jaded Stone. According to my gracious host, the Jaded Stone way was one of four different philosophies that were thousands of years old. These schools, as they have come to be known, specialize in different techniques to sharpen the wit, discipline the body, and align the soul. According to Abbott Sargal, although each of these schools adopted a different philosophy, and thus their students were wholly different from one another, they all seek the same thing: intellectual, physical, and spiritual purity.

The four schools are proud of their ancient traditions. They exist in remote areas, far away from the civilized world, in order to allow their students to practice their rigorous techniques and learn the basics of their complex philosophies. The four schools are: The Breath of Wind, whose members are as fast as their namesake; the Fist of Fury, which encourages its monks to tap into the primeval essence at the core of their beings; the Jaded Stone, which believe purity can only be achieved through peace of mind; and the Sacred Chameleon, which teaches its students to hide their bodies, minds, and souls.

MONK SCHOOLS

Monks come in many different varieties. Some are dedicated to a single deity, some refuse to follow a particular faith. Some devote their lives to hone their bodies while others aspire to become spiritually enlightened. Most of those who join monasteries seek to align their mind, body, and spirit in the hopes of reaching a better understanding of humanoid kind as well as further their awareness of the world around them. To the layman, this kind of life-long ambition — which, for the greatest monks, often turns into unfathomable quest — is unthinkable, perhaps even ridiculous.

Although I understand the need to further one's knowledge — perhaps better than anyone — I find myself unable to make sense of the drive that pushes the elite of the monastic orders to seek this sort of enlightenment. Perhaps I am too much of an intellectual to comprehend why someone would push his body to such rigorous exercises; perhaps I am too set in my ways to understand the need to seek the peace of mind so many among them seek. Whatever their motivations, the monks who finally reach what many call "enlightenment" are truly admirable.

Among the various monastic orders in existence today, some have truly set themselves apart. I once had the privilege of visiting a secluded monastery in the far east — this place had a library so extensive it would make most imperial librarians salivate. During my stay at the monastery, Abbot Sargal, a

THE BREATH OF WIND SCHOOL MONK

The Breath of Wind School teaches that life is ephemeral, that the body is a weak shell through which one has a limited amount of time in which to express himself. Because of the fragility of the body and the limited life span granted to human beings, the monks who follow the ways of the Breath of Wind believe that in order to compensate for a short life, one must move quickly and act without hesitation. Because of this, the monks from this ancient school developed unique techniques allowing them to focus their minds to sharpen their wit, enhance their speed, and improve their prowess in unarmed combat.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Breath of Wind School monk.

AC Bonus (Ex): All monks are highly trained at dodging blows, but those who follow the path of the Breath of Wind are especially good at it. The monks of this school add their Wisdom bonus (if any) to their AC while unarmored and unencumbered. Furthermore, their superior speed allows them to gain a +1 bonus to AC at 3rd level. This bonus increases by +1 for every three monk levels thereafter, as indicated in Table 1-5: The Breath of Wind School Monk.

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Fast movement (Ex): The monks who study the ways of the Breath of Wind are faster than any of their counterparts. Beginning at 1st level, they gain an enhancement bonus to their speed while unarmored. This bonus increases as the monk acquires experience, as indicated in the table above. A monk in armor (even light armor) or carrying a medium or heavy load loses this extra speed.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 4th level, the monk of the Breath of Wind school gains the extraordinary ability retain his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. He loses this bonus if immobilized, however.

Lightning Reflexes: The Breath of Wind monk gains the benefit of the Lightning Reflex feat for free when he attains 5th level.

Whispering Wind (Sp): At 7th level, the monk of the Breath of Wind school learns how to communicate by shaping the air around him. He gains the ability to send messages as per the *whispering wind* spell cast by a sorcerer of a caster level equal to his monk level. He can use this spell-like ability once per day at 7th level, and one additional time every four levels thereafter (twice at 11th

level, three times at 15th, and four times every day at 19th level).

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): From 8th level and onwards, a monk who follows the way of the Breath of Wind can no longer be flanked; he is able to react to opponents on opposite sides of him as easily as if reacting to a single foe. This defense denies an attacker the sneak attack ability by flanking him, unless he has at least four more character levels than the monk.

Superior Flurry (Ex): A monk of the Breath of Wind is so fast that he gains the greater flurry ability (from the PHB) at 7th level, allowing him to take one extra attack at his highest attack bonus. At 13th level and again at 20th, he gains one such extra attack, as indicated in the table above.

Wind Walk (Sp): At 19th level, the Breath of Wind School monk learns how to alter the substance of his body into a cloud-like vapor (as the *gaseous form* spell) and move swiftly through the air. This ability functions as the *wind walk* spell cast by a druid of a level equal to his monk level. A Breath of Wind monk may use this spell-like ability once per day.

TABLE 1-5: THE BREATH OF WIND SCHOOL MONK

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus	Unarmed Damage*	AC Bonus	Unarmored Speed Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+0	+0	Fast movement, fury of blow, unarmed strike	-2/-2	1d6	+0	+10 ft.
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+0	Evasion	-1/-1	1d6	+0	+10 ft.
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+1	Still mind	+0/+0	1d6	+1	+20 ft.
4th	+3	+1	+1	+1	Ki strike (magic), slow fall 20 ft., Uncanny dodge	+1/+1	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
5th	+3	+1	+1	+1	Lightning Reflexes	+2/+2	1d8	+1	+30 ft.
6th	+4	+2	+2	+2	Slow fall 30 ft.	+3/+3	1d8	+1	+30 ft.
7th	+5	+2	+2	+2	Superior flurry, <i>whispering wind</i> 1/day	+4/+4/+4	1d8	+2	+40 ft.
8th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+2	Improved uncanny dodge, Slow fall 40 ft.	+5/+5/+5/+0	1d10	+2	+40 ft.
9th	+6/+1	+3	+3	+3	Improved evasion	+6/+6/+6/+1	1d10	+2	+50 ft.
10th	+7/+2	+3	+3	+3	Ki strike (lawful), slow fall 50 ft.	+7/+7/+7/+2	1d10	+3	+50 ft.
11th	+8/+3	+3	+3	+3	<i>Whispering wind</i> 2/day, slow fall 60 ft.	+8/+8/+8/+3	1d10	+3	+60 ft.
12th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+4	Abundant step,	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	+3	+60 ft.
13th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+4	Superior flurry	+9/+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	+4	+70 ft.
14th	+10/+5	+4	+4	+4	Slow fall 70 ft.	+10/+10/+10/+10/+5	2d6	+4	+70 ft.
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+5	Quivering palm, <i>whispering wind</i> 3/day	+11/+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	2d6	+4	+80 ft.
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	Ki strike (adamantine), slow fall 80 ft.	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	+5	+80 ft.
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	Timeless body	+12/+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	+5	+90 ft.
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	Slow fall 90 ft.	+13/+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	2d8	+5	+90 ft.
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	<i>Whispering wind</i> 4/day, <i>wind walk</i>	+14/+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	2d8	+6	+100 ft.
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+6	Superior flurry, perfect self, Slow fall any distance	+15/+15/+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	2d8	+6	+100 ft.

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THE CHARRED CHAMELEON SCHOOL MONK

The ways of the Charred Chameleon School are strange and the order accepts an even more limited amount of candidates than the other ancient traditions presented here. The monks from this school specialize in stealth and infiltration. Additionally, their training in the harsh desert climate has made many among them able to cope with extremely hot temperatures. Some are even known to walk bare footed across the fiery ashes of fires, totally uninjured. It is even believed their master once crossed a lake of molten lava.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Charred Chameleon School monk.

Endure Heat (Su): The monks of the Charred Chameleon learn to live comfortably in temperatures as hot as 140 degrees Fahrenheit without having to make Fortitude saves (as described in the DMG). This ability does not protect the monk from damage taken from fire or heated objects (such as firebrands or weapons affected by a *heat metal* spell).

Improved Stealth (Ex): At 2nd level, the monk of the Charred Chameleon improves his ability to move stealthily. He gains an insight bonus equal to his Wisdom bonus

(if any) to the skills Hide and Move Silently. Additionally, he gains an additional +2 insight bonus to these skills at 4th level and every four levels thereafter (+4 at 8th, +6 at 12th, +8 at 16th, and +10 at 20th).

Trap Sense (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, a student of the ways of the Charred Chameleon gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps. These bonuses rise by +1 every three monk levels thereafter (+2 at 6th level, +3 at 9th, and so on).

Resist Fire (Su): Beginning at 4th level, the monk of the Charred Chameleon School is able to focus his mind to allow his flesh to touch flames uninjured. He gains energy resistance 4 against fire, so each time he is subjected to fire damage, this damage is reduced by 4 points before being applied to his hit points. At 8th level and again at 12th level, the energy resistance against fire is enhanced by another +4 (8 points at 8th level and 12 points at 12th).

Unarmed Sneak Attack (Ex): A 5th level monk of the Charred Chameleon who catches an opponent unable to defend himself properly from his attack can use his unarmed strike to hit vital parts of his opponent's body to deliver more damage. This ability functions as the Rogue's sneak attack, except it can only be used with an unarmed

TABLE 1-6: THE CHARRED CHAMELEON SCHOOL MONK

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus	Unarmed Damage*	AC Bonus	Unarmored Speed Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Endure heat, Flurry of blows, unarmed strike	-2/-2	1d6	+0	+0 ft.
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Evasion, improved stealth (Wisdom bonus)	-1/-1	1d6	+0	+0 ft.
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Trap sense +1	+0/+0	1d6	+0	+10 ft.
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Improved stealth (+2), Ki strike (magic), Resist fire 4	+1/+1	1d8	+0	+10 ft.
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Unarmed sneak attack +1d6	+2/+2	1d8	+1	+10 ft.
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Trap sense +2	+3/+3	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Wholeness of body	+4/+4	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
8th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+2	Improved stealth (+4), Resist fire 8	+5/+5/+0	1d10	+1	+20 ft.
9th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+3	Trap sense +3, unarmed sneak attack +2d6	+6/+6/+1	1d10	+1	+30 ft.
10th	+7/+2	+7	+7	+3	Ki strike (lawful)	+7/+7/+2	1d10	+2	+30 ft.
11th	+8/+3	+7	+7	+3	Diamond body, greater flurry	+8/+8/+8/+3	1d10	+2	+30 ft.
12th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Improved stealth (+6), Resist fire 12, Trap sense +4	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	+2	+40 ft.
13th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Diamond soul, unarmed sneak attack +3d6	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	+2	+40 ft.
14th	+10/+5	+9	+9	+4	Hide in plain sight	+10/+10/+10/+5	2d6	+2	+40 ft.
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+5	Trap sense +5	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	2d6	+3	+50 ft.
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Improved stealth (+8), Protection from fire	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	+3	+50 ft.
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Timeless body, tongue of the sun and moon, unarmed sneak attack +4d6	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	+3	+50 ft.
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Trap sense +6	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	2d8	+3	+60 ft.
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Empty body	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	2d8	+3	+60 ft.
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Improved stealth (+10), Perfect self	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	2d10	+4	+60 ft.

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strike. At 5th level, the extra damage delivered is equal to 1d6, but the ability increases by 1d6 every four levels thereafter (+2d6 at 9th level, +3d6 at 13th, and +4d6 at 17th).

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): When he attains 14th level, a monk of the Charred Chameleon can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as he is within 10 ft. of any sort of shadow, the monk can hide himself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. However, he cannot hide in his own shadow.

Protection from Fire (Su): This supernatural ability, gained at 16th level, may be used once per day and functions as per the spell *protection from energy* cast by a cleric of the same level of the monk. The protection, however, is limited to a single type of energy (fire) and affects only the monk.

THE FIST OF FURY SCHOOL MONK

The students of the Fist of Fury School channel the negative energy of their souls into powerful fits of fury that improve their abilities in combat. This unique strange and chaotic-like technique makes the Fist of Fury adept a rarity, and most monastic orders view the rage engendered by way of the fist — as it is sometimes called — as a disgrace. For most monks, the teachings of the Fist of Fury School goes against everything they stand for, yet the followers of its way are as lawful and orderly as any monk I ever met. Somehow, the monk of the Fist manages to keep his rage in check.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the First of Fury School monk.

Expurgation (Su): The 1st level initiate of the First of Fury School learns how to focus all his negative emotions into a powerful blast of sonic energy. Once per day, the character can release this eerie energy from his body by uttering a loud and disturbing cry, thus releasing all which his gloomy, corrupt, and foul from his soul, mind, and body. The process of expurgating his dark emotions and tainted vitality can harm living beings around him. In order to complete the process, the monk must shout for one full round. The action of expurgating his emotions does not provoke an attack of opportunity, but if the monk is distracted during the round he must succeed at a Concentration check in order for this ability function; a distracted monk failing his Concentration check loses his expurgation ability for the day.

The monk loses his Dex bonus to AC while expurgation is active.

All living beings within 30 ft. of the monk and able to hear him — including his allies — must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 10 + monk's level + monk's Wisdom modifier) or take 2 points of negative energy damage for every monk level the character has. A victim who succeeds at this save still takes half of the damage. Any creature that has already saved against the monk's expurgation ability receives a +4 bonus to his Will save.

TABLE 1-7: THE FIST OF FURY SCHOOL MONK

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus	Unarmed Damage ²	AC Bonus	Unarmored Speed Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Expurgation, flurry of blows, unarmed strike	-2/-2	1d6	+0	+0 ft.
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Controlled frenzy 1/day	-1/-1	1d6	+0	+0 ft.
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Iron Will	+0/+0	1d6	+0	+10 ft.
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Ki strike (magic), slow fall 20 ft.	+1/+1	1d8	+0	+10 ft.
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Controlled frenzy 2/day, Purity of body	+2/+2	1d8	+1	+10 ft.
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Slow fall 30 ft.	+3/+3	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Focused Expurgation	+4/+4	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
8th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+2	Slow fall 40 ft.	+5/+5/+0	1d10	+1	+20 ft.
9th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+3	Controlled frenzy 3/day, greater controlled frenzy	+6/+6/+1	1d10	+1	+30 ft.
10th	+7/+2	+7	+7	+3	Stunning Expurgation, Slow fall 50 ft.	+7/+7/+2	1d10	+2	+30 ft.
11th	+8/+3	+7	+7	+3	Diamond body, greater flurry	+8/+8/+8/+3	1d10	+2	+30 ft.
12th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Abundant step, Slow fall 60 ft.	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	+2	+40 ft.
13th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Controlled frenzy 4/day	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	+2	+40 ft.
14th	+10/+5	+9	+9	+4	Greater Expurgation, Slow fall 70 ft.	+10/+10/+10/+5	2d6	+2	+40 ft.
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+5	Tireless controlled frenzy	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	2d6	+3	+50 ft.
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Slow fall 80 ft.	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	+3	+50 ft.
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Controlled frenzy 5/day, mighty controlled frenzy	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	+3	+50 ft.
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Slow fall 90 ft., Timeless body	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	2d8	+3	+60 ft.
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Lethal Expurgation	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	2d8	+3	+60 ft.
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Perfect self, slow fall any distance	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	2d10	+4	+60 ft.

Controlled Frenzy (Ex): Through the constant and rigorous exorcising of his inner demons, the monk who follows the ways of the Fist of Fury learns how to channel all his negative energy into a controlled fit of rage. Beginning at 2nd level, he gains the ability to enter a frenzied-like state, thus improving his combat capabilities.

A Fist of Fury monk can fly into a fit of restrained frenzy a certain number of times per day. In a frenzy, a monk temporarily gains a +2 bonus to Strength, a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, and one temporary hit point for every monk level he has. While in a frenzied state, a Fist of Fury disciple cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities requiring patience or concentration (such as expurgation). He cannot cast spells or activate magic items that require a command word, a spell trigger (such as a wand), or spell completion (such as a scroll) to function. He can use any feat he has except Combat Expertise, item creation feats, and metamagic feats.

A controlled frenzy lasts for a number of rounds equal to 4 + the character's Constitution modifier. A monk may end his controlled frenzy at any time. At the end of the frenzy, he loses the modifiers to Strength and Will saves as well as any remaining temporary hit points and becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter (unless he is a 15th level Fist of Fury monk, at which point this limitation no longer applies; see below).

A monk of the Fist of Fury school can become frenzy only once per encounter. At 2nd level he can use his controlled frenzy ability once per day. At 5th level and every four levels thereafter, he can use it one additional time per day (to a maximum of five times per day at 17th level). Entering a controlled frenzy takes no time itself, but a monk can do it only during his action, not in response to someone else's action.

Iron Will: A 3rd level monk of the Fist receives the Iron Will feat for free.

Focused Expurgation (Su): At 7th level, the Fist of Fury disciple may choose to concentrate the potent energy released by his expurgation ability to specific targets within 30 ft. of him. Instead of releasing an expurgating cry affecting all living beings around him, the monk can control the outburst of his dark energies upon up to 1 target for every three monk levels plus his Wisdom modifier (if positive). Like expurgation, this ability takes a full round to complete and, if distracted, the monk must succeed at a Concentration check or lose the expurgating ability for the day. Focused expurgation count towards the monk's daily limit of the expurgation ability use (once from 1st to 13th level and twice from 14th level and onward).

Greater Controlled Frenzy (Ex): At 9th level, a monk of the Fist's bonus to Strength and his morale bonus on Will saves increase to +4. Temporary hit points gained are now two for every Fist of Fury monk level of the character.

Stunning Expurgation (Su): When he attains 10th level, the monk becomes so adept at channeling his dark thoughts and emotions that in addition to dealing negative energy damage, he may also stun the victims of his expurgation outcry. Each time a living creature takes damage from the monk's purgation ability, it must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15 + the monk's Charisma modifier) or be stunned for a number of rounds equal to 1 + plus the monk's Charisma bonus (if any). Stunning expurgation automatically takes effect whenever the monk releases the potent energies through his expurgation ability.

Greater Expurgation (Su): At 14th level, the monk can use expurgation twice every day and the range of the ability doubles; he may now affect all living beings within 60 ft. of him.

Additionally, the monk may now cause more harm to a single target if he so chooses. When using focused expurgation, the Fist of Fury monk may concentrate all the vile energies upon a single living creature. The negative energy damage dealt to the victim doubles (four points of damage per monk level). A target that saves against this ability still takes two points of damage per monk level. This supernatural ability is usable once or twice per day and count towards the monk's two uses of his expurgation ability for the day.

Tireless Controlled Frenzy (Ex): From 15th level and onwards, a monk no longer becomes fatigued at the end of his controlled frenzy.

Mighty Controlled Frenzy (Ex): At 17th level, a monk's morale bonus on his Strength score and Will saves during his frenzy increase to +6. Furthermore, for the duration of his controlled frenzy, he now gains three temporary hit points for every monk of the Fist of Fury level he has attained.

Lethal Expurgation (Su): When he reaches 19th level, the monk of the Fist of Fury School has become a master of the art of expurgating his negative energies. When focusing his expurgation outburst against a single living being, he may now opt to attempt to slay it. Instead of taking negative energy damage, the selected target must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20 + the monk's Wisdom modifier) or die. If the saving throw is successful, the target is no longer in danger from that particular lethal expurgation attack, but it may still be affected by another one at a later time. This supernatural ability is usable once every 24 hours and count towards the monk's two uses per day of the expurgation ability.

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN

THE JADED STONE SCHOOL MONK

It is said that the Jaded Stone School exists since the beginning of time, but I doubt this is true. The school, however, seems to have been around for hundred, perhaps even thousands of years. Its philosophy is simple: To be as calm and relaxed as a stone, preferably one which has seen so many winters that it has become obviously jaded. I personally never understood the ways of the Jaded School monks, but those who follow this path become almost as resilient as their namesake.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Jaded Stone School monk.

Fist of Stone (Ex): The follower of the ways of the Jaded Stone quickly learns how to harness the potent energies flowing in his body and can harden certain parts of his flesh. Although the 1st level initiate's control over this power is limited, a monk of the Jaded Stone School gradually gains more discipline over his entire body, which eventually becomes a weapon as hard and lethal as adamantite.

At 1st level, the Jaded Stone monk can harden his fists, feet, knees, elbows, and other specific parts of his anatomy, which effectively become as hard as stone. When used in combat, these parts deliver extra damage. Initially, the monk gains a +1 circumstance bonus to damage (as indicated in the "Unarmored Damage" column of Table 1-8: The Jaded Stone School Monk). At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, this circumstance bonus increases by 1 (+2 at 4th level, +3 at 8th, +4 at 12th, and so on).

Body of Stone (Su): When he reaches 2nd level, the apprentice of the Jaded Stone School's ability to harden his flesh improves. Although he cannot actually turn his flesh into stone, his skin becomes hard and able to resist blows, cuts, stabs, and slashes. Effectively, the monk gains a hardness of 1. If, in any given day, this ability absorbs more damage than a number equal to 10 multiplied by the Jaded Stone monk level, the monk loses the benefit gained by this ability until he has had a chance to rest for 8 straight hours.

Spells and magic items, such as *shatter*, reduce the hardness by 1 until the monk has had time to rest.

At 7th, 12th, and 16th level, the Hardness of the monk's stone-like flesh improves by 1, as shown on Table 1-8: The Jaded Stone School Monk.

Toughness (Ex): Also at second level, the Jaded Stone monk gains Toughness as a bonus feat. He gains this feat again at 6th level and every four levels thereafter (10th, 14th, and 18th level).

Fast Movement (Ex): A monk who studies the ways of the Jaded Stone is not as fast as monks from most other orders, but he still gains an enhancement bonus to his speed as shown on Table 1-8: The Jaded Stone School Monk. A monk in armor or carrying a medium or heavy load loses this extra speed.

Improved Still Mind (Ex): At 8th level, the monk of the Jaded Stone School becomes even more adept at resisting spells and spell-like effects from the Enchantment school, gaining an additional +2 bonus to any saving throws made to resist such spells and effects (thus raising his save bonus from the still mind ability to +4).

TABLE 1-8: THE JADED STONE SCHOOL MONK

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus	Unarmed Damage*	AC Bonus	Unarmored Speed Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Fist of stone, flurry of blows, unarmed strike	-2/-2	1d6+1	+0	+0 ft.
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Body of stone (hardness 1), toughness	-1/-1	1d6+1	+0	+0 ft.
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Still mind	+0/+0	1d6+1	+0	+0 ft.
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Ki strike (magic)	+1/+1	1d8+2	+0	+0 ft.
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Fast movement, purity of body	+2/+2	1d8+2	+1	+10 ft.
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Toughness	+3/+3	1d8+2	+1	+10 ft.
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Body of stone (hardness 2), wholeness of body	+4/+4	1d8+2	+1	+10 ft.
8th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+2	Improved still mind	+5/+5/+0	1d10+3	+1	+10 ft.
9th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+3	Improved body of stone	+6/+6/+1	1d10+3	+1	+10 ft.
10th	+7/+2	+7	+7	+3	Ki strike (lawful), Toughness	+7/+7/+2	1d10+3	+2	+10 ft.
11th	+8/+3	+7	+7	+3	Diamond body, greater flurry	+8/+8/+8/+3	1d10+3	+2	+20 ft.
12th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Body of stone (hardness 3)	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6+4	+2	+20 ft.
13th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+4	Diamond soul, greater still mind	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6+4	+2	+20 ft.
14th	+10/+5	+9	+9	+4	Greater body of stone, Toughness	+10/+10/+10/+5	2d6+4	+2	+20 ft.
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+5	Quivering palm	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	2d6+4	+3	+20 ft.
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Body of stone (hardness 4)	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8+5	+3	+30 ft.
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Timeless body, tongue of the sun and moon	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8+5	+3	+30 ft.
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Toughness	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	2d8+5	+3	+30 ft.
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	True body of stone	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	2d8+5	+3	+30 ft.
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Perfect self	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	2d10+6	+4	+30 ft.

Improved Body of Stone (Su): By the time he reaches 9th level, the monk's control over his flesh is so great that he may no longer be affected by sneak attacks. Although he may still be caught flat-footed, the monk's flesh is so hard that his vital organs are much tougher to damage.

Greater Still Mind (Ex): At 13th level, the Jaded Stone School monk's ability to resist spells and spell-like effects from the Enchantment school becomes even more attuned. He now gains a +6 bonus to saving throws to resist Enchantment spells and spell-like effects.

Greater Body of Stone (Su): When he attains 14th level, the monk of the Jaded Stone School no longer suffers the effect of critical hits. Critical hits deal normal damage to him.

True Body of Stone (Su): Once per day, the 19th level may raise the Hardness of his body of stone, effectively increasing the Hardness of his body to 8. When triggered, this supernatural ability lasts for 1 hour plus one hour per point of Constitution modifier (if positive) the monk has.

PALADINS

Most paladins are described as pure-hearted, merciful, and generous men and women who chose to devote their lives to the pursuit of truth and justice. These holy warriors often uphold the law and dedicate their adventuring career to oppose evil, and thus are highly respected in good-aligned societies. Blessed by the will of their god, these self-righteous fighting-machines are a symbol of goodness and honor, but they are not alone.

Most other lawful churches have their own version — and indeed their own vision — of the perfect blessed warrior. These paragons of virtue are also preoccupied with upholding the law and maintaining order. Like their most common counterpart, they too obey a strict and outdated code of conduct, but to some of them "honor" is a relative term.

Although most people native to this kingdom would not recognize the authority of these other kinds of paladins, most other lawful societies would. And they would indeed do best to respect these men and women, for they are as ambitious and stubbornly dedicated as the good paladins that are so common in these parts.

THE EVIL PALADIN

Evil paladins, often called dark paladins, are commonplace in lawful evil societies. Completely dedicated to uphold the law — their lawful evil law — and oppose good, these champions of evil are proud, haughty, and cruel. Although many of them view themselves and the other men and women from their orders as the natural leaders of their respective countries, most dark paladins are extremely loyal to their superiors, whether they be church officials or the monarchy of their kingdom. Because dark paladins play an important role in their societies, most are selected among the ruling classes; thus many among them are of noble blood.

TABLE 1-9: THE EVIL PALADIN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Aura of evil, <i>detect good</i> , smite good 1/day	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Dark blessing, touch of evil	—	—	—	—
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Aura of despair, resist toxins	—	—	—	—
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Command undead	0	—	—	—
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	bestow curse 1/week, smite good 2/day	0	—	—	—
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Contagion 1/week	1	—	—	—
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2		1	—	—	—
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2		1	0	—	—
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Contagion 2/week	1	0	—	—
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Bestow curse 2/week, smite good 3/day	1	1	—	—
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3		1	1	0	—
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Contagion 3/week	1	1	1	—
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4		1	1	1	—
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4		2	1	1	0
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Bestow curse 3/week, contagion 4/week, smite good 4/day	2	1	1	0
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5		2	2	1	1
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5		2	2	2	1
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Contagion 5/week	3	2	—	1
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6		3	3	3	2
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Bestow curse 4/week, smite good 5/day	3	3	3	3

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the evil paladin.

Aura of Evil (Ex): The power of a dark paladin's aura of evil (see the *detect evil* spell) is equal to his paladin level.

Detect Good (Sp): An evil paladin can use *detect good* at will. This ability functions as the spell of the same name.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, a dark paladin may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per paladin level. If the dark paladin accidentally smites a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day. At 5th level, and at every five levels thereafter, the dark paladin may smite good one additional time per day, as indicated on Table 1-9: The Evil Paladin, to a maximum of five times per day at 20th level.

Dark Blessing (Su): At 2nd level, an evil paladin gains a profane bonus equal to his Charisma bonus (if any) on all saving throws.

Touch of Evil (Su): Also at 2nd level, the dark paladin with a Charisma score of 12 or higher can cause wounds by touch. Each day he can cause a total number of hit points of damage equal to his paladin level \times his Charisma bonus. A dark paladin may choose to divide the damage dealt by his supernatural touch among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using touch of evil requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The evil paladin decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching a living creature.

Alternatively, an evil paladin can use any or all of his allotment of points from his touch of evil supernatural ability to cure himself or undead.

Aura of Despair (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, the dark paladin radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 ft. of him to take a -2 morale penalty on all saving throws. This ability functions while the evil paladin is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Resist Toxins (Su): The 3rd level evil paladin receives further blessings from his god. He gains a $+4$ divine bonus to all saving throws made to resist poisons and other toxins, such as the ill effects caused by drinking too much potent wine or other intoxicating substances.

Command Undead (Su): At 4th level, the evil paladin gains the supernatural ability to command and rebuke undead. He may use this ability a number of times per day equal to $3 +$ his Charisma modifier. The dark paladin turns undead as a cleric of three levels lower would.

Bestow Curse (Sp): When attaining 5th level, an evil paladin can produce a *bestow curse* effect, as per the spell of the same name. This ability is usable once per week at 5th level, and one additional time per week for every five levels gained thereafter (twice per week at 10th level, three times at 15th, and four times at 20th).



Contagion (Sp): At 6th level, a dark paladin can produce a *contagion* effect, as the spell, once per week. He can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels gained thereafter (twice per week at 9th level, three times at 12th, and so forth).

Code of Conduct: A dark paladin must be of lawful evil alignment and loses all class abilities if he ever willingly commits an act of goodwill.

Additionally, a dark paladin's code requires that he respect legitimate authority and the age-old traditions of his religious order. The dark paladin acts with honor: He does not lie, never breaks the law, and always keeps his promises. He is not bound to help those in need, but occasionally does so if it serves his purpose (provided those he helps do not stray from the rules set by an authority recognized by the dark paladin). A dark paladin punishes those who harm or threaten his companions, his religion, or his superiors. And he does so without pity, mercy, or remorse.

Associates: While he may adventure with characters of any neutral or evil alignment, a dark paladin will never knowingly associate with good characters, nor will he continue an association with someone who consistently offends his moral code. A dark paladin may accept only henchmen, followers, or cohorts who are lawful evil.

The Evil Paladin's Spell List

Dark paladins choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level — *bane, cause fear, command, corrupt weapon**, *cure light wounds, curse water, detect poison, detect undead, doom, endure elements, hide from undead, inflict light wounds, magic weapon, protection from chaos/good, read magic.*

2nd Level — *bear's endurance, bull's strength, darkness, death knell, delay poison, eagle's splendor, owl's wisdom, resist energy, undetectable alignment.*

3rd Level — *blindness/deafness, contagion, cure moderate wounds, deeper darkness, discern lies, dispel magic, greater magic weapon, inflict moderate wounds, magic circle against chaos, magic circle against good, protection from elements.*

4th Level — *cure serious wounds, deathward, dispel chaos, dispel good, divine power, freedom of movement, inflict serious wounds, poison, unholy sword**.*

Corrupt Weapon

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: EPal 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Weapon touched

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This transmutation makes a weapon strike true against good foes. The weapon is treated as having a +1 enhancement bonus for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction of good creatures or striking good incorporeal creatures (though the spell doesn't grant an actual enhancement bonus). The weapon also becomes evil, which means it can bypass the damage reduction of certain creatures. (This effect overrides and suppresses any other alignment the weapon might have.) Individual arrows or bolts can be transmuted, but affected projectile weapons (such as bows) do not confer the benefit to the projectiles they shoot.

In addition, all critical hit rolls against good foes are automatically successful, so every threat is a critical hit. This last effect does not apply to any weapon that already has a magical effect related to critical hits, such as a keen weapon or a vorpal sword.

Unholy Sword

Evocation [Evil]

Level: EPal 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Melee weapon touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows you to channel holy power into your sword, or any other melee weapon you choose. The weapon acts as a +5 *unholy weapon* (+5 enhancement bonus on attack and damage rolls, extra 2d6 damage against good opponents). It also emits a *magic circle against good* effect (as the spell). If the *magic circle* ends, the sword creates a new one on your turn as a free action. The spell is automatically canceled 1 round after the weapon leaves your hand. You cannot have more than one *unholy sword* at a time.

If this spell is cast on a magic weapon, the powers of the spell supersede any that the weapon normally has, rendering the normal enhancement bonus and powers of the weapon inoperative for the duration of the spell. This spell is not cumulative with *corrupt weapon* or any other spell that might modify the weapon in any way.

THE NEUTRAL PALADIN

Neutral paladins are a rarity in most realms, and many doubt their existence. Unlike the good paladin, who is obsessed with opposing evil, and the dark paladin, whose main concern is to destroy all that is good, the neutral paladin seeks only true justice. To him, law and order are the most important tenets of society, and he commits himself entirely to maintaining the peace and justice that can only be obtained through the rigorous exercise of the law.

A neutral paladin is a seeker of truth and justice. He is not blinded by the moral or ethical quandaries of the good paladin. He is not absorbed in the grand ambitions of his church or king, like most dark paladins, nor does he seek to further his personal wealth, glory, or power. Because of this, the neutral paladin is often referred to as a "true paladin" and most lawful societies would do well to have them act as judge or jury.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the neutral paladin.

Aura of Law (Ex): The power of a true paladin's aura of law (see the *detect law* spell) is equal to his paladin level.

Detect Chaos (Sp): At will, a neutral paladin can use *detect chaos*, as the spell of the same name.

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Smite Chaos (Su): Once per day, a neutral paladin may attempt to smite chaos with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per paladin level. If the paladin accidentally smites a creature that is not chaotic, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day. At 5th level, and at every five levels thereafter, the true paladin may smite chaos one additional time per day, as indicated on Table 1-10: The Neutral Paladin, to a maximum of five times per day at 20th level.

Divine Blessing (Su): At 2nd level, the neutral paladin gains a divine bonus on all saving throws equal to his Charisma bonus (if any).

Lay on Hands (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, a neutral paladin with a Charisma score of 12 or higher can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can heal a total number of hit points of damage equal to his paladin level \times his Charisma bonus. A paladin may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action.

Alternatively, a true paladin can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this fashion requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The paladin decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Aura of Authority (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, the neutral paladin gains an additional +2 divine bonus to all

Charisma-based skill checks made to convince or influence NPC characters. Furthermore, when determining the initial attitude of all lawful NPCs towards him, the true paladin adds +4 to his Diplomacy check.

Divine Courage (Ex): Also at 3rd level, a neutral paladin is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Additionally, the true paladin gains a +4 divine bonus to all saving throws made to resist the special abilities of undead and chaotic outsiders.

Turn Outsiders (Su): When a true paladin reaches 4th level, he gains the supernatural ability to turn chaotic, evil, or good outsiders. Turn outsiders functions as the cleric's ability to turn undead, with the difference that the neutral paladin can only affect outsiders that are at least partially chaotic, evil, or good. Unlike clerics, good paladins, and dark paladins, the neutral paladin is unable to affect undead; but he has the power to turn outsiders (with the exception of lawful neutral or true neutral outsiders). A true paladin may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. He turns chaotic, evil, or good outsiders as a cleric of three levels lower would turn undead.

Remove Paralysis (Sp): The 5th level true paladin can produce a *remove paralysis* effect, which works as the spell of the same name. Initially, he can only use this ability once every week. At 8th level, he can use *remove paralysis* one additional time per week, and then one additional time per week for every three levels gained thereafter (three times per week at 11th, four times at 14th, and so forth).

TABLE 1-10: THE NEUTRAL PALADIN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Aura of law, <i>detect chaos</i> , smite chaos	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Divine blessing, lay on hands	—	—	—	—
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Aura of authority, divine courage	—	—	—	—
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Turn outsiders	0	—	—	—
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Smite chaos 2/day, <i>remove paralysis</i> 1/week	0	—	—	—
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	<i>Remove curse</i> 1/week	1	—	—	—
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2		1	—	—	—
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	<i>Remove paralysis</i> 2/week	1	0	—	—
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	<i>Remove curse</i> 2/week	1	0	—	—
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Smite chaos 3/day	1	1	—	—
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	<i>Remove paralysis</i> 3/week	1	1	0	—
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	<i>Remove curse</i> 3/week	1	1	1	—
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4		1	1	1	—
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	<i>Remove paralysis</i> 4/week	2	1	1	0
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	<i>Remove curse</i> 4/week, smite chaos 4/day	2	1	1	0
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5		2	2	1	1
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	<i>Remove paralysis</i> 5/week	2	2	2	1
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	<i>Remove curse</i> 5/week	3	2	2	1
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6		3	3	3	2
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	<i>Remove paralysis</i> 6/week, smite chaos 5/day	3	3	3	3

Remove Curse (Sp): At 6th level, a true paladin can produce a *remove curse* effect, as the spell of the same, up to once every week. He can use this ability one additional time per week for every three levels after 6th (twice per week at 9th, three times at 12th, and so forth).

Code of Conduct: A true paladin must be of lawful neutral alignment and loses all class abilities if he ever willingly acts in an unlawful manner.

Additionally, a neutral paladin's code requires that he respect legitimate authority, act with honor (doesn't lie, doesn't cheat, doesn't use poison, and so forth), help those in need (provided they do not serve an unlawful cause or master), and punish those who disrespect the law or threaten societal order.

Associates: While he may adventure with characters of any alignment, a true paladin will never knowingly associate with characters that commit unlawful acts, nor will he continue an association with someone who consistently offends her code of behavior. A true paladin may accept only henchmen, followers, or cohorts who are lawful neutral.

The Neutral Paladin's Spell List

True paladins choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level — *bleed*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *detect poison*, *detect undead*, *divine favor*, *endure elements*, *hide from undead*, *just weapon**, *lesser restoration*, *magic weapon*, *protection from chaos/evil/good*, *read magic*, *remove fear*, *shield of faith*.

2nd Level — *bull's strength*, *delay poison*, *eagle's splendor*, *owl's wisdom*, *resist energy*, *shield other*, *sanctuary*, *undetected alignment*, *zone of truth*.

3rd Level — *cure moderate wounds*, *discern lies*, *dispel magic*, *grear magic weapon*, *magic circle against chaos*, *magic circle against evil*, *magic circle against good*, *magic vestment*, *protection from elements*, *remove blindness/deafness*, *remove disease*.

4th Level — *break enchantment*, *cure serious wounds*, *deathward*, *dispel chaos*, *divine power*, *mark of justice*, *righteous sword***, *restoration*, *sending*.

Just Weapon

Transmutation [Law]

Level: NPal 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Weapon touched

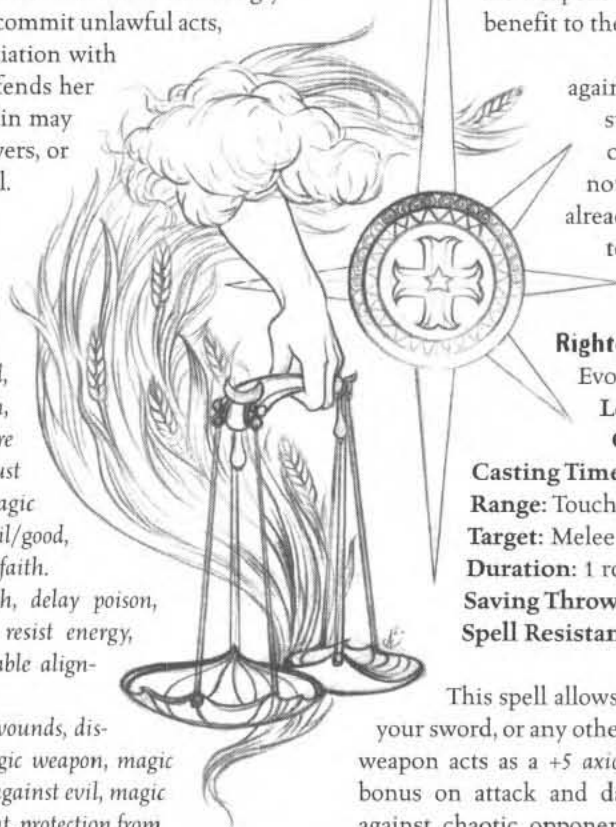
Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This transmutation makes a weapon strike true against chaotic foes. The weapon is treated as having a +1 enhancement bonus for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction of chaotic creatures or striking chaotic incorporeal creatures (though the spell doesn't grant an actual enhancement bonus). The weapon also becomes lawful, which means it can bypass the damage reduction of certain creatures. (This effect overrides and suppresses any other alignment the weapon might have.) Individual arrows or bolts can be transmuted, but affected projectile weapons (such as bows) do not confer the benefit to the projectiles they shoot.

In addition, all critical hit rolls against chaotic foes are automatically successful, so every threat is a critical hit. This last effect does not apply to any weapon that already has a magical effect related to critical hits, such as a keen weapon or a vorpal sword.



Righteous Sword

Evocation [Law]

Level: NPal 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Melee weapon touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows you to channel holy power into your sword, or any other melee weapon you choose. The weapon acts as a +5 *axiomatic weapon* (+5 enhancement bonus on attack and damage rolls, extra 2d6 damage against chaotic opponents). It also emits a *magic circle against chaos* effect (as the spell). If the *magic circle* ends, the sword creates a new one on your turn as a free action. The spell is automatically canceled 1 round after the weapon leaves your hand. You cannot have more than one *righteous sword* at a time.

If this spell is cast on a magic weapon, the powers of the spell supersede any that the weapon normally has, rendering the normal enhancement bonus and powers of the weapon inoperative for the duration of the spell. This spell is not cumulative with *just weapon* or any other spell that might modify the weapon in any way.

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN

ROGUE OF THE WHISPERING BLADES

The *Whispering Blades* of Atrilik. The name means nothing to most people, except perhaps the vague notion that Atrilik is a place — a city, in fact — deep in the southern lands. To the inhabitants of Atrilik — and indeed to those who live nearby or trade with the remote city — the *Whispering Blades* are legendary. In fact, the Order of the *Whispering Blades* is so secretive that most believe its existence is indeed only a myth. I know better.

Truth be told, one of their members almost stole my last breath. His unscrupulous — and I dare say unprovoked — attack failed, but had it not been for my own cleverness and vigilance the murderer would undoubtedly have succeeded. Like most who call themselves rogues, this man had an infuriating nonchalance about him, but one look in his devilish eyes told me his carefree attitude was only a façade. The man was not a simple thief, nor was this attempt at taking a life his first. There was cunning in his probing eyes, and there was method to his lethal combat style.

I dare say my meeting with a member of the Order of *Whispering Blades* left a sour taste in my mouth. And even though I am a capable magic user and a fierce opponent in battle, I do not look forward to the day when I will have to confront one of their kind again. But this day is bound to come sooner or later, for it is said that the *Whispering Blades* always avenge their fallen brothers.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d6.

Class Skills

The rogue of the *Whispering Blades*' class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str),

Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the rogue of the *Whispering Blades*.

Crippling Attack (Ex): If a rogue of the Order of the *Whispering Blades* catches an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from his attack, he can strike a vital spot in his anatomy, thus delivering a crippling strike.

Any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the rogue of the *Whispering Blades* flanks his target, he deals extra damage to his victim's Strength score in addition to the damage he would normally deal. This extra ability damage, dealt to the Strength score of the victim, is temporary and is 1 point at 1st level, increasing every two levels thereafter.

This damage cannot be modified by Strength or magic. Should the rogue score a critical hit with a crippling attack, this extra ability damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can count as crippling attacks only if the target is within 30 ft. However, the *Whispering Blade* rogue cannot use a weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a crippling attack, not even with the usual –4 penalty.

A rogue of the *Whispering Blades* can attack only living creatures with discernible anatomies when using a crippling attack — undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and

TABLE 1–11: THE ROGUE OF THE WHISPERING BLADES

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Crippling attack +1, trapfinding
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Conceal blade, evasion
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Crippling attack +1d2
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Uncanny dodge
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Crippling attack +1d3
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Quick Draw
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Conceal blade, crippling attack +1d4
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2	Improved uncanny dodge
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3	Crippling attack +1d6
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3	Rogue option
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+3	Crippling attack +1d8
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Rogue option
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Crippling attack +1d10
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+4	Rogue option
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+5	Crippling attack +1d12
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Rogue option
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Crippling attack +2d8
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	Rogue option
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	Fatal crippling attack, crippling attack +2d10
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	Rogue option

incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to crippling attacks. The rogue must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A rogue of the Whispering Blades cannot attempt a crippling attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

If the character also has the sneak attack ability (in addition to the crippling attack), the additional damage from both attacks stack.

Conceal Blade (Ex): Early in his training, the rogue of the Whispering Blade learns how to conceal small weapons upon his body. At 2nd level, he receives a +5 competence bonus to any Hide check made to conceal a small or tiny weapon upon his person. At 7th level, this bonus increases to +10.

Quick Draw (Ex): At 6th level, the rogue of the Whispering Blades gains the Quick Draw feat for free, but only in regards to Small or Tiny weapons.

Rogue Option: A rogue of the Order of the Whispering Blades can select one rogue option at 10th level, and every two levels thereafter. The options are listed below and unless otherwise stated the same option may be chosen more than once.

Option 1: Bonus Feat: The Orders of the Whispering Blades are adept melee combatants and their members are trained in a variety of fighting styles. The rogue may choose one feat from the list below. He may take this option more than once, however, each time he must select a new feat from the list.

The rogue of the Whispering Blades must choose from the following list of bonus feats: Acrobatics, Agile, Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting (provided the character can cast spells; see rogue options, below), Combat Expertise (Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Whirlwind Attack), Combat Reflexes, Deft Hands, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting (Two-Weapon Defense, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Greater Weapon Focus).

Option 2: Alternate Crippling Attack (Dexterity) (Ex): When delivering a successful crippling attack, the rogue of the Whispering Blades may now choose to deal Dexterity damage instead of Strength damage.

Option 3: Alternate Crippling Attack (Constitution) (Ex): When delivering a successful crippling attack, the rogue of the Whispering Blades may now choose to deal Constitution damage instead of Strength damage.

Option 4: Improved Crippling Attack (Ex): An opponent damaged by one of the rogue's crippling attacks takes an additional +2 points of Strength damage. If the rogue of the Whispering Blades also has one (or both) of the Alternate Crippling Attack options, this extra damage can be dealt to either Dexterity or Constitution.

Option 5: Slippery Mind (Ex): This ability represents the rogue of the Whispering Blades' ability to wriggle free from magical effects that would otherwise control or compel him. If a rogue with slippery mind is affected by an enchantment spell or effect and fails his saving throw, he can attempt it again 1 round later at the same DC. He gets only this one extra chance to succeed on his saving throw.

Option 6: Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): A rogue of the Whispering Blades must have at least 12 ranks in the Hide skill before he can take this ability. Hide in plain sight allows him to use the Hide skill even while being observed, as long as he is within 10 ft. of any sort of shadow.

Option 7: Improved Evasion (Ex): This ability works like evasion, except that while the rogue of the Whispering Blades takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks that would normally deal half damage, and he takes only half damage on a failed save (instead of full damage). A helpless rogue of the Whispering Blades does not gain the benefit of improved evasion.

Option 8: Spell-like Ability (Sp): A rogue of the Whispering Blades must have an Intelligence score of at least 12 in order to select this option. When choosing this option, he must select one of the following spell-like ability: *Blur*, *cat's grace*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *false life*, *fog cloud*, *fox's cunning*, or *spider climb*. Every time he chooses this option, a rogue of the Whispering Blades must select a new spell-like ability. The selected spell-like ability can be used once a day and function as the spell of the same name as cast by a wizard of half the rogue of the Whispering Blades level.

Fatal Crippling Attack (Ex): When he attains 19th level, the rogue of the Whispering Blades' crippling attack becomes even more lethal. In addition to the normal ability damage dealt to the victim and the regular weapon damage, whenever the target of the rogue's crippling attack suffers a critical hit, must also succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20 + the rogue's Intelligence modifier) or die.

SORCERER AND WIZARD

I have always felt that the elementalists — those arcane spellcasters who choose to specialize in a single element — were too focused, that their spell progression was too rigid, and that inevitably they had a disadvantage over other magic users. What I had not realized was that the spells of their chosen element are more varied than I had originally believed.

Note: The following rules are ment to be used with the elemental class presented in AEG's *Magic* sourcebook. In addition to the elemental spells an elemental can prepare over and above his normal allotment of spells per day, as presented in *Magic*, the elemental may now also choose spells from the following lists (in addition to the original elemental spell lists presented in *Magic*):

Elementalist Options

Level Air Elemental Spell

1	Feather fall
2	Gust of wind
3	Wind wall
4	Call lightning storm
5	Cloudkill
6	Acid fog
7	Wind walk
8	Greater shout
9	Storm of vengeance

Level Earth Elemental Spell

1	Endure elements
2	Bear's endurance
3	Meld into stone
4	Stone shape
5	Transmute rock to mud/transmute mud to rock
6	Move earth
7	Phase door
8	Earthquake
9	Elemental swarm (earth elementals only)

Level Fire Elemental Spell

1	Produce flames
2	Pyrotechnics
3	Flame arrow
4	Fire shield
5	Fire seeds
6	Flame strike
7	Sunbeam
8	Sunburst
9	Meteor swarm

Level Water Elemental Spell

1	Endure elements
2	Chill metal
3	Water walk
4	Wall of ice
5	Blight
6	Acid fog
7	Monster summoning VII (huge water elemental)
8	Polar ray
9	Icicle swarm*

* *Icicle swarm* functions like the *meteor swarm* spell with the exception that it deals cold damage rather than fire damage. The ice spheres also leave a bluish trail of extreme cold behind them while traveling to their destination.

NEW FEATS

Elemental Comprehension [General]

You understand the intricacies behind a specific type of element.

Prerequisite: Elementalist 4th

Benefit: You gain a +2 caster level bonus on all the spells you cast from your elemental mastery spell list.

Elemental Familiarity [General]

Your familiarity with the elementals allows you to improve your resistance against a specific element.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast at least one 3rd level arcane spell

Benefit: When taking this feat, choose one elemental type (earth, water, fire, or air). You gain a +4 competence bonus to all saving throws and checks made against creatures from this elemental type.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times (up to 4), but each time you must choose a different type of elemental.

Improved Elemental Knowledge [General]

Your familiarity with one type of elemental is enhanced.

Prerequisite: Spell-craft 4 ranks, Elemental Knowledge

Benefit: You gain an extra +1 competence bonus to attacks and damage against creatures of the elemental type with which you already have taken the Elemental Knowledge feat.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times (up to 4), but each time you must choose a different type of elemental.

THE SECRETS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Lest you be a peer of mine (and who is, really?), I recommend that you close this book and move on. For there is nothing for your meager intellect to deduce here. Turn back these pages and return this book where you found it. For the truths written here are not for you..

You have been warned.

IMMORTALITY

Immortality. For millennia uncounted, evolved humanoids dreamed of cheating the inevitable. Some of these beings tried to deviate from their fate in order to enjoy the rest of their lives for all eternity. Over the centuries, many intelligent creatures aspired to become immortal, but very few were able to reach their goal. Unlike the gods — whom many among us believe are the creators of the universe — most of us have a limited amount of time on this plane. And for most of us, our miserable existence will terminate when our last breath escapes our mortal shell.



Hopeless romantics still cling to the idea that one gains immortality through fame and fortune. Some believe the legendary heroes of the past Age are immortalized in the folktales and songs recounted by bards and troubadours. Some assume the architects who built the great monuments thousands of years hence still live through their art. Others even say the scribes, philosophers, and sages who put their thoughts to paper gain a sort of immortality. Although it is true the work and deeds of great men inevitably outlive them, those who believe the only way to gain immortality is through our actions, legacies, and the vestiges we leave behind, are contemptible fools.

The simple truth is there are many ways of gaining immortality. The question is how does one want to become immortal? To some, immortality gained through undeath is not truly immortality. Since these foul beings continue to exist only through unlife — these dreadful entities do not draw breath — I tend to agree with this assessment. In my opinion, the only immortal state that truly matters is the one in which blood still pumps through one's veins, in which one continues to feel the air filling in his lungs. Any other state is not really immortality.

The real challenge, then, is to figure out how to render the physical body immortal. And then make sure the mind and soul remain healthy and well within the bounds of this corporeal shell.

Over the years, elves, dwarves, and other races tried to uncover the intricate secrets of immortality, but despite their best efforts these already long-lived beings have failed in their pursuit. Since the birth of mankind, countless sages delved into the study of the ties binding the physical body with the spiritual entity we call the soul. Many among them dedicated their lives to comprehend the symbiotic connection between the body, the mind, and the spirit. Very few were able to understand the intricate links between these distinct aspects of our beings, but centuries ago an old human male nevertheless figured out a way to cheat death.

His story is a long and complex one, for he existed for many life times. Although this is not the place to describe the intricate details of the long journey that was his life, a few things nevertheless need to be mentioned.

His name was Argos of Varnasia. He hailed from the city after which he took his name, but the legendary metropolis on the western coast sank into oblivion long before Argos met with his own death. In his youth, Argos was an impulsive and bloodthirsty man.

Following the first raid on Varnasia by the invading northern barbarian tribes — in which his entire family was brutally murdered — Argos joined the legion of the Empire he was a citizen of. His hatred of the northern barbarians who had killed his loved ones was the fuel that dictated his every action, and Argos quickly became one of the most dedicated soldiers ever to grace the ranks of the prestigious imperial army. At the age of thirty-three, he was given the title of general. A few years later, as the northern

tribes became even more reckless in their raids, Argos was given the task of putting an end to this menace — once and for all. In the years that followed, General Argos led a series of wars against the northern tribes. After years of warfare, the barbarians, unable to cope with the superior might and tactics of Argos' legions, capitulated. But Argos, who was by then called "Bloodaxe," rejected the barbarians' surrender.

Legends say Argos' hatred of the northern tribesmen was so intense that he wished for nothing less than the complete eradication of their kind. Whether this is true or not, surviving historical records from this ancient era show that Argos did indeed continue to fight against the people of the Frozen Steppes long after their leaders capitulated. Some historians maintain that Argos fought until the barbarians were on the brink of extinction, others claim the General became mad with hatred and pushed his men too far. Whether these assessments are true or not, Argos did eventually stop. And were it not for his change of heart, the descendants of the barbarian people of the frozen northland would not be pestering our borders today.

As it were, Argos Bloodaxe had an epiphany. His chroniclers wrote that after a fierce battle on the northern steppes, Argos' persistence made him pursue the fleeing survivors. He led his fatigued troops into an ambush at the foot of the icy northern hills. There, his legionnaires were defeated but Argos, who had been heavily wounded during the encounter, somehow managed to escape imprisonment.

Alone and on the brink of death, the warlord wandered through the icy plains of the far north. For days he managed to survive in the harsh environment, but his body eventually succumbed to the many wounds he had received. When he awoke, Argos found himself in a cave next to a warm fire. His wounds were bound and the cleaned carcass of an elk lay near. There were no traces of anyone, but Argos was grateful for his good fortunes. None know what happened to Argos after that, but he spent many months in this cave.

When he returned home, two years after the fateful battle, Argos Bloodaxe was a changed man. Now convinced the gods would make him pay for his crimes against the barbarian tribes of the north, Argos became a fervent defender of peace. He used his reputation to oppose the senate and expose the genocide they supported.

Unlike what most historians believe, however, Argos' goal was far from noble. His new ambition was driven by a dreadful fear of the wrath the gods had in store for him rather than by good will towards his former enemies. But dread is a powerful stimulant, and Argos did more than establish a long lasting peace between his people and the tribes of the north: He learned how to cheat death.

Though none knows how he learned the technique he brought back with him from his lonely journey in the northland, Argos nevertheless learned to control his breathing and, through rigorous and ceaseless exercises, he became ageless.

Today, the art of controlling one's intake and release of air — a technique discovered or perfected by Argos himself — is known by a select few. These men and women are part of a special covenant and call themselves the Argosian Monks.

In essence, the Argosians believe aging is caused because the breath of the gods that animates the clay of our flesh leaks out with every breath we expire and every word we speak. The followers of Argos have learned breathing procedures and sit in silence, conserving this divine breath and speaking only when absolutely necessary.

They live for millennia.

IMMORTALITY THROUGH UNDEATH

Death. For many of us, it is the end of everything — or at least the end of everything we know. For some, however, death is only the beginning.

Varna of the Lake, who was once my mentor in the Order of the Righteous Star Magi — many decades before she earned the title of "the Vile" — told me that life was naught more than a state of being, just like unlife. There was truth to what my once esteemed colleague told me all those years ago. In fact, there are so many ways of becoming an undead that a handful of sages consider the passage from a living being to a creature of the night a natural process in the evolution of humanoid kind. These foolish individuals, however few, believe that to become an undead is something everyone secretly desires. But to retain one's mind while transcending into such a state is somewhat of a challenge. My former mentor was one of the few to accomplish this.

What I have come to realize in the course of my long career is that most those who transcend into the undeath state lose their minds entirely, becoming little more than slaves to the whims of their soulless bodies. These creatures have no will of their own, no brains with which they can process logical thoughts, and no personality. They are, in fact, mindless and soulless beings. The greatness of what Varna accomplished was not to become an undead, but rather to retain her mind and soul while her corporeal body was transformed.

I cannot, in good conscience, praise the actions of my former colleague, but I cannot dismiss them either — because what she accomplished, however disturbing, was nevertheless beyond anything any of us great thinkers believed possible. Varna may have been seduced by the dreadful power and evil knowledge she acquired in the course of her prestigious career, she may have sunk into a dark pit from which she would never again climb out, she may even have had dealings with the most loathsome of the gods, but in the end she succeeded — she became immortal.

Though I would greatly discourage anyone from attempting this disquieting of ritual, I learned Varna's greatest secret: If an undead creature is suffused with positive energy at the moment of its creation, of a quantity just barely enough to cause it harm, it will retain the original, unsullied mind it had in life.

And thus is how some great individuals — however perverse — become immortal.

Immortal Coils

When using a *create undead* spell, or other magic of 6th level or above allowing the creation of an undead, a character can instill positive energy that will allow the newly conceived creature to retain its original mind by binding its soul to its revitalized corpse. A single point of positive energy must be imparted to the new undead, and this must be done no later than 1 round following the creature's creation. Using a spell as simple as a *cure minor wounds* is ideal for this ritual, which lasts no longer than the casting time of the original spell used to create the undead plus one round (in which one point of positive energy must be transferred to the creature).

Although the process is relatively quick and simple, it is far from perfect and the newly created undead creature suffused with the positive energy must succeed at a Will save (DC 20) in order for this process to work. If the save is successful, the creature's soul remains bound to its body and the mutated being retains its mind, which remains undamaged; or, in other words, exactly as it was in life. If the new undead fails its saving throw, however, the positive energy was not successfully transferred and its soul remains unbound. The undead then becomes a mindless creature of the night — just as if the creator did not impart it with positive energy in the first place.

It is possible to use a spell of level below 6th to create an undead creature, such as a *raise dead*, but the process of making the new undead retain its unsullied mind becomes much more complex with such spells. The creature's Will save is augmented exponentially when using low level spells, and the chances its mind remains intact are thus lessened. Add 5 to the DC of the undead's Will saving throw for each level below 6th of the spell used to create it. For instance, a *raise dead* spell, which is a 3rd level spell (three levels under 6th) requires the undead to make a Will save at a DC of 35 (20 + 5 per level below 6th) in order for it to retain its mind and soul.

Regardless of which spell is used in the creation of the undead or its level, the brain of the original creature must be intact in order for this process to work. The ancient remains of a dead human which have turned into a fleshless skeleton cannot be turned into an intelligent undead; the creature's mind is already long gone.

THE SECRET OF LICHDOM

People often ask me what is the most powerful creature I encountered during my long years of adventures. Though I faced many appalling beasts and deadly aberrations in my time, none distraught me more than one truly sickening undead: The lich.

Most people shudder at the mere mention of this loathsome creature, but very few were fortunate enough to cross paths with a lich and live to boast about it. Though many commoners heard tales about the darkest being of the night, the information they share is usually based on a bard's tale or a children's ballad. The

common man knows the lich is horrible, he realizes it is undead, he believes it lacks the morals most mortal creatures possess, but he does not truly understand just how ignoble this creature truly is.

The simple fact is that a lich is repulsively, undeniably, and unbelievably evil. It is a perverted soul trapped in a disgustingly revolting body, which is literally rotting from the inside out. Moreover, this type of undead is sinfully conniving, viciously witty, and unbelievably perverted. What is even more frightening is that a lich has at its disposal more power than even a man like me might dream possible. And more often than not, it wields magic which could put to shame even the most potent wizards in our realms.

My encounter with Karna the lich was an unpleasant event to say the least. In life, Karna was known as the Devilish, for he was a brutal sorcerer who showed no mercy, pity, or remorse. He was a cunning man who influenced the greatest monarchs of his time and folklore holds that he was responsible for the death of countless thousands. His passing onto the unlife state — some two thousand years ago — is now the stuff of legend, but I never dreamt the countless myths surrounding this ambitious and potent magic user were true — that is, until I came face to face with him.

I will not reveal the location of this magical creature, for I dare not send foolhardy adventurers to their deaths — and I know if I do so much as name an approximate geographical locale, some buffoons will take it upon themselves to seek Karna out, regardless of the fact that their lives would undoubtedly be forfeit if they do. I will not repeat all the secrets Karna himself explained to me, for I refuse to propagate evil and I cannot in good conscience take the chance that these secrets fall into the wrong hands. There is one fundamental principle, however, which I must share with you. First, however, let me tell you a bit more about my unfortunate encounter.

It was in the last days of my illustrious career, when I was still part of one of the greatest adventuring bands ever to grace the world. It was also in the dead of winter, when the land and the people lay still, dormant, and waiting. My companions and I were eager for action, as is often the wont of young men and women in the prime of their lives. We were impatient and jaded, eager for adventure and glory. We did not know quite what to do with ourselves, but we had discovered an ancient map in one of our previous endeavors, one leading to an old wizard's tower deep in the wilderness. We knew next to nothing about the place, save for its approximate location and the fact that it was said to have been the property of a magician once. Without further ado, we set out for this place of sorrow and death — for sorrow and death we found there.

Finding the tower had been easy; our map was precise and the landscape had not changed much during the long years since it had been drawn. Figuring a way inside the place, however, was a challenge. With the help of Felan, one of my trusted companions and a devoted follower of the god of light, I was able to break the enchantment sealing the tower off... and so we proceeded inside.

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN

We explored many rooms and chambers before we unwittingly stumbled into Karna's private abode. The great lich of legend confronted us, and in the blink of an eye all my companions were either slain or incapacitated. I alone remained standing, facing the horror, which still sat in its throne. But Karna decided to spare my life — not because he deemed it worthwhile or because he took pity on me, but rather because he had not met anyone in centuries and was craving information.

Karna stripped me of all the things I needed to cast my spells and incarcerated me. The months that followed were undeniably the worst of my life, for Karna the lich enjoyed torturing defenseless victims in his undeath state as much as he had in life. My intimate knowledge of the world's history allowed me to feed the vicious fiend with bits and pieces of information he so obviously craved. Had I not been a student of the past, I would probably have joined my companions in death (though I later learned Felan also survived the lich's initial onslaught). Fortunately for me, Karna was also a creature that enjoyed sharing its ideas, its thoughts, and the knowledge it had accumulated over the long centuries of his existence. So even though I divulged some historical and cultural facts to my enemy, I did learn great secrets in return.

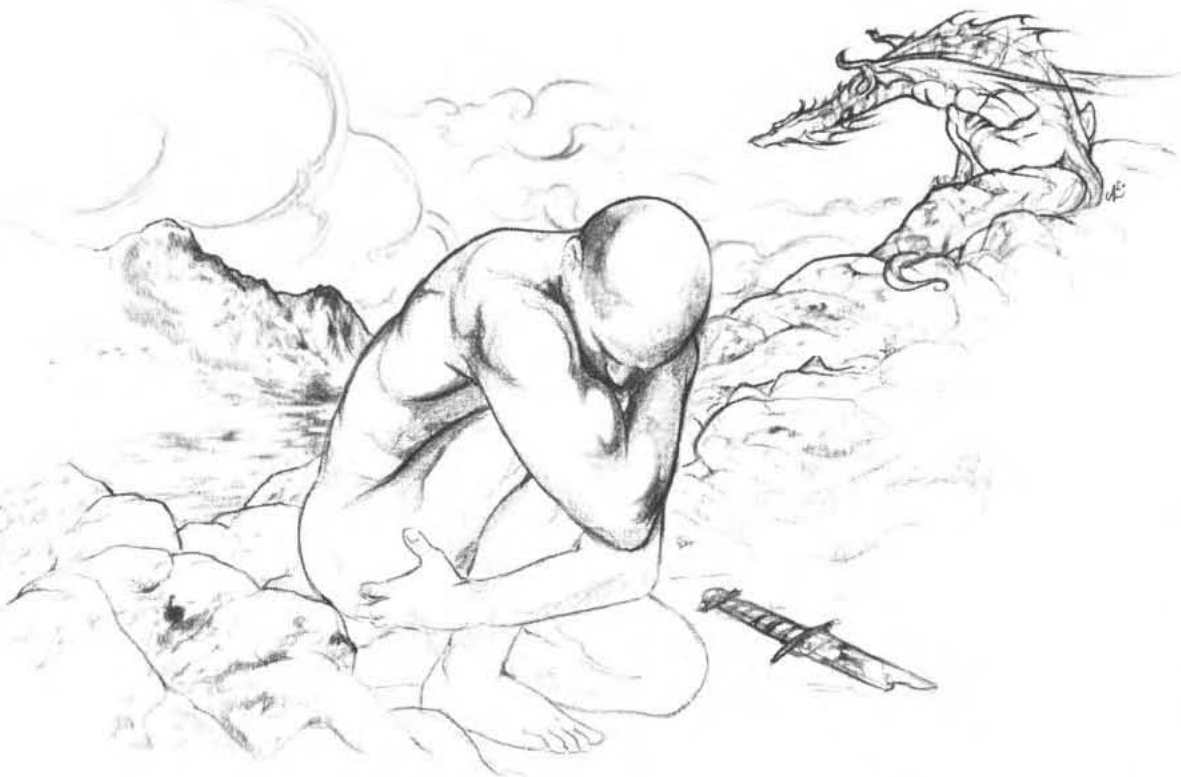
I will spare you the details of my escape from Karna's tower, but I will say this: to this day, I remain skeptical whether my ruse against Karna worked or if the lich actually allowed me to escape. Whatever the answer, I barely managed to hold on to the

shred of life left in me. And I later vowed never to reveal the location of the lich's keep to anyone — for fear I would lead the unfortunate soul to his doom.

One thing I learned from the lich Karna, however, I reveal to you now.

It is a disturbing fact that the soul of a lich is a twisted and evil thing, but what is even more disquieting is what this wretched soul must do before it can aspire to gain immortality through lichdom. According to Karna the Devilish, in order to become a lich, one must brutally murder his family. Though he did not reveal to me the intricate secrets of how to turn one's living body into the immortal shell through which a lich can exist, Karna explained that to complete the transition into lichdom, one must kill his parents, sibling, spouse, and children. And the murders must be made in cold blood, using the same ritualistic blade. Only when this is done can the lich's transformation be complete.

Karna himself did just that, not because he was driven mad with jealousy or rage — as most ancient tales say about him — but because he was obsessed with gaining immortality through lichdom. Karna was a vile being in life, a remorseless murderer, and he proved this when he slaughtered his kin. This terrible act of evil allowed Karna to complete the ritual which turned him into the dreaded creature he became, it finalized his long and hazardous transition from life to unlife, it made him become a lich. But there is more to the story than what he revealed to me.



During my stay, I noticed strange things about Karna. On one hand he was a genius with boundless and invaluable knowledge at his disposal; on the other he was acting very eerily, almost as if he had lost his mind. In my wisdom, I began to study the lich's weird behaviors and, after months of observation, I finally understood his nervous quirks, angry snarls, and the strange comments he occasionally shouted. I realized Karna was not alone. I began to suspect no lich truly ever is. In fact, Karna — as I think all liches — was haunted by the ghosts of the people who had been his family.

Though I only saw these spirits a few times, I quickly understood they meant me no harm, that they could not care less about the living, and that they were quite benevolent — at least towards me. For Karna, however, it was another matter. The ghosts kept hovering about him, whispering things I could not comprehend. Sometimes, their spirits took form, but most often I could not see them. I could hear their quiet voices, however, even when they did not make themselves known to me. And it was obvious Karna could see them.

Though they did not seem able to cause the lich any harm, these ghosts were certainly vexatious to Karna. They pestered and insulted the lich, they toyed with its ingenious mind. And Karna responded in kind, throwing insults and ordering them to keep quiet. Sometimes, the lich had whole conversations with them. After hearing a couple of these unearthly confabulations — for this seemed almost mundane to Karna, despite the circumstances — it became clear to me that the spirits had once been his family; the family he had murdered to become a lich.

If the price of immortality through lichdom is to be haunted by the ghosts of your family, I would be happy to live only one lifetime.

ASCENSION TO GODHOOD

I once had an interesting debate with one of my compatriots in the Order of the Righteous Star Magi. Our discussion concerned the many aspects of godhood, more specifically the birth or creation of a deity. My confrere maintained that the gods were beyond our understanding, that their creation was too cryptic, and their existence too surrounded in myth for us to make any sense of. He insisted their power was far too potent for any mortal man to comprehend, that the gods existed on an entirely different level, and that their influence on humanoid kind was so intricate we could not even begin to fathom its intricacies. Considering the countless religions and individuals who have tried to appreciate the nature of the gods over the last Ages, I would tend to agree with his assessment.

What my esteemed collaborator failed to mention, however, was that some mortals had indeed unraveled the secrets of godhood. In fact — and that was the whole point behind my argument — some of the most powerful gods to watch over us at this very moment were indeed born mortal. If these men and women, however few, figured out a way to gain ascension into godhood, then surely some other mortal humanoids had uncovered many of the gods' most closely guarded secrets.

Our debate soon focused on one of the most fundamental questions: how were the gods created. There are, of course, many answers to this question; most of which found solely in myth and legend. Because most religions are biased and too involved in the mythology surrounding the deity they worship, one cannot base his research exclusively on the sacred texts. Such an analysis would indeed be futile.

My colleague and I concluded that the gods came into being through many different means, that we were not learned or wise enough to determine how one simple being can eventually become a god, let alone analyze whether the myth behind the creation or ascension of each deity were true or false. And thus ended our discussion.

What I had not realized at the time was that this simple exchange with my compatriot would inspire him to seek out answers to some of the things we had discussed. In the following years, I learned he became a dedicated scholar of the gods' pantheon, of the history of both dead and active religions, and of the countless myths concerning the creation of the universe, of the gods, and of humanoid kinds.

Most learned men are familiar with at least some of his work, for he wrote many volumes under the name of Archelius of Bondar. His most impressive contributions to date remain, of course, "The Fundamental Principles of Creation," "The Naked Truth of Godliness," and "The Sacred Pantheon of Modern Days." These tomes explore the vast array of subjects we once had brushed, years before. And Archelius — as I will call him — remains an undisputed expert on the subject of godhood.

Archelius lived a long and productive life, and his solid reputation as one of the most respected scholars of our time was undoubtedly well deserved. Throughout his illustrious career, Archelius harbored a tremendous respect for life and a great reverence for the gods. It is unfortunate he suffered so terribly at the end.

It is in large part because of him that I am writing these lines. For some reason unknown to me, Archelius requested my presence and beckoned me to him just a few days before the dreadful disease he had contracted finally killed him. It was on his deathbed that he revealed to me the great secret he did not dare put into writing. Perhaps it was because of the discussion that inspired him so many years before, the debate that might have inspired his long career, that he chose to share this secret with me; perhaps it was because of my prestige; perhaps it was for both of these reasons or something entirely different. But whatever motivated him to reveal his thoughts to me, I am grateful. For Archelius' knowledge confirmed a great many of my own theories.

Through my own research, I had found clues to one of the things Archelius and I had once discussed, notably the mysteries surrounding the creation myths of several gods. In many sacred texts, it is said that some of the best-known deities were once mortal beings, that they had been great heroes or villains of their respective time, and that they somehow ascended into a state of godliness. As can be expected, these sacred texts do not reveal how a simple mortal creature could aspire to immortality by becoming a god.

There are, however, several documents which briefly hint at the answer to this question. Through many long years of research, I compiled the wisdom of many sages each of which had their own thoughts and ideas on the subject. After several years of reading, I discarded many portions of this material as either ridiculously absurd or blatantly plagiarized. I had come up to a preliminary conclusion when Archilius summoned me to his deathbed. What I learned from the venerated sage was that he had arrived at the same conclusion as I had.

Let me explain. There is a limited amount of divine energy at any one given time. The gods must share this almighty force among themselves, but the potency of all the deities together is always equal to this amount of energy. In order to gain more power, a god must acquire a greater portion of this ambrosial essence. To do so, the deity must either steal this energy directly from another god or gather more devotees.

The latter is perhaps the most obvious, but the former is nevertheless the most important. When a god enlarges his flock of worshippers, his influence over the world is enhanced — as we mortals have often witnessed — but his unearthly power in the higher planes is also augmented. When the gods battle each other, they do so to acquire more of this primeval essence from which they draw their power. The winner of such a conflict, whether it takes the form of a battle of wit, of a great courtly-like intrigue, or of a divine epic battle, usually wins a portion of the glorious force upon which his opponent draws his godliness.

It is my understanding, this godly essence is in constant motion, senselessly flowing from one god to the next. The more powerful gods control greater portions of this energy, while gods whose religion or worship are on the decline have less.

This revelation, however, does not explain how one can become a god, but I am getting there. Since this mystic essence is limited, it is only natural to assume that to become a god, one must find a way to acquire some of this potent stuff. As you can imagine, one does not find barrels of this divine energy at the general store. In fact, no mortal can even hope to perceive this ambrosial substance, let alone capture it. But there is nevertheless a way for a mortal being to become a god.

Simply put: To become a god, one must kill a god.

Once this is accomplished, the sanctified essence which gave the murdered god its divinity is transferred to its murderer. This is how some of the old gods perished and disappeared from memory, this is how the heroes of old became immortals, and this is how many legendary mortals of mythology claimed their godhood.

REINCARNATION

There are many theories regarding reincarnation. In fact, there are so many ways to analyze how reincarnation actually works that it is hard to make sense of it all. The simplest way to define the process of reincarnation, as most savants see it, is saying it is the rebirth of the soul in another body.

Some believe the current marriage of our mind, body, and soul is but one of the various possible aspects we can take. Theorists hold that our soul is eternal and our current self is simply one of the many incarnations we might embody over the course of several lifetimes. These sages maintain that our spirit — or soul, if you will — is immortal, that it has no physical form of its own but exists in an incorporeal state, and that it holds all of our dreams, our drive, and our ambitions. According to many experts, the soul is basically the essence of our beings. It is the spark igniting the flames of our life, the fuel driving our every action and reaction, and the spirit shaping and defining our character. This incorporeal entity, which is at the very core of our being, however, cannot survive without the body. The soul alone is not only intangible and seemingly unreal (at least to us), but also impotent and unable to express its true self by itself.

In order for this intangible soul to achieve its full potential — and indeed in order for it to take concrete form — it must merge into a physical shell. Once the soul is attached to a corporeal form, it is bound to it until the body withers and dies. So the true failing of humanoid kind — and the reason why we are not immortal — is intrinsically linked with the limits of the physical entity we call the body. While the soul is immortal and endures to find another physical shell after we die, our physical being has a limited amount of time in this world. And thus the reason so many great thinkers seek out a way to cheat death.

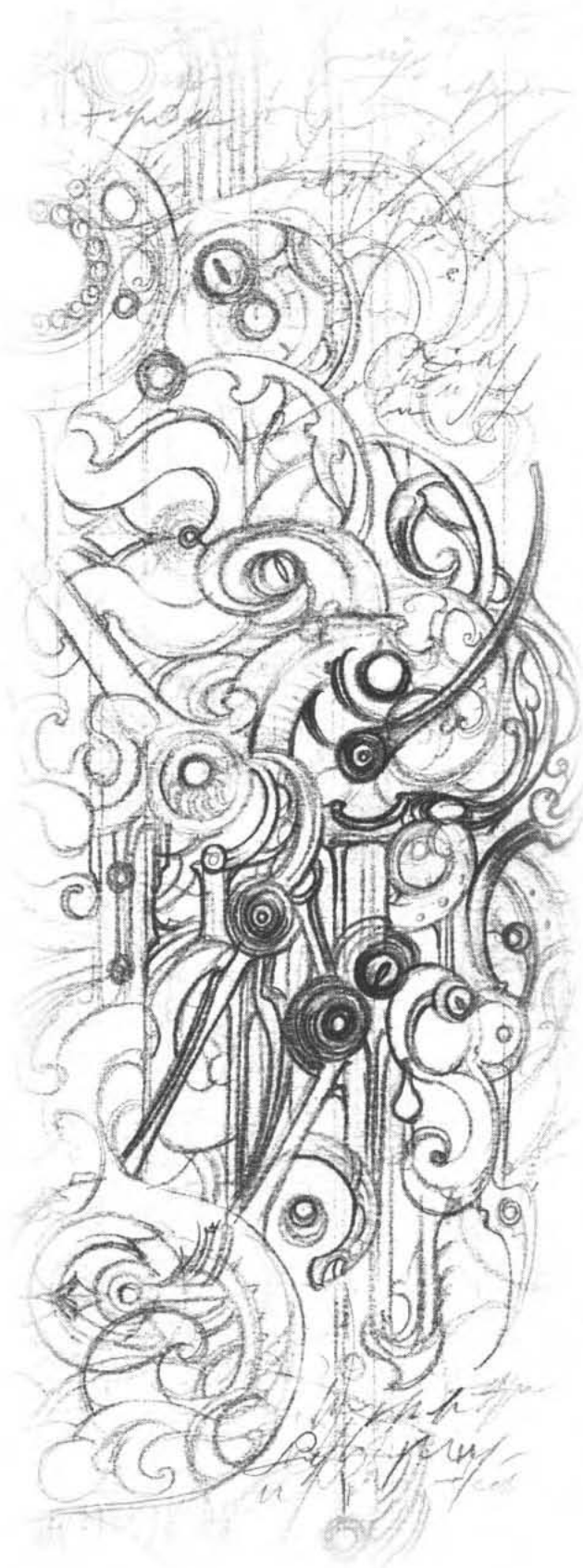
I believe the soul of each and every living creature is part of the great energy that feeds the higher powers. Though I already established that this divine energy bestows the deities their godhood, it is important to understand we all share a small portion of this great ambrosial essence. This is why the more of us there are to worship a particular deity, the more this deity's power and importance expands.

None truly knows how long it takes the essence of our soul to find another suitable body in which it can reincarnate, thus becoming a wholly different being. Many, however, maintain it takes only an infinitely short instant because the driving forces behind the universe have already determined where and when each of our souls would reincarnate. I do not believe this nonsense, for I do not think the gods or any other higher power predetermines our path. The Fates are wise, but even they cannot foresee everything. My own theory is that the soul is strong enough to find its own path, and thus I believe we are responsible for each of the incarnations in which we are born.

The embodiment of the soul and its marriage with a single physical shell is done sometime after the conception and before the birth of the new entity — which can be a short time after the soul is released from the previous body at the time of its death, or some time later. If the soul is not immediately reincarnated into a new physical entity, it remains in limbo until it does. But there is one aspect I haven't yet discussed. I have talked about the immortal soul and the mortal body, but what about the mind?

Many wise men suggest that the mind is the result of the marriage of the physical shell and the spiritual soul. Without both of these aspects each humanoid — and indeed every animal and

THE LORE OF FAZZIL IBN KARDUN



other living thing — would have no functional brains. But the mind is more than simply that. The soul, as I have established, represents our essence, the expression of our true self, or the core of our being. The body is, more simply, the physical shell within which our soul can grow and experience life. Our mind, which is dependent on both soul and body, is the link between the two. Through it, we experience physical and emotional pain and joy, we express our thoughts and feelings, and we accumulate knowledge and wisdom. When we die and our soul is reincarnated, we lose all memory of those experiences. With death of the body comes the death of the mind. But our soul somehow grows throughout this process, it remembers, even if it is unconsciously.

This is what reincarnation is all about.

And the wisest men and women who walk among us have often lived many lifetimes. Though they might not realize or acknowledge it, their soul is old, having accumulated countless lifetimes of wisdom. The most enlightened beings are those whose soul has been reincarnated many times over.

There are those, however, who would rebuke these theories. Among them are the druids of the Order of the Sullied Hand, who believe the goal of reincarnation is not to experience many lifetimes and become wiser or more enlightened, but rather to uncover the ultimate expression of our soul.

Though I do not entirely trust the druids of the Sullied Hand, I cannot dismiss their theories as pure gibberish either. For not only have they been around for years uncounted but there might be truth in their eerie philosophy. These strange druids are also fervent believers of the reincarnation process. Although they might not reveal their true allegiance to their secretive Order, most openly preach their belief in reincarnation and often educated the ignorant masses on the subject. I even found proof that many great warriors of old believed so strongly in the reincarnation theories of the Order of the Sullied Hand they became totally fearless in battle. These warriors welcomed death with open arms, for they trusted they would be reincarnated into a life better suited for them.

The Order of the Sullied Hand was founded thousands of years ago, but the events surrounding its early beginning have been lost for generations. None truly knows who founded the order, but the druids who belong to it still remember why. And their impressive theory of reincarnation is at the center of their beliefs.

In recent years, the Order has been strongly active in rural areas and the wilderness, but very few among us know of its existence. This is mainly because the druids of the Sullied Hand work in secret and seldom reveal their allegiance to the Order. But their obsession with the reincarnation process sometimes give them away.

Strong believers of reincarnation, these secretive druids hold that our soul is intrinsically linked with a totem animal. They believe the totem animal of each individual varies depending on the true nature of his spirit, but that every one of us is nevertheless bound to such a force. For the druids of the Sullied Hand, the essence of the totem animal is the driving force behind our soul;

it is the true expression of our being; it is what we should aspire to become.

The life long goal of any member of the Sullied Hand is to align his soul with his totem animal. At the time of his death, the druids of the Order hope to reincarnate into such entities, for they trust that people who reincarnate into their totem animal are happier and better adjusted to life.

If their ambition were simply to achieve a happier state of being, I would leave it at that. But these druids are much more devious. They believe all the woes in the world come from a common source. They feel people whose souls are trapped into the wrong corporeal form cause all the wars and plagues and deaths. Simply put, they think everyone should pursue their goal, which is to align their spirit with their totem animal, and eventually be reborn as this animal.

Unfortunately, the druids of the Sullied Hand also maintain that most people are not intelligent or wise enough to understand they suffer because their soul is trapped inside a body that should not have been theirs in the first place. Moreover, they pretend — like many other defenders of the wilderness — that most humanoids are destroying nature and that the entire planet suffers because of them. In their minds, if more people were reincarnated in the form of their totem animal, life would not only be better for them but the planet would also have a chance to finally heal itself.

In a strange way, the druids of the Sullied Hand seek harmony. They hope to restore the fragile balance between nature and humanoid kind. They wish all the people in the world could live happily through their rightful incarnation in the form of their totem animal. Though their goal might seem noble, the druids of the Sullied Hand are far from altruistic. In fact, most members belonging to this strange Order are fanatically vile and — I dare say — depravedly insane.

The simple fact is that the ultimate goal of this secretive sect is to murder everyone in the world and reincarnate them all in a mass ritual, which would bind their souls to their rightful totem animal. Though I doubt the Order of the Sullied Hand is prepared for such a dreadful task, I fear the day when their leaders take it upon themselves to slaughter the masses.

Thus far, the activities of the Order have been subtle and conducted with the utmost secrecy. However, I know for a fact that many druids of the Sullied Hand are responsible for countless cold-blooded murders. I have even witnessed one myself. What truly troubled me about the incident was that the evil druid believed he was doing his victim a favor. He was so driven by his twisted belief that he even performed a strange and loathsome ritual after assassinating his target. The ritual, I later learned, was to help guide the soul of the deceased towards its totem animal. In other words, the druid hoped his victim would reincarnate into the true expression of its being, and live a happy life.

I do not approve of the Order of the Sullied Hand's actions. I do not believe the members of the sect — or anyone else for that matter — have the right to murder innocents. I do not trust them, nor do I wish to meet another one of their disquietingly

fanatical kind ever again. But I do trust their theory on a totem animal which is intrinsically linked with the soul might hold some truth — or at least a partial truth. For who among us truly knows why our spirit passes from one life to the next? Who among us can say what the ultimate purpose of our soul is? Perhaps the druids of the Sullied Hand have a point. Perhaps we should do well to discover our own totem animal.

RESURRECTION

I should not be writing this. I should lay down my quill and stop now, before it is too late. All the fibers of my being tell me not to continue with this idiotic endeavor. My mind, guided by any sense of reason left in me, screams in silence, begging me to stop. But I cannot put down the quill, I cannot throw away the parchment, and I cannot keep this secret to myself. Yet I am haunted by a great sense of personal doom, for once I reveal what I have learned my life will undoubtedly be at risk.

What I am about to disclose concerns us all, and I fear what the members of the Society of the Silent Reckoning will do to me when they discover I have learned of their existence. They will undoubtedly send their assassins after me — and to be perfectly honest, I dread what they might do to me; for these are a strange and especially fanatical lot. But this is too important to keep hidden. The truth must be told. Besides, I am an old man at the end of his road. So what do I have to lose but a few years?

Several years ago, I discovered an ancient volume written in a language I had never before encountered. The thick tome was bound with narrow bones, its finely chiseled spine carved out from the femur of what appeared to be a small demonic creature. The tome's bulky cover was made out of strange and lustrous black leather, and I dare not guess the type of fiend this leathery skin originated from. The pages of the volume were made of cracked burgundy leather as thin as paper, the golden hieroglyphic markings upon them barely visible. It took me a long while to decipher its cryptic language, for even my spells proved to be of little help in this endeavor. But I have broken its secrets. Now I understand. And thus I must reveal to others what was written therein...

Though I have no time to translate the entire manuscript here, in these simple pages, I will nevertheless unveil its most enigmatic secret.

The manuscript I found was titled "The Essence of Being." It described in intricate details how the soul of every sentient life form remains attached to its body, even after death. It explained that the connection between the immortal spirit and its last physical incarnation was so strong that the act of resurrecting the dead individual was an almost trivial matter; at least to the many head priests and high ranking clerics of many religions.

According to the ancient text, the connection between the essence of our being and its physical incarnation is so powerful some people can be resurrected many years after they have died. Most priests who study such things would agree, but they would also say the soul in question must be willing to return to the body; and this is not always the case. Sometimes, a soul is

"trapped" in another life, its essence already deeply connected to a new incarnation. Sometimes, the soul, although free of any restriction, is unwilling to come back to its original form — either because it wants to move forward and start anew within a freshly spawned form or because it would prefer to linger on in limbo for a while longer. The experts are unsure about the reasons behind a soul's refusal to return to its last known incarnation, but many believe the spirits which cannot be resurrected have had a hard time in life and, once they die, are unwilling to continue with it. But the ancient text "The Essence of Being" states otherwise.

Based on the golden hieroglyphs I decrypted, there are many ways to force a soul to return. With the help of potent divine magic, the head priests of many cults were able to resurrect several of their most ardent followers. In some cases, great heroes and monarchs have been brought back to life in the hope they would once again be able to save the people from a terrible doom or reinstate the glory of a Golden Age long past.

Throughout history, there have been many documented cases where influential people — such as kings and great thinkers — were resurrected. In most instances, the individual in question continued with his life until death caught up with him once more. In other cases, the person was brought back to life more than once. Some people have even used resurrection not only to cheat an early death but also to prolong their existence, thus living for many more years than nature would otherwise allow.

The dark volume I read revealed the story of King Kravus, a human monarch responsible for a vast empire which dominated the northern hemisphere of our planet in the past Age. Though modern historians know very little concerning this period of time, the book explained — in great many details — the life and times of Kravus. My own analysis of the dark tome confirmed it might indeed come from this mystical period of history, so I for one believe the information disclosed within its thick pages might be accurate; at least as far as any chronicle can be.

King Kravus was a powerful man. He lived in hard times and in one of the most brutal parts of the world, where great roaming tribes ruled. According to the story, he was the first king to unite the savages of the northern continent under a single rule. With the help of an unnamed deity, Kravus even brought civilization to an uncivilized people. But he accomplished all of this with the force of his mighty hosts and the cruelty of his calculating mind. He was able to rule over the largest kingdom mankind had ever seen, but he did so by slaughtering all those who would oppose him.

When the great monarch passed away, his descendents quickly lost control of the many different ethnics comprising the vast kingdom their father had built. Soon, all Kravus had gained by spilling the blood of his enemies crumbled into dust.

Miraculously, the King returned from the grave — resurrected by the priests of an unholy order seeking the restoration of the great kingdom he had forged. But Kravus' return was not entirely welcome, for he had been a merciless ruler. To reclaim his

throne, he had his sons and grandsons assassinated. He also murdered all the nobles and church officials who had opposed his return. It took him a few years, but Kravus took over the reigns of the kingdom he had built once again. And he reinstated order and forced unity in its lands.

Kravus' second rule, however, was even crueler than his first. He became obsessed with seeking out and killing all who would oppose him. He ordered the destruction of abundant forests where he believed his enemies were hiding. He decreed war against people who had already pledged loyalty to him. He caused the genocide of countless cultures.

During this dark period, the book claims, Kravus was able to prolong his life through the divine magic of the evil priests who had remained loyal to him. The king died many times — of some diseases he contracted, of accidental deaths, and following a number of successful assassination attempts — but the unholy priests kept bringing him back to life. Again and again they resurrected the only man who was perverted enough to keep control over the unbelievably vast kingdom.

It was then that the Society of the Silent Reckoning was founded. A sect of good assassins, the Society eventually murdered Kravus and put an end to his tyrannical rule, which had lasted for almost two hundred years. Since then, the Society of the Silent Reckoning ensures that kings and other rulers cannot become immortal by resurrecting themselves again and again.

Though very few people know of their existence, the members of this secret cabal are an essential part of the world; for no one wants to see another ruler like Kravus. The members of the Society have concocted an elixir that, when ingested, gradually severs the connection between the spirit and the body. They poison the food and drink of the most powerful monarchs in the world to ensure they are not brought back to life over and over again.

And, though I now fear for my life, I applaud them.

The Lazarus

The elixir of the Society of the Silent Reckoning is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. None knows how it is concocted save for the most important members of the cabal. Once drunk, the effect of this potent mixture stays inside the body forever. The substance is not considered a poison nor a disease, and even the greatest clerics are unable to detect it in the body. Every time this substance is ingested, there is a cumulative 1% chance any attempt at resurrection fails; so the more one drinks the elixir, the less chances he has at returning from the dead. Additionally, if a soul is resurrected into a body containing this elixir, there is an additional 10% chance that the next resurrection attempt will fail.

Chapter 2:

The Cryptic Studies of Alexander Draus Rho

Grandmaster Rourke,

As per your orders, I investigated Draus Rho and his research. Your suspicions proved true given even the barest glimpse into his actions since last we saw him. Sometimes his activities were so thorough that I had no choice but to cast about blindly for his trail, while other times I was so close to him that I found myself hesitating rather than performing my duties as I should have.

In the end, however, all my efforts were virtually for naught. Rho is gone, almost certainly forever, and little indeed survived in his wake. What follows are excerpts lifted piecemeal from his surviving journals, what little of them did survive. As per your instructions, I excised no text. These few passages are literally all that remains of Draus Rho's records after he took leave. He evidently took to burning his journals upon discovering that I was following him, though in some cases the papers must have smoldered for over a week before I recovered them. Normally, I would discount such drama as a sign of a forgery, to distract me from my true hunt, but I find the circumstances compel me to make an exception.

My official recommendation is that we continue hunting. Draus may be mad, or simply gone astray as we hoped, but in any event his rarefied knowledge and abilities are too great to leave any doubt as to his present condition or whereabouts. Unofficially, I want nothing further to do with the man. Try as I might to deny his poisonous thoughts, I find myself agreeing with some of his conclusions, and sympathizing with still more. I cannot countenance the thought of trodding Draus' path any further, so I must plead release from this duty. I can only hope that Draus' words tempt me less if I have less reason to dwell upon them.

This day in your service,
—Alliau Hol

FEY STUDIES

I have always lived my life by two rules. The first is that truth is an absolute, a means and an end in one. Deceit weighs upon souls, and I've not met a liar yet who could truly divide reality from their own warped imaginings. Every undiscovered lie leads us into darkness and ruin, whereas the truth cannot help but benefit all.

The second rule is that of synchronicity, the tiny reverberations of truth in the world. Few lie out of habit, after all, so their fictions betray their secret motives, in turn leading towards their reasons for the lies in the first place; lies are, I suppose, a suicidal in that respect. Another way to notice this is by simply learning and paying attention. When we, as children, learned a new word, we suddenly heard it spoken constantly. Did we merely notice an existing trend, a coincidental series of events, or did our knowledge somehow call to others? The question borders on hubris, even solipsism, but we first knew a truth, and knowing it, we could not help but see it everywhere.

I am a yet young, for an elf. My masters flatter me by saying that I am the youngest archmage our people have ever known, but I know this is not entirely true. I know that my place was at White River, to cut off the orcish reinforcements. I know, too, that the plan required the sacrifice of an elven city and its people to make the ruse appear genuine. I cannot fault my masters for choosing my city, either. If I was willing to sacrifice anyone, I should not have wanted to pass that pain on.

Today, I am six score years old. My peers praise me as a hero, the priests honor my name, and children on the streets fight over the right to be me as they reenact my battles. My research has already produced over a dozen new spells, and new techniques for old ones. The kingdom is saved, and the orcs are in retreat.

The Cryptic Studies of Alexander Draus Rho

In the quiet hours of night and solitude, I would trade it all, just to touch her face once again.

My master has... asked, I suppose, that I take a sabbatical while I mourn. He is correct. I have lost much, and my participation is no longer necessary. It would hurt morale if the others knew how I grieved so, and should the orcs return, I fear I might lose myself in my grief. Grandmaster Rourke has thankfully provided a small cover story for me by granting me my leave of absence in the form of an investigation I once asked him for.

Little Haelle's wings flutter happily as she thinks about visiting her cousins, but I can feel her sympathies for me lying just beneath her cheer. More than any, she must know how deeply this all has affected me.

As I packed away my personal effects and pretended to listen to Haelle's playful chattering, I found my thoughts drifting back to the orcs.

The orcs. I have never truly understood why we have fought so against one another. We live in the forests, and they in the hills. We eat little meat, and they eat little else. Both our religions tell of our gods warring against theirs, and even the legends of outside races agree. There is no motive in these stories, though, no origin to the allegory. That the orcs hunt us is no surprise, as they hunt everyone. That we who are at peace with even the dwarves, that we hunt the orcs, too, is somehow troubling. It is one thing to fight for our own defense, but another to attempt to eradicate an entire people, even if they are our sworn enemies. Some fringe scholars warn that the orcs are corrupt cousins, but so are the drow, who have still less in common with the orcs than do we.

I will have time enough in the journey to dwell upon such thoughts. I close this book now, to finish bundling. In three days' time, I will open it again, and record my first experiences with the fey.

The road between Shademarch and the Autumn Glens held some of the fiercest fighting against the orcish invaders. Everything that stood east of Icewood Creek is now gone.

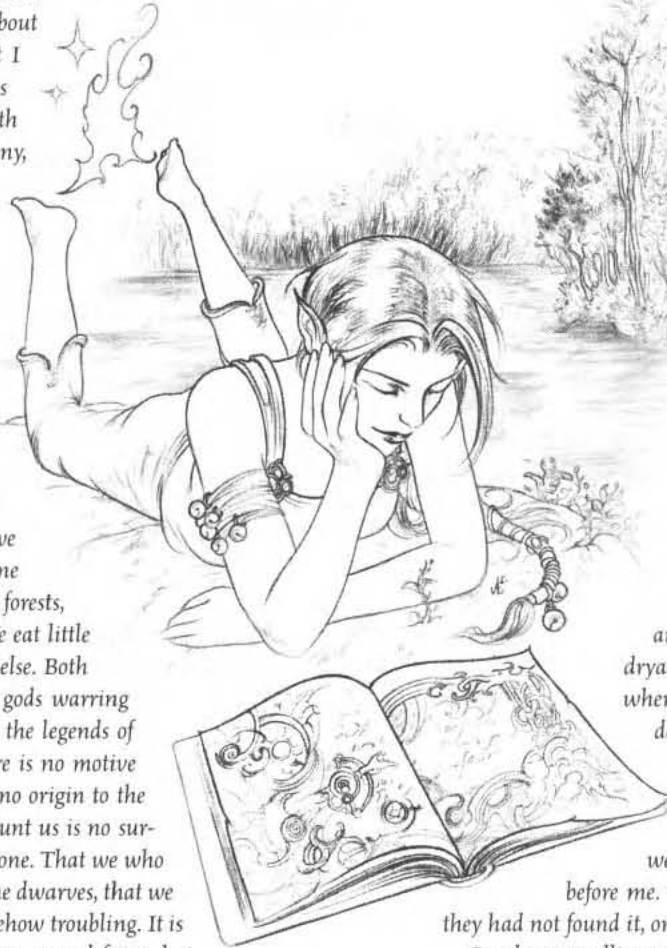
The homes mysteriously absent from their foundations, stone roads reduced to rubble, and entire herds of cattle slaughtered and left to rot on hill and dale. The trees are ashen, and the waters black — foul with pitch. As a precaution, I cast my divinations about the ruinous horizon for signs of a black dragon, but I found myself oddly thankful that it was truly the orcs who had been responsible for these atrocities. I was dismayed, though not surprised, that I could find no other living and aware creatures to

the east of Icewood, and accelerated my pace. Fortunately, Haelle slept through the wastes, and did not see what had become of her childhood home.

West of Icewood told me a different story as my horse leapt over the broken bridge. It could not possibly have happened thus, but on one side of the creek was terrible and complete devastation. On the opposite shores, lush forest and verdant fields. Even the road became little more than an overgrown pathway. The creek had marked the border between fey lands and mortal kingdom, between where the dryads and nymphs leant us their aid and where they refused to let us bolster their defenses. Though the human knights and conscripts did their best to halt the orcs' advances, several reliable reports placed a major battle to the west of Icewood. Even yet, it stood pristine before me. Whatever the orcs had come for, either they had not found it, or the fey had recovered it quickly.

Our human allies against the orcs were correct in their estimation of the fey. The fey, though eager to aid even their distant cousins during the war, dispatched only one of their number to speak with me. I met her on the glade outside of the Autumn, just as the last of the sun's brilliant hues had faded into night. She cloaked herself in the finest white silks, and moved with an internal grace beyond nature's bounds. The fey chose to impress their greatness upon me with a nymph, but while I had met none of her kind before, I had heard tales enough to know that something was amiss. As enticing, beguiling, perfect as her shape was, I intuitively knew that to gaze upon her too long would be to forget my honored mourning. The notion did more than protect me from the nymph's powers.

However strange it still seems, I felt only hatred for this gentle creature.



Any ill will was irrational, however, and I had far greater concerns than avenging my grief on the innocent. I swallowed my ire as she approached me. The nymph introduced herself as Sellyah, a young nymph as curious about my people as I was concerning hers. She apologized for the delay in our meeting, for the prior refusals to allow me to come to Autumn Glen, but she claimed her kind had concerns about arcanists such as myself. Where the fey find comfort in their ties to nature, and can at least understand (if not always use) the god-given abilities of clerics and paladins, arcane magic is almost as alien to the fey as the fey are to us.

My curiosity aroused, I decided to delay my initial series of questions, instead taking the opportunity to tell her more about my magic ask her more about her own. The process was difficult, akin to a deaf man describing color to a blind man, so different are our perspectives. I first reminded her that bards themselves are arcanists, and that tales of their dalliances with nymphs and dryads are only slightly less famous than bardic epics. Chuckling heartily, Sellyah agreed, but noted that the bards' love of beauty is one shared by all fey, marking bards as exceptional in many ways (I chose not to ask what she meant). Sellyah told me that her powers derive from her ties to nature, specifically from the very glade upon which we then stood. Whenever she needed support, she claimed, she simply drew upon her love for that place, and from that she could heal any wound, or stand against any foe she had yet faced. I suggested that many sorcerers would feel their own abilities were similar, though the sorcerers' source of power was their own will, rather than some outside force.

Sellyah frowned slightly at the suggestion, but offered nothing further. We quietly adjourned for the night, and she showed me where I could bed down for the night in safety.

Sleepless and by starlight, I now pen these words in my journal. In retrospect, I think my initial conclusion was rash and with little basis. The links between sorcerers and fey are shallow, as both can cast spells without preparation. Sorcerers often have blood ties to ancient creatures, most notably dragons. In contrast, I have never heard of a nymph producing offspring outside of the apocryphal tales in lusty bard-songs. The fey often resemble elves, particularly elven women, but these are mere physical similarities, no true sign of blood. I had been considering that this was possibly a choice to appeal to the elves, as we often live near the fey lands, when a stray thought crossed my mind: many gods choose to appear as the same race as their followers.

The notion makes a certain amount of sense, albeit without adequate research at hand to do more than simply make an educated guess. The fey have links to some aspect of nature, without which they perish, and by striking at one, the other falters. Their power flows directly from this tie, and the locations home to the greater fey are pristine, the kind that marks many of the gods' favored sites. As nature is not truly intelligent in and of itself, the fey themselves might intuitively access its blessings, but never meditate upon the symmetry of being servant, protector, and avenger of nature. For all their supernatural beauty, I cannot recall of any accounts of it from a perspective that does not hold

elven women to be the height of loveliness, as even orcs often grudgingly admit; perhaps if I could speak to a lizardfolk druid on the subject, I might find a detailed description of the emerald scales of a nymph.

Perhaps the fey are, in their own way, avatars of nature, much as the more traditional deities might have lesser aspects which they reveal or unleash upon the mortal realms.

FEY MAGIC

Though creatures of inherent magic, fey are not true sorcerers, as they (and their magic) are part of nature, not masters of it. Like sorcerers, fey intuitively wield magic, requiring no formal training, nor even an outside guide like a spellbook or scrolls, although a fey usually wields druidic magic rather than arcane. Even though the basic limits of fey magic is like that of druids, however, the fey do not truly worship nature, being both already a part of nature, and too selfish on average. This is not out of a lack of caring, as fey are duly compassionate when not angered, but rather part of their being. As part of the very nature that they serve and exemplify, their greatest instinct is self-preservation.

As aspects and servants of nature, it is extraordinarily difficult to permanently cut the fey off from nature, the source of their power, without outright killing them. Anything which would bar creatures from using their spell-like or supernatural abilities would have a similar effect on the fey, but these are temporary measures at best. There are two known ways to disrupt the connection between fey and nature: manipulating the fey's protectorate, and forcing the fey themselves to abandon the link. Both methods are dangerous, but each reaps its own reward.

The Fey Protectorate

The fey are so strongly tied to nature that a blow to one harms the other. While this is the most infamous dryad trait, it extends to all other creatures of the fey type. Each fey has a portion of nature they guard over, commensurate with the fey's size and ability. A pixie might watch over a single flower or acorn, while a nymph reigns over a lake or meadow. Whatever the size of the protectorate, it represents the fey's link to nature, and is normally a pristine example of nature's capacity for beauty and perfection. The protectorate's appearance not only shows how strong the fey's bond with nature is, it also reflects the fey's emotions. If a fey grows angry (see *Forces of Nature*, below), its meadow may rustle with harsh storm winds, or its flower suddenly sprout wicked thorns.

Though the fey can leave their protectorates for extended trips with little fear of injury or death, it is uncomfortable for them to do so for long. So long as a fey is within line of sight with its protectorate, the fey suffers no penalty. It may remain apart from its protectorate for a number

of days equal to its hit dice, during which time it likewise suffers no ill effects, though it is none the happier for it. Each day following, however, the fey suffers a point of temporary ability damage to both Constitution and Wisdom, and may not heal this damage until the fey touches protectorate again. Being within eye contact prevents further damage and resets the number of days the fey can remain apart from the protectorate without harm, but does not allow healing or restore ability scores. If this reduces a fey's ability score below the minimum required to cast a spell, the fey may only use it as a spell-like ability by becoming enraged (again, see *Forces of Nature*, below). If either a fey's ability scores reach 0 in this manner, the fey dies a painful death, and may not be raised by magic short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell.

Another way to manipulate a fey's ties to nature is by deliberately damaging the protectorate directly. Poisoning plants, damming rivers, or judicious use of some spells such as *blight* or *desecrate*, similarly weaken the fey. Any effect which inflicts hits to a fey's protectorate affects the fey as well, regardless of distance or even the fey's normal immunities or chances to resist via spell resistance or saving throws. For effects which deal no normal damage, such as a drought or earthquake destroying part of the protectorate, the fey instead suffers ability loss as though the fey had withdrawn from the protectorate for a number of days depending on the severity of the damage done to the protectorate (as DM deems appropriate; a hairline crack on an acorn protectorate or a mild but rainless summer might be equivalent to a single day's worth of withdrawal, whereas a cracked shell or dammed waters might be as many as six days). While the fey does not suffer beyond this initial effect, neither can it heal from this damage unless and until the protectorate does. Outright destruction of the protectorate does not necessarily kill the fey directly (though the fey takes damage as outlined here), but since the fey can no longer make contact with the protectorate, death from withdrawal quickly follows. Following the destruction of its protectorate, a fey invariably becomes enraged.

Intentionally disrupting a fey's power in these manners is not without benefit. As angrily as any fey reacts to such cruelty, a fey's will to continue living overcomes the desire to brutally end the life of a malevolent mortal. Though compassionate to a fault, fey understand that they live far longer than any of the common races, and while they may feel guilty serving a tyrant for a few years, it does not compare with their capacity to do good after their tormentor has rotted away in his grave. In truth, however, the fey are far more likely to come to the decision out of fear of dying than any plan for their own redemption. Villains guarantee the fey's servitude by exposing the fey to their protectorate just often enough to keep them useful. Additionally, while directly touching a damaged

protectorate, a creature may make a *demand* of the fey once per day, as though he were a sorcerer of 18th level.

Of course, should the fey return to full power, or the protectorate suffers further destruction, little could persuade them not to bring nature's wrath to bear upon their enemies.

Any attempt to provoke *antipathy* between a fey and its protectorate automatically fails. A fey may *commune with nature* as a free action as a spell-like ability (as though cast by a druid of a level equal to the fey's hit dice), but only to determine the status of the protectorate.

Abandoning the Protectorate

Though a more famous method, convincing a fey to abandon their ties to nature is more difficult by far than manipulating a protectorate. Bards often sing ballads of fey who turn their backs on immortality for love, but the tales rarely turn out well for the fey or the lover. More rarely, a fey devotes itself so firmly to a particular cause that it abandons the protectorate to safely devote itself to the new duty, perhaps even becoming a paladin in the process. While fey are creatures of passion, it takes an overwhelming appeal to their emotions to so sway them, as abandoning the protectorate severs the fey from its soul. While the fey no longer suffers withdrawal from the protectorate, neither can the fey use any of its spells, spell-like or supernatural abilities, as well as racial bonuses or penalties to ability scores or skill checks. Further, if the fey was already suffering from withdrawal, or the protectorate had already suffered damage, a fey that abandons the protectorate can never heal any of the ability damage lost.

A fey who does abandon its protectorate becomes a mortal (shifting its type to "humanoid" of the appropriate sub-type), an elf (if of Medium-size or larger) or a halfling (if Small or smaller), gaining the associated racial features over the next 1d4 weeks. In addition, while the former fey may have abandoned the protectorate out of the noblest of ideals, other fey never entirely trust it again. Ex-fey suffer a -2 racial penalty on all Charisma-based checks with fey (other than Intimidate checks, which are made without any additional bonus or penalty), and ex-fey may not take creatures of the fey type as cohorts, followers, familiars, or companions. The ex-fey may not be raised by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell. The ex-fey retains any extraordinary abilities it had as a fey, including a modified use of the *Forces of Nature* extraordinary ability (see below), but loses all other abilities associated with their former type of fey. The ex-fey also chooses the higher cause for which it abandoned the protectorate — staying with a lover, serving a worthy mortal, or destroying a particularly foul enemy.

Abandoned protectorates, if still undamaged, produce a new fey of the same kind as the ex-fey in the next 1d10 years. Strangely, this new fey has some of the memories of

the ex-fey, and may even appear identical, though the new fey's name is usually different. The new fey instinctively refers to the ex-fey as its parent, and the ex-fey does not suffer any racial penalty to Charisma checks with this new fey. The two may not get along, however, especially if the ex-fey's new calling brings the new fey into conflict.

NEW FEY ABILITY

Forces of Nature

All fey creatures gain this ability in addition to those in the *Monster Manual*.™

Forces of Nature (ex): When a fey's protectorate is destroyed or threatened, the fey becomes a mad, vicious instrument of nature's ugliest vengeance. The fey enters a state of continuous rage (as a barbarian of a level equal to the fey's HD). However, unlike a barbarian, the duration of the rage is not contingent upon his Constitution score. Instead, every minute the fey continues to rage, he suffers one point of temporary ability score damage to every ability.

In addition, while enraged, the fey gains the following abilities:

- unarmed attacks deal lethal damage and provoke no attacks of opportunity.
- At will I — *control plants* and *dominate animals*.
- 3/day *creeping doom* and *summon nature's ally III*.

Creatures dominated or summoned gain immunity to fear.

FEY FEATS

The following are optional feats showing close ties to the fey. Bloodgifts represent ancestral or racial ties to a higher power. Characters may begin play with only one 1st level bloodgift, but may gain others later on, so long as the prerequisites are met.

In addition to any other prerequisites, all fey feats require the following:

Prerequisite: Race (elf, half-elf, or halfling; half elves usually have one human parent and one fey).

Fey Blood [Bloodgift]

You have fey blood running in your veins.

Prerequisites: Cha 17+, spellcaster level 1st+.

Benefit: When determining bonus spells by spell level and maximum spell level known, you may use your highest ability score in place of the appropriate one. In addition, the saving throw DC for all your spells is increased by 1.

Special: This feat can only be chosen at 1st level. A character can never have more than one 1st level bloodgift.

Fey Child [Bloodgift]

You are the parent/guardian of a true fey child, either biological or adopted.

Prerequisites: Two or more feats with Fey Blood as a prerequisite, or Former Fey.

Benefits: Fey blood runs true in one of your children, and while the fey do expect you to protect that child, the fey tolerate you on the child's behalf. Your child is an NPC creature of the fey type, of a kind determined by the DM (or, if you have the Former Fey feat, the same kind of fey as you once were). The fey begins play with 1 HD, gaining an additional HD every time you gain a level. While the child does not accompany you on adventures (it suffers any penalties for leaving its protectorate as normal), it freely offers its assistance when possible. In addition, while acting in your child's name, you suffer no racial penalties to Charisma-based checks when dealing with the fey. And should harm ever befall your child, you gain 2d4 fey allies for 2 weeks, willing to aid you in your quest for revenge on the person responsible.

Upon maturity (when the child has the listed number of HD for a fey of its kind), you no longer gain allies if the child is harmed, and you once again suffer (any) racial penalties for Charisma-based checks in dealings with fey. You do, however, gain a +3 competence bonus to all such checks, in recognition for your success as a parent.

Special: If your child dies, you lose all benefits of this feat. If you are responsible for the child's death, you thereafter suffer a -4 incompetence penalty to all Charisma-based checks with the fey, including Intimidate checks. Some fey may even hunt you.

Fey Heritage [Bloodgift]

You have devoted much time and energy to studying the powers of your fey blood, and the heritage that has so strongly marked you.

Prerequisites: Fey Blood, any non-lawful alignment.

Benefit: You have awakened some of the dormant potential of your blood, gaining druid as a favored class in addition to your normal favored class. You also gain a +3 racial modifier to all Charisma-based checks when dealing with fey. Additionally, if your type ever changes due to a class feature, you may choose to make your new type fey, rather than the normal change associated with the class, though you cannot change again afterwards.

Unfortunately, tapping your potential has exposed you to many fey weaknesses. Any cold iron weapon striking you has its critical threat range and critical multiplier each increased by 1, and cold iron weapons bypass any of your inherent damage resistance.

Former Fey [Bloodgift]

You were once fey, but abandoned your true nature in exchange for something greater still.

Prerequisites: Race (elf, half-elf, or halfling; half elves usually have one human parent and one fey).

Benefit: In exchange for your life as a fey, you have devoted yourself body and soul to something or someone else. Choose something to represent a higher calling, something that cannot be achieved as a fey and requires either continual work to maintain (such as true love) or represents a goal that can only be achieved through decades of effort, if ever (such as toppling the government of a particularly vile nation). All attempts to control or deceive you to work against this higher calling automatically fail, as your devotion is pure and unwavering. If, however, you receive true testimony or evidence that you have been betrayed in the process of your higher calling, you may tap into the *forces of nature* extraordinary ability, seeking to destroy those who betrayed you. You also gain one of the following classes as a favored class: bard, paladin, or ranger.

You also suffer a -2 racial penalty on all Charisma-based checks with fey (other than Intimidate checks, which are made without any additional bonus or penalty), may not take creatures of the fey type as cohorts, followers, familiars, or companions, and may not be raised by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell.

Special: This feat can only be chosen at 1st level. A character can never have more than one 1st level blood-gift. At the DM's discretion, fey PCs may take this feat as a quest feat, with the racial prerequisite replaced by finding the higher goal worth sacrificing their fey blood for. The ex-fey loses all racial modifiers and abilities except for *forces of nature*, and becomes an elf (if Medium-size or larger) or a halfling (if Small or smaller).

You may not take any feats which draw upon fey ancestry or allies, and lose any benefits of such a feat you already have. The sole exception to this is the **Fey Child** feat.

GLAMER AND THE FEY

Though their primary roles are as servants and guardians of nature, the fey draw upon an additional, minor well-spring of power: their roles as teachers and tricksters. While the intelligent races are so removed from nature that they are but distant and frequently unwelcome relatives, the link remains, especially in barbaric tribes or rural settlements. Countless folk tales tell of fey assuming the forms of missing children or inhuman beauties, to test the worth of mortals; almost invariably, the mortals prove wanting, and the fey either embarrass them or exact harsh vengeance. These stories have proven so popular and so humorous or frightening that even non-bards frequently recite them, and the widespread assumptions about the fey influence nature to grant the fey the following minor boons.

When in the presence of an active glamer spell cast by a character of fewer levels than the fey's hit dice, the fey instinctively knows the spell's effects, and is personally immune to them. The fey may then choose to strip away the spell's power by severing its tenuous power over reality, performing opposing Will checks with the spell's caster (if the caster receives any bonus to the DC of Illusion or glamer spells other than those granted by high levels or ability modifiers, his check gains a competence bonus equal to the DC bonus). If the fey is successful, the spell's effects immediately end. If the fey is unsuccessful, however, the fey loses the battle of wills, and immediately falls under the spell's sway (any spell resistance does not take effect, and the fey is considered to roll a natural 1 for any Will saves from the glamer spell). This takes a standard action regardless of results, and cannot attempt to disrupt a glamer spell's effects if the casting level is higher than the fey's HD.

Should the fey wish such, however, it may actually lend reality to the spell's effects. By taking a full round action, the fey can bolster the spell's effects, making the glamer as real as anything found in nature. The spell no longer needs a Will save (if any; should the spell affect an area or a target creature other than Self, the Will save becomes a Fortitude save instead), and becomes a Transmutation spell instead of an Illusion spell (losing or gaining bonuses and penalties as appropriate, i.e. a caster with the Spell Focus (Transmutation) feat would gain a bonus to the DC of the spell, but would lose any benefit of the Spell Focus (Illusion) feat as well). Furthermore, certain spells which mask someone's appearance take real effect. For instance, a spell that would normally disguise someone as a bear instead physically turns them into a bear, as through the use of a *polymorph* spell. Finally, all other effects of the spell remain unaltered, and the spellcaster may choose not to accept a fey's blessing in this manner. Fey may not use this on their own spells or abilities, nor may they use it on illusions inherent in a magical item (e.g. *glamered* armors, *potions of invisibility*, or *staves of illusion*) or used in tandem with a *permanency* spell or other effect which prolongs the spell's duration (such as the Extend Spell metamagic feat), as the ability to modify the spell is of temporary use.

I found that I could not sleep this morning, My barest attempts at conversation had provoked Sellyah too much, and she was not only unwilling to tell me why, she apparently had objections to my presence in the first place. She was a messenger uncomfortable with both the message and the person to whom she would deliver it. She served other fey in some capacity, but she was alone as my liaison.

In contrast, as much as I miss my family, I know that others suffered more for the war, and did so while offering more direct aid to the fey. Before the war, countless others had implored the fey to share secrets. Even yet, the fey chose only me.

Something is amiss.

Today, I spoke with Sellyah about why the orcs attacked the fey, and why the fey refused outside help. Infuriatingly, she dodged the question by asking me a question in return. Worse, I had no answer to her question.

"Why do you think the orcs came here?"

While I have never doubted this method of teaching, it has always aggravated me. I have no patience for such matters when innocents live or fall between precious seconds. I curtly answered that I did not know, and she quickly gave up the truth: there was a ley line passing through the protected lands of the fey. Upon reflection, this was all the answer I needed, both in why the fey requested my presence here and in my questions about the orcish peoples. Still, Sellyah refused to comment further, insisting that I should instead track down the villainous hand behind the orcish atrocities. While I knew why I was here, I was no closer to discovering the orcs' motivations.

So, as my master would say, if I do not know the truth, I must look at what I do know more objectively. The orcs war against us because their gods demand that they conquer all. We war against them, apparently because our gods war against theirs. In both cases, however, the true motive is missing. Though orcs are simple as a species, the rare exceptions have not disputed the need for these wars. In our case, the hatred is almost a mad instinct, like a whipped dog turning on anyone who comes near. Again, it is no surprise that the orcish gods would not explain themselves to their followers, as the orcs are often as foolish as their gods are evil. That our gods are silent, then, is the clue, and it is a troubling one at that. If our cause is just, then our gods could share the details unless somehow not allowed, but who among the righteous would prevent revealing damning evidence? Who among the vile could prevent our gods from uncovering the beacon of truth, but would allow the war to continue at all? The answer, in both cases, is simple.

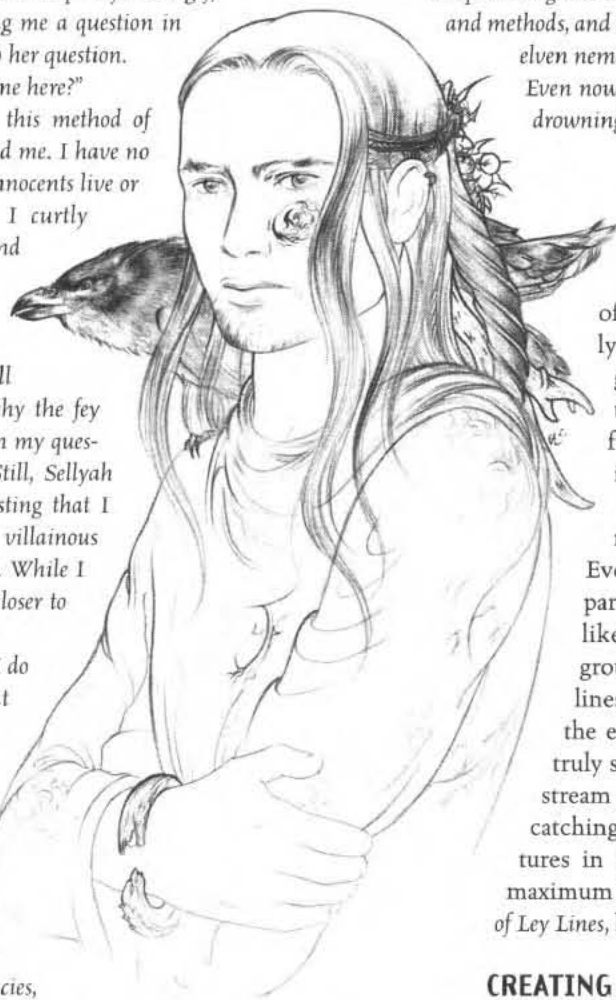
No one.

A just war waged by just men for just reasons would not hesitate to share those secrets with their soldiers. The true motives behind a righteous war would spur the righteous on to victory. That our gods do not do this means that something in this is wrong. I cannot doubt the gods' reasons for keeping this mystery, but neither can it continue. I have the tools at my disposal, the clarity of purpose, and no right not to use them both to the best of my ability.

I must end this war for the sake of both races.

I depart tonight to uncover my mysterious enemy's plans and methods, and to end the new threat behind the old elven nemeses.

Even now, I cannot think of Sellyah without drowning in a sea of rage



LEY LINES

Ley lines are rivers or arteries of natural spiritual energy, virtually overflowing with magical energies. Though most clearly visible to the naked eye in the light of a full moon, they appear as nothing more than extended, hazy moon beams without the aid of magic or supernatural sight. Even this, however, shows only part of a ley line, a faint afterimage, like an aurora borealis on the ground. Only by gazing upon ley lines with ethereal sight, or within the ethereal plane itself, can anyone truly see ley lines in their full glory. A stream of light cascades ever forward, catching spirits and unintelligent creatures in its undertow. Their width and maximum length is as described in *Powers of Ley Lines*, below.

CREATING A LEY LINE

Ley lines form when an immense number of creatures travel in the same direction, all of them of the same mind set. Truly mindless and unnatural creatures (such as lesser undead and most constructs) cannot form ley lines in their travels, and remains a difficult task for even intelligent creatures. By their nature, few intelligent creatures take journeys without hidden fears or desires, tainting an otherwise stable ley line's formation and rendering it useless. There are rare exceptions, of course, such as singularly holy pilgrimages, but an overwhelming number of people must make the trip, with a similarly overwhelmingly high percentage of them with a single thought or desire resonating through all (at least a thou-

sand people making the trip a year, and 90% or more of them truly believing in the exact same cause for the journey). The complicated minds of the intelligent races make such ley lines rare but supremely sacred to those who regularly travel the ley line's length. Instead, most ley lines form as animals travel to watering holes, during seasonal migrations, or along coastal or sea currents.

Unfortunately, ley lines also need maintenance. So long as travelers continue these lanes and mindsets, the ley line remains active (though it may fluctuate depending on the number of people or animals supporting it; see *Powers of Ley Lines*, below). If abandoned, the ley line dries up; if tainted by other mindsets, it may either weaken or even change the nature of the ley line. Changing the domain of, destroying, or moving a ley line disrupts all life forms in the area; animals lose their way, plants grow more slowly, and any benefits or side-effects of the ley lines' powers disappear.

MOVING A LEY LINE

Though rare, it is not unknown for a ley line to move. If a landslide covered a well-traveled mountain pass, for instance, but an alternate route was nearby and still reliable, the ley line would shift positions to accommodate the new path and abandon the old one. In extreme cases, an entire length of a ley line may become impenetrable (i.e. a plague hits a region, and the local constabulary quarantines the area), but the journey itself continues, shifting a ley line miles from its former path. So long as the beginning and end point of a ley line remain intact (as well as any crossroads, see *Crossroads*, below), and travelers still keep up with the journey itself, the ley line weakens only slightly. It otherwise flows with the same essences. If a ley line's path is entirely blocked, and there is no alternate path to continue, the ley line slowly dies (consult the chart below, in the *Powers of Ley Lines* section). If the ley line meets a crossroads, its weakness does not affect the other ley line(s), but if a ley line is one of only two at a crossroads, the crossroads is effectively destroyed.

Natural changes, however, are less catastrophic than magical ones.

A rare spell, *let the road rise*, forcibly moves the ley line's dimensions to those that better suit the caster. Though the beginning and end of the ley line do not change, nor do any crossroads, the ley line reorients itself to the caster's will, and may change domains because of the spell's power. Though the travelers along the path do not change noticeably, any new domain to the ley line subtly affects them due to the domain's side effects (see *Powers of Ley Lines*, below). What may once have been a ley line leading animals to good hunting grounds (Animal domain) may warp into a hellish landscape of mad beasts (Destruction

domain). Additionally, any cleric with access to the ley line's original domain, as well as any druids, view the use of such a spell as an unholy affront, and are likely to seek out and attack the spellcaster during the casting.

Let the Road Rise

Conjuration (Teleportation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 8

Range: 0 ft.

Components: V, S, M, XP

Casting Time: 1 day/ley line's strength

Target: A ley line of a power level less than or equal to half your casting level

Duration: 1 year/caster level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Special

This spell extends a ley line to the your location, as much as 5 miles per your caster level, minus a number of miles equal to the ley line's strength. At the spell's completion, the ley line shifts to accommodate the caster's location, much like diverting a river or tethering a rope in place. Nothing else moves; people or animals already on the ley line suddenly find themselves inexplicably lost and disoriented if the ley line has shifted around them, as though any familiar landmarks are somehow out of place. From here on, those who travel the ley line intuitively know that the new path is the correct one, but are slightly disturbed by the changes. In fact, this is an effect of stretching the ley line's power beyond its original boundaries, and the ley line weakens one level. For the purposes of this spell only, ley lines are considered to have spell resistance equal to triple their strength.

You must have some clear idea of the location, layout, and energies of the ley line to use this spell. You may not simply cast this spell, and have the nearest ley line move as you wish. Nor can you cast this spell if geography or distance physically separates the ley line from your location (i.e. the ley line journeys through a mountain range to a distant city, and the ending points are either outside your range, or blocked off by sheer rock walls). Similarly, if you cast this spell and the new path would extend the ley line beyond its normal path distance (see *Powers of Ley Lines*), the spell instantly fails. You may not move a ley line's end points, nor may you move a ley line where it meets a crossroads. If the spell's duration lapses, the ley line snaps back into its former place (or as close as possible), and regains its former associated domain.

It is possible to create a crossroads through multiple uses of this spell, twisting two ley lines to meet at a location of your choosing. If you create a crossroads, the duration of this spell becomes indefinite, so long as the two ley lines retain enough strength to meet at the crossroads. Unfortunately, an artificial crossroads is even more unsta-

ble than an artificial ley line movement, and doubles the chances of random summonings.

If a ley line is of sufficient level of strength after you move it, you may choose to override its associated domain. You may not change a ley line's associated domain into its opposite (as listed in Table 2-1, below), change an alignment to oppose your own alignment, or to give it one of the following domains: Chaos (moving a ley line is a lawful act, forcing your will onto the ley line), Good (the choice to move a ley line is an inherently self-ish decision, as it disrupts the lives of countless others), Healing (disrupting the ley line's natural flow damages the environment), Plant (the Plant domain is not available as an associated domain for ley lines), or Sun (the Sun domain is not available as an associated domain for ley lines). To give an elemental domain to a ley line, the location where you cast this spell must have a high concentration of the element (e.g. a windy monastery for Air, a mountain range or cave for Earth, a volcanic rift for Fire, a pure lake or mighty river for Water). Domains without opposites may change normally.

This spell is so rare that it is unavailable through any means other than research or role-play (though a party member can still teach it to another). Instead, you must make a Knowledge (arcane) check at DC 35 to discover this spell and release what it is you possess. If you have 10 or more ranks in Spellcraft you gain a +2 synergy bonus to the check.

The material component for this spell is a lodestone of exceptional strength, valued at 5,000 gp. It costs 5,000 XP to cast this spell.

TABLE 2-1: OPPOSING ASSOCIATIONS FOR LEY LINE DOMAINS

Domain	Opposite Domain
Air	Earth
Animal	None
Chaos	Law
Death	Sun
Destruction	Healing
Earth	Air
Evil	Good
Fire	Water
Good	Evil
Healing	Destruction
Knowledge	Trickery
Law	Chaos
Luck	None
Magic	None
Protection	Destruction
Strength	None
Travel	None
Trickery	Knowledge
War	None
Water	Fire

Crossroads

Many races place a religious or superstitious power on crossroads, whether a crossroad is as simple as a tributary stream meeting a raging river, or even cobblestone streets meeting in a city. Arcane sages and clerics of the Travel domain understand the roots of these beliefs, as where ley lines cross, their powers combine, enhancing both the ley lines' effective levels in the area, and combining their benefits and side-effects.

More interestingly, crossroads act as anchors for ley lines. Though a ley line may move generally, due to the effects outlined above, a crossroad prevents the ley line from completely changing its dimensions. While the ley line may distort horribly from movement, it must still meet the crossroads.

Rarely, two opposed ley lines cross, usually at the point of legendary battles or in disputed lands. In such a case, the crossroads, however powerful it may be, is largely unsafe for anyone to travel. Powerful forces on both sides view the land as an important front for an extended war campaign. While neither side can afford to lose ground to their enemy, often leading to stalemates as long as the crossroads holds, neither can they let up in the conflict. This usually spills over onto those who travel the ley lines, as the easiest and safest way to end this particular conflict is to destroy the enemy's ley line. In any case, the chances of random summonings at a crossroads is doubled (or tripled, if the crossroads was created through the use of a *let the road rise* spell).

Clerics, particularly those of the Travel domain, keep a steady eye on crossroads. Like artifacts, crossroads are powerful and dangerous tools. Even discounting the random summonings, powerful crossroads can directly link to another plane, establishing a periodic or even a permanent gateway to that world. Regardless of whether a cleric views the crossroads as a holy site or a profane and heretical threat, the powers involved are too great to go unchecked. Arcanists might try to tap into the crossroads' power, enemies might receive messages from their gods or stage raids through the gate, and the clerics' own gods may send aid or invoke divine quests through the crossroads.

Powers of Ley Lines

The mindsets held during the creation of a ley line influence the scope of the ley line's power. Though rarely created by intelligent races, ley lines of exceptional strength align with the ideals that spawned them, providing benefits to those who can tap into these ideals, usually spell-casters.

To those who can use the ley lines, however, great power is available. Tapping into a ley line increases a spell's strength, particularly if the spell keys into the ley line's associated domain. With sufficient power to a ley

line, a spellcaster of any real talent is all but invincible. To gain access to such power as associated ley lines offer, creatures must remain on the ley line a number of continuous days equal to the ley line's strength, after which the creatures are attuned for a number of days equal to their Wisdom modifier. Though the greatest ley lines also pose the greatest risks in exploitation, few doubt that the risks are worth it. Table 2-2 outlines the common limits of ley lines.

Arcane Ley Lines [General]

You can attune your arcane energies to ley lines.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, ability to cast arcane spells.

Benefit: You can attune to ley lines, allowing you to draw upon their power in conjunction with your arcane spells. Depending on the distance you are from the ley line, it can take as little as 1 round or as long as an hour to attune to it.

Normal: Characters cannot attune to ley lines without knowing exactly where they are.

TABLE 2-2: LEY LINE LIMITS

Ley Line Strength*	Dimensions (length/width)**	Support Needed/Year†	Random Summoning Chance (by year)	Example Ley Line
1	¼ of a mile/10 ft.	100 creature/year	0.1%	A small path leading to favored wintering grounds for animals.
2	½ of a mile/15 ft.	150 creatures/year	0.5%	A popular watering hole for animals.
3	1 mile/20 ft.	200 creatures/year	1%	A desert oasis, untouched and unknown to the intelligent races.
4	2 miles/20 ft.	250 creatures/year	2%	A secret pathway leading to a sacred site for conducting rites of passage.
5	4 miles/25 ft.	300 creatures/year	3%	A migration pattern of animals, unthreatened by the intelligent races.
6‡	8 miles/30 ft.	350 creatures/year	5%	A long journey to a sacred meditation lodge, a retirement site wherein those who are so old or sick as to be a burden to their people await death.
7	16 miles/35 ft.	400 creatures/year	10%	The site of a mass exodus, perhaps those fleeing war or plague.
8	32 miles/40 ft.	450 creatures/year	15%	Marching grounds for an exceptionally disciplined army of conquerors or protectors.
9	64 miles/45 ft.	500 creatures/year	20%	A lonely, well-kept path to a tomb of a great hero.
10§	128 miles/50 ft.	550 creatures/year	25%	A pilgrimage sacred to a highly lawful society.

* While standing within a ley line, characters add the ley line's strength to their casting level when casting spells, in addition to other effects.

** Crossroads do not have an effective length, but rather a radius of effect. To determine this radius, add the widths of each of the weakest and strongest ley line in the crossroads. All those standing within this many feet of the actual point where the crossroads link, gain the benefits and suffer the penalties for all involved ley lines, whether standing directly in a ley line or not. Ley lines can be shorter than the allotted distance, but not longer.

† If the ley line receives a category less, the following year lowers the ley line's strength to that level. If a ley line's strength is reduced to 0 (fewer travelers are necessary to sustain it), or has its maximum length reduced below the actual length of the ley line, the ley line is destroyed. If a ley line receives a number of devoted travelers every year equal to a higher strength ley line, after a hundred years, it increases its level to equal the new amount. No more than 10% of these travelers may deviate from the ley line's required mindset.

Crossroads may not be directly destroyed in this manner, though the destruction of ley lines reduces its power.

‡ Ley lines of 6 or higher strength have an associated domain (see below). Crossroads do not have associated domains of their own, but rather share all domains associated with each of the crossroads' ley lines.

§ Ley lines have a maximum strength of 10. To determine the strength of a crossroads, add together the strengths of the lowest and highest strength ley lines. Likewise, add together the percentage chance of summonings. If a crossroads has 100% or greater chance of an annual summoning, there is a permanent gateway to one or more planes at the crossroads, and outsiders from that plane cross over as often or rarely as the DM sees fit.

In addition, ley lines with a strength of 10 have enough concentrated energies of their domain that deities that share or oppose this domain view the area as a potential power base on the material realm, and are ever watchful over these areas. In emergency situations, these powers may intervene, either personally or indirectly (dispatching a select group of followers, or using their divine abilities to protect the gods' interests).

Divine Ley Lines [General]

You can attune your divine energies to ley lines.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, ability to cast divine spells.

Benefit: You can attune to ley lines, allowing you to draw upon their power. Depending on the distance you are from the closest ley line, it can take as little as 1 round or as long as an hour to attune to it. You can utilize these ley lines in conjunction with your divine spells.

Normal: Characters cannot attune to ley lines without knowing exactly where they are.

ASSOCIATED DOMAIN BENEFITS AND SIDE EFFECTS

Powerful ley lines are concentrated zones of power, easily accessed by those already attuned to the ley lines' domains. These ley lines are extraordinarily rare; perhaps five exist for any single domain, and often fewer (if any exist at all). With the exception of Animal and some Travel domains ley lines, all of these ley lines arise from the travels of intelligent races, rather than animals. As sources of magical energies, however, ley lines and crossroads are also contentious grounds during wars. With several powerful spellcasters in attendance, a ley line is all but impervious to outright attacks, while subterfuge is only marginally more successful a strategy. Worse still, any emotionally-charged battles at ley lines run the risk of damaging the ley line's ties to its associated domain, as enemy forces still count as part of the total population traveling the ley line.

The following list contains the domains, their requirements for creation, benefits and side-effects, and a listing of the types of monsters that are most readily summoned along it or from a random summoning result. In addition, remember that all ley lines and crossroads add their strength to a spellcaster's casting level while the spellcaster casts a spell from within a ley line. Summons on these ley lines, including those creatures randomly summoned by gates, obey the rules outlined below.

Air

Air is only rarely an associated domain, requiring an isolated mountain peak with high winds, arcane manipulations, or even a natural, airborne ley line. Often overlooked, however, are natural wind tunnels in underground caves or in windy deserts or badlands. The key is less a large, free source of air, but a constant, strong wind suggesting the element almost comes alive. Though bird migrations and other, more intelligent creatures most often create these ley lines, children sometimes do so as well, transforming a simple hilltop good for kiting into a true ley line. Unfortunately, air ley lines are easily disturbed, and few survive for long.

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Any spellcaster casting an available Air Domain spell or a spell with the [Electricity] descriptor may attempt to cast the spell without losing a spell slot for the day. To do this, the ley line's strength must be at least double the spell's level, and the spellcaster must succeed on a Spellcraft check (DC = 5 × the spell's level). Only one spell slot per day per level may be saved in this manner.
- *Other Benefits:* Those running with the wind at their backs have their movement speed doubled (after all other effects). Similarly, those firing ranged weapons with the wind behind them double their range increments.
- *Summonings:* Summoned creatures are either flying creatures native to the region, or creatures of the Air sub-type, but otherwise obey all summoning rules.
- *Side-Effects:* The magical winds lead to unstable footing. While moving (including in melee combat), creatures on the ground or jumping must make a Balance check (DC = 2 × the ley line's strength) or fall prone instead. Creatures may eliminate this chance by taking slow, deliberate steps, but in so doing lose any Dex and Dodge bonuses to AC and Initiative. Additionally, flying creatures still have their movement increased as above, but sacrifice their maneuverability due to the high winds. Flying creatures have their maneuverability downgraded one category. Clumsy fliers may not fly, and any attempts to do so result in the creature flailing about helplessly before falling and suffering damage (equal to that of a fall of the ley line's strength × 10 ft., or the creature's flight speed, whichever is less). Creatures of the Air sub-type are immune to the loss of maneuverability. Using ranged weapons becomes more difficult, causing a -2 circumstance penalty to attacks, doubled to -4 if attacking directly into the wind. Finally, grenade weapons are unreliable, suffering a -4 circumstance penalty to hitting the target correctly.

Animal

Animal ley lines are small and at a distance from civilized areas, created by animals' natural movement patterns. Few survive the touch of intelligent races, but particularly spiritual tribes of barbarians (primarily those with a high number of druids present) walk the ley lines less as greedy poachers or sportsmen, but as almost natural predators. While the animals still create and maintain these lines, it is the barbarian tribes who elevate the ley line to higher levels of strength. Animals instinctively know and follow these ley lines, even if not they are not native to the area, and high level Animal ley lines (strength of 8 or more) have several dire animals as natural protectors.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Once per day, *summon nature's ally* calls forth double the normal amount.
- **Other Benefits:** Any successful attempt at an Animal Empathy check spreads its benefits to all animals along the ley line, so long as they are of the same breed. This does not extend to dire animals or vermin. Additionally, barbarians may rage an additional time per day while on an Animal ley line.
- **Summonings:** Summonings call up an animal or dire animal if possible, though summoned animals (especially those near crossroads with alignment domains) may have additional templates.
- **Side-Effects:** Animal ley lines are attuned to the more primitive aspects of intelligent species, and on full moons, this bestial aspect comes to the fore. During a night with a full moon, all humanoids and giants within a number of miles equal to the ley line's strength gain a lycanthrope template of the DM's choosing. This afflicted lycanthropy lasts 1d4 days after the full moon, but bite attacks from these lycanthropes do not inflict lycanthropy. The lycanthropy wears off 1d4 days after the full moon, and has no lingering effects.

Chaos

Chaos ley lines are virtually unheard of, as the creation of ley lines require a focused mind. The few known are the creations of the willfully chaotic, often lunatic or nomads with no set travel pattern. Even more strangely, they appear and disappear of their own accord, and none are entirely sure whether any chaos ley line has ever been destroyed, or it has simply entered a dormant state.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** The first spell of the day cast spontaneously is cast as though with the Maximize Spell metamagic feat.
- **Other Benefits:** All creatures on the ley line may act freely, as though subject to a *freedom of movement* spell.
- **Summonings:** Any spell or effect summoning a creature summons a monster of the DM's choosing instead, so long as it is of the same CR.
- **Side-Effects:** Any Concentration check or Will save that succeeds by a greater margin than the ley line's strength makes the ley line disappear for a duration of the DM's choosing.

Death

Death ley lines are among the most common ley lines, as death itself strikes regularly, through plague, war, accidents, or simply age. The grim tasks of removing the fallen from battlefields, or the honoring of the dead with funerary rites both provoke the exact thoughts necessary for ley lines to form. Even simple legends of haunted forests, told often enough, give rise to death ley lines.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Any living creature that dies from a magical effect is reanimated as an undead (skeleton or zombie) under the control of its killer.

Creatures destroyed by massive damage may not be animated in this manner, and the effect ends once the controller leaves the ley line's boundaries.

- **Other Benefits:** All undead on the ley line gain turn resistance, as though bolstered by an evil cleric of a level and Charisma equal to the ley line's strength +4.
- **Summonings:** All summoning effects summon undead, if possible and within the spell's description.
- **Side-Effects:** All regeneration effects are negated, and attempts to raise any recently dead creature fails while the corpse is on the ley line. Creatures who die on the ley line are animated as undead, as per the spell *animate dead* cast by a sorcerer with a casting level of the ley line's strength level.

Destruction

Invariably the regular routes of pillaging barbarian tribes and similar marauders, destruction ley lines arise wherever havoc is not merely an accident, but a way of life. These ley lines bear obvious traces of their passage, as the lines' ruinous path leaves nothing standing. Trees break, the ground splits, and cities fall to rubble, all due to the power of the ley lines.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** The first spell of the day that inflicts damage, is considered to have been cast as though with the Maximize Spell metamagic feat.
- **Other Benefits:** All weapons have their critical threat multiplier increased by one. All attempts to sunder an item automatically inflict the maximum possible damage.



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- **Summonings:** Summoned creatures may be of any type, but do not follow the commands of their summoner. Instead, they attack with a berserk rage (as though they were barbarians of a level equal to their hit dice), striking out at anyone or anything nearby.
- **Side-Effects:** All attempts to heal hits automatically heal the minimum possible amount. Additionally, a destruction ley line automatically destroys any items that remain on it a number of continuous days greater than the items' hardness.

Earth

Earth ley lines are unique in that they exist for centuries without being discovered. Though dwarven tunnels and goblinoid mines may team with ley lines, or swaying rope bridges on the surface promote the fear of the ground far below, those who travel the ley lines rarely even consider the power that flows everywhere. This may even account for otherwise inexplicable drow attacks, as that race is more familiar with magic than most other races near these ley lines.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Any spellcaster casting an available Earth Domain spell or a spell with the [Acid] descriptor may attempt to cast the spell without losing a spell slot for the day. To do this, the ley line's strength must be at least double the spell's level, and the spellcaster must succeed on a Spellcraft check (DC = 5 × the spell's level). Only one spell slot per day per level may be saved in this manner.
- **Other Benefits:** Earth ley lines have magic to spare, resulting in rich veins of rare minerals and gems. An Earth ley line generates such precious materials whenever a random summoning takes place, producing raw ore or uncut stones equal to the line's strength times 1,000 in gp. Further, in order to cast an *earthquake* spell, spellcasters must be at least a level higher than the ley lines' strength.
- **Summonings:** Summoned creatures are either tunneling creatures native to the region, or creatures of the Earth sub-type, but otherwise obey all summoning rules.
- **Side-Effects:** Unfortunately, the ley lines' power comes with a price, as the lines themselves stabilize the surrounding earth. Whenever an Earth ley line is moved, destroyed, or reduced in power, it results in an earthquake (along the line's entire length, but otherwise as per the spell of the same name, cast by a sorcerer of a level equal to the ley line's previous strength).

Evil

Evil ley lines are the easiest to predict forming as they do around the greatest villains and following the cruelest acts in history. The war torn battlefields of orcish hordes, the smoldering remains of a cult's foul lair, the loose cadre

of wizard towers dedicated to plumbing the ether for forbidden secrets: all these and more give rise to the dark energies of an Evil ley line.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** By sacrificing a victim (performing a coup de grace on a helpless, living creature) as a spell is completed, the spellcaster may add the creature's Challenge Rating to the caster's casting level. Doing so consumes the soul of the victim, who may not be raised by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell.
- **Other Benefits:** Evil ley lines favor treacherous actions. Whenever a creature makes a melee or ranged strike while his opponent is flat-footed or otherwise incapable of self-defense, the strike automatically threatens a critical hit.
- **Summonings:** Summonings apparently work fine, but creatures of the [Evil] sub-type are more common than normal, and willfully reinterpret any orders so as to do the most excessive damage possible.
- **Side-Effects:** Paladins and clerics with access to the Good domain may not cast spells without making a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the ley line's strength level) each time they attempt to cast a spell. Additionally, those who violate their codes of conduct by committing an evil act must also perform a *lesser geas* before they may achieve *atonement* (as per the spells of the same names). Evil deities may be watching as well, and rarely pass up the opportunity for a qualified paladin to convert to a blackguard.

Fire

Fire-associated ley lines are terribly dangerous, unstable even compared to Chaos lines. Open flames become roaring bonfires, and Fire lines may literally burn themselves out if their power goes unchecked. These ley lines twist their way through the charred remains of massive fires, becoming paths of relative safety through sweltering deserts, or down trails of lava. Unlike other ley lines, the Fire lines need no one to actually travel the path, but instead to fear and respect it as any other fire.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Any spellcaster casting an available Fire Domain spell or a spell with the [Fire] or [Flame] descriptors may attempt to cast the spell without losing a spell slot for the day. To do this, the ley line's strength must be at least double the spell's level, and the spellcaster must succeed on a Spellcraft check (DC = 5 × the spell's level). Only one spell slot per day per level may be saved in this manner. If cast at a target in the ley line, however, this may cause roaring flames (see *side-effects, below*).
- **Other Benefits:** Flames and heat from a Fire ley line are powerful forces indeed, and any weapon forged in this heat gains the *flaming* enchantment. Unfortunately,

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this may not be turned off, and requires the utmost care in use. While within ($5 \times$ the ley line's strength in feet), the ley line's heat prevents any damage from extreme cold.

- **Summonings:** Summoned creatures are normally creatures of the Fire sub-type, but otherwise obey all summoning rules.
- **Side-Effects:** The most unstable element by far, unchecked flames consume themselves, even along the Fire ley lines. If an open flame ignites or spreads to a Fire line, the whole line is aflame in magical fire in a number of hours equal to the ley line's strength. Afterwards, the line loses one level of strength an hour until it no longer has the Fire domain. During this burning period, the fires deal 1d12 damage per strength level. Additionally, walking directly on a ley line, even an unlit one, is like walking in extreme heat (see page 303 of the DMG).

Good

In stark relief from Evil ley lines, Good lines form not through violent crusades or even necessarily an arduous journey to overthrow a terrible villain (though the best-known are). While evil thrives on melodrama and treachery, good comes from self-sacrifice and the desire to aid others. For every ley line born when a righteous paladin lead an army of light to overthrow a terrible corrupt foe, still more come from less bombastic tales of simple farmers offering shelter to strangers in winter, or of distant neighbors visiting whenever a friend is sick. Though these ley lines' origins are less forceful, the lines themselves last as long as such simple heroism feeds the magic.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** It is easy to miss the benefits of Good-aligned ley lines, and no less so for spellcasters. Once per day, a spellcaster may cast a spell as though with the Quicken Spell metamagic feat, but only when benefiting a friend or innocent in dire need, and never to deal direct damage to a creature.
- **Other Benefits:** Good-aligned ley lines reward heroism. Whenever a creature takes an action to aid another by granting an ally an AC bonus (see PHB, 154), the creature grants his companion a +4 AC bonus instead of the normal +2 bonus.
- **Summonings:** As befits the line's tendencies, summons usually result in creatures of the [Good] sub-type, though in most instances this is a subtle distinction, invisible to the naked eye. Good creatures summoned in this manner rebel if ordered to perform evil actions, and chaotic good creatures may subtly twist any commands to work against evil summoners.
- **Side-Effects:** Paladins and clerics with access to the Evil domain may not cast spells without making a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the ley line's strength level) each time

they attempt to cast a spell. Additionally, those who violate their codes of conduct by committing an evil act must also perform a *lesser geas* before they may achieve atonement (as per the spells of the same names). Evil deities may be watching as well, and rarely pass up the opportunity for a qualified paladin to convert to a blackguard.

Healing

Healing ley lines are usually short paths or hidden retreats, empowered not by action but pure belief. Hot springs, paths between sacred sweat lodges and nearby tundra, and holy forests full of medicinal herbs all may provide homes to Healing ley lines. These lines exist independently of alignment, however, and extravagant vampires indulge in sacrificial rivers of blood to similar effect.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Whenever a spell heals a creature outside of combat, the caster casts the spell as though he had used the Maximize Spell metamagic feat.
- **Other Benefits:** Healing lands are literal life savers. While on a Healing ley line, creatures gain a sacred bonus equal to the ley line's strength on all stabilization checks.
- **Summonings:** Randomly summoned creatures are usually intelligent and wounded, seeking the ley lines' recuperative powers. All other summons occur as normal.
- **Side-Effects:** While the ley lines' benefits are indisputable, and comfortable even when not wounded, luxuriating in these locations too long is a selfish and chaotic act. Further, attempting to profit from the ley lines' curative powers risks weakening the ley line, as exploiting the Healing lines' gifts for money is counter to the natural and freely-granted benefits of these lines.

Knowledge

Knowledge ley lines are unique to intelligent races, created as often by a mass of students seeking out a famed university or library as through ritual training grounds of barbarian tribes. These ley lines grant subtler benefits than most, relying not on direct power or advantage, but rather on the wisdom of the ages and the inventive minds of the youth.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Once per day per spellcaster level, a spellcaster may cast a divination or Knowledge domain spell without using a spell slot. Spellcasters may only cast any given spell once per day in this manner.
- **Other Benefits:** Walking the ley lines while meditating on a problem is not simple fidgeting, but invoking the ley lines' power. By walking a distance along the line (subtract the creature's Wisdom modifier from the ley line's strength, and compare the new result to the distance listed on Table 2-2, with the result equaling the distance necessary), the creature may retest a failed

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Knowledge check at the end of the journey. If the ley line is long enough that one or more such treks may be fully made without walking back along the ley line (rounding down on fractions), the creature may continue retests until he succeeds in the check or he reaches the end of the ley line.

- **Summonings:** Summons are usually of intelligent creatures, but otherwise unmodified.
- **Side-Effects:** To those who understand the potential knowledge holds, Knowledge ley lines are invaluable resources. Unlike other ley lines, Knowledge lines are unaffected by conflict, so long as all sides seek the lore hidden within the ley lines' boundaries (most creatures involved in the attack are either mindless or do not have both a negative Intelligence modifier and a negative Wisdom modifier).

Law

Law ley lines are only common to fanatically lawful societies, usually lawful neutral or lawful evil ones. The agents of law trod these paths, their goals ever foremost in their minds. Routes favored by tax collectors, police, and other officials are all likely to become Law ley lines, particularly if the law bans anyone else from treading these paths.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Any prepared spell cast on a Law ley line is cast as though with the Maximize Spell metamagic feat.
- **Other Benefits:** All promises or oaths spoken along a Law ley line gain the benefit of the ley line's power, becoming a lesser geas (as per the spell of the same name, cast by a wizard of a level equal to the line's strength). This effect only happens for sworn oaths or promises, not for any simple statement or agreement. In addition, those who travel the ley line may *discern truth* at will a number of times per day (as per the spell of the same name, a number of times per day equal to the lesser of the creature's Wisdom modifier or the ley line's strength, and cast as a cleric of the creature's level).
- **Summonings:** There are no truly random summonings at Law ley lines. Instead, the summons occur at fixed intervals. When someone first encounters a Law ley line and assuming the DM does not assign a specific

interval to it, the DM checks to see if there is a random summoning this year. If not, the result of the roll minus the percentage chance of the summons is equal to the number of years until the next summoning. Summoned creatures are lawful, and obedient to their summoner to the best of their abilities.

- **Side-Effects:** Law ley lines thrive on order, but suffer greatly if disturbed. If moved or weakened, Law ley lines are reduced an additional level of strength.

Luck

As with Chaos and Trickery domain ley lines, Luck lines are rare and fickle. There is no logical standard for these ley lines' creation or destruction, and even invoking their benefits is a dubious decision at best.

Those who tempt fate receive rewards and punishments in equal measure... unless, of course, they are lucky.

- **Spellcasting Benefits:** Whenever making a roll or check, those on the ley line may choose to invoke the benefits of the ley line, and reroll, accepting either result. Every creature on the ley line may use this benefit a number of times per day equal to the Luck line's strength plus their Charisma modifier (minimum of once per day), but may not use this benefit more than once on the same roll or check.

- **Other Benefits:** As above.

- **Summonings:** There are no changes to any summonings.

- **Side-Effects:** Each time after a creature uses the benefit of a Luck ley line, the DM may force that creature to reroll a later successful roll or check. The DM may

only force one reroll to a specific roll or check, and only a number of times up to the number of times the creature used the benefit. The creature's debt to luck follows him, however, and the DM may force this reroll even if the creature is no longer on the ley line.

Magic

Magic ley lines present a quandary to researchers. Epic battles between magical forces create some of these ley lines, while others appear apparently without cause or support. Their powers are undoubtedly great, as these are among the purest and greatest sources of magic known, but the mysteries surround them are troubling, even deadly. Though the benefits of Magic ley lines tempt all



spellcasters who know of them, only the most foolish would wield these magicks without first considering whether the price might ultimately be worth it...

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Spellcasters on a ley line gain a number of free spell slots per day equal to the ley line's strength. These spell slots are only useful for reducing the increased spell slot cost of metamagic feats, and may not reduce a spell's modified level below the spell's printed level for the casters' casting class.
- *Other Benefits:* None. The magic of a Magic ley line is for spellcasters and spellcasters alone.
- *Summonings:* There are no changes to any summonings.
- *Side-Effects:* Instead of requiring travelers to sustain their power, Magic ley lines demand other, more esoteric sources of energy, as the DM chooses.

This may be an annual sacrifice of a number of item charges equal to the number of travelers that would otherwise be necessary, or the number of hours per day the spellcasters must remain on the ley line to remain attuned. Sadistic DMs may demand still more, such as obedience to the ley lines' creators, or aiding any creatures randomly summoned along the line's length.

Plant

There are no Plant-associated ley lines, as this would require a large number of sentient creatures of the Plant type, all separate but behaving as of one mind. Those who seek out plants instead create Animal lines (if animals), Healing or Protection lines (if seeking to raise buildings or find healing herbs), or War (if intending to harvest the plants for weapons or poisons). While it is theoretically possible that such lines may eventually occur, nobody is entirely certain what these ley lines would create. The DM is encouraged to customize such a ley line for his campaign, should he deem it necessary.

Protection

Protection ley lines are normally circular paths, often around a sacred site, city, or artifact. There is no desire for duty or war behind these ley lines, but rather a steadfast

need that whatever the line guards, remains guarded at all costs. Sometimes these are straight lines instead, barring passage, but they always stand watch over something valuable. Those who support these lines are almost invariably guardians patrolling a predetermined route.

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Spells which bolster AC, hit points, or saving throws grant an additional sacred bonus equal to the ley lines' strength.
- *Other Benefits:* Protection ley lines favor those who do not fail or waver in the lines' sacred missions. So long as no one crosses the ley line's full width, those who are attuned and walk the path do not age, require no food, drink, or sleep, and may fight normally until reduced below -11 hit points, at which point they die as normal.

- *Summonings:* Summoned creatures attempting to cross the width of the ley line hedge themselves out in so doing, banishing themselves in the process.

- *Side-Effects:* If a Protection ley line's width is ever fully crossed, the ley line is permanently and irrevocably destroyed. If its guardians have lived beyond their natural life spans, or gone without food or water for so long that they should have starved, the guardians immediately die.



Strength

Though only the most dedicated scholars study ley lines long enough to categorize the lines, when the less-disciplined students of magic think of ley lines, they usually think of Strength lines. Strength ley lines form quickly, often in the aftermath of a famous hero's quest or in recognition of some other monumental deed, such as an epic contest of strength and skill. Where other ley lines represent the will and desires of many, Strength ley lines recognize the individual's own might. Though favored by tyrants and heroes alike for this very reason, Strength ley lines only acknowledge one master over each line at a time. Those who wrest control of these ley lines immediately gain these benefits, but must guard the newfound power jealously.

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- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Once per day per ley line level, the master of the ley line may gain the benefits of any one feat. While he must meet all the feat's requirements, he keeps these benefits for one hour, or until he uses this benefit again, whichever comes first. Any feat simulated in this way is lost if the master of the line loses his attunement to the line.
- *Other Benefits:* As above.
- *Summonings:* Summoned creatures are exemplary of their kind, and are usually of a higher level of advancement than normal.
- *Side-Effects:* Only one person at a time may attune himself to a Strength ley line, and only so long as he accepts any challenge to his ability. Should someone else call the master out to a duel, the master must accept, though the master traditionally defines the nature of the contest. For this very reason, few fighters survive challenging a wizard's control over a Strength ley line. Should the master of the ley line resort to treachery rather than rely on his own strength (such as by sabotaging the challenger, or naming conditions to the match that the challenger is incapable of fulfilling), the line abandons him forever.

Sun

It is not wholly accurate to claim that there are no Sun ley lines, but not even the most insane minds would try to create another. The one known Sun line is the actual path of the sun through the sky. Though many legends speak of battles held on this ley line, often over the fate of the world, it is also a blazing inferno, and to tap into its power is to court death. The DM should only allow access to the Sun line as part of an apocalyptic campaign, and even then, the power of the ley line should be as mysterious as it is destructive, and tailored to the DM's campaign.

Travel

Travel ley lines are the most common form of associated lines, born from the simple movements of all creatures. Though comparatively few ley lines ever become an associated ley line, over half that do run with the energies of this domain. Hardy and useful, these lines last so long as all who walk the lines seek to continue the journeys to the end.

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Travel lines lend themselves well to creative spellcasters. A spellcaster may target a spell without regard for line of sight, so long as both spellcaster and target are on a Travel line and the target is within the spell's range. Travel ley lines also make perfect homes for permanent teleportation circles, waiving the experience cost for the creation of such a circle (up to 1 circles per 2 ley line strength levels, rounding down).

- *Other Benefits:* Travel ley lines allow for speedy movement. So long as there is no break from travel longer than an hour a day, movement along the ley line is doubled.
- *Summonings:* Summonings occur as normal, but a random summoning along a Travel line results in a lost traveler from another plane arriving. The traveler may be seeking shelter from enemies, seeking new worlds to conquer, or have a mind so abstract and alien that its desires are equally incomprehensible.
- *Side-Effects:* Travel ley lines benefit all travelers, not just the peaceful ones. Due to the extra speed granted by Travel ley lines, invaders frequently target the lines first, the better to threaten all the lands the lines cross. Clerics that serve the Travel domain guard against such attacks, fearing what might happen if all these lines fall to would-be conquerors.

Trickery

Favored by malevolent fey and aberrations, trickery ley lines stretch over the world, quivering and twisting at their own mad whims. Like all ley lines, their power arises from the shared beliefs and movements of the creatures that travel the lengths of the ley, but Trickery lines alone twist and grasp to find new, fertile grounds to feed upon. Whenever the truth is not so much lost as it is deliberately distorted, a Trickery ley line may not only result, but slither to the deception, apparently of its own free will. Trickery ley lines appear as absolutely, perfectly normal extensions of the environment.

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Treachery is the rule, not the exception, on Trickery lines, and deceitful magic is the stronger for it. Whenever a Trickery domain spell or illusion spell is in effect on a Trickery ley line and someone must make a Will save to avoid the spells' effects, he must make two consecutive Will saves instead of one.
- *Other Benefits:* All Bluff, Disguise, Forgery, Hide, and Move Silently checks gain an enhancement bonus equal to the Trickery ley line's strength level.
- *Summonings:* Summonings on Trickery lines do not work quite as the summoner intended, and while the creatures are otherwise unmodified, all summoned creatures' types change to aberration. Additionally, the DM may decide that any given Trickery ley line is an extension of one of the Far Realms, distant planes of madness and alien, virtually incomprehensible denizens. In such circumstances, random summonings spew forth these foul creatures, the least of which are any kind of aberration, at their maximum advancement.

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- *Side-Effects:* Trickery lines befuddle the senses, confusing even the most disciplined souls. All Appraise, Concentration, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge, Listen, Sense Motive, Spellcraft, Spot, and Survival checks made on a Trickery line suffer a competence penalty equal to the ley line's strength level.

War

Though the power of Magic is more malleable, the wasting effects of Death and Destruction more direct, and the madness of Trickery more frightening, War ley lines are perhaps the most deadly of all their ilk. Unlike other ley lines, War lines feed on their own power, inviting conflict after conflict until the ley line overflows its limits, catching all in its wake.

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Any spell which manipulates emotion (anger, fear, rage, etc.) has its effect increased as though one of the following metamagic feats were imposed: Empowered Spell, Extended Spell, or Maximize Spell. This benefit does not require attunement to the ley line.
- *Other Benefits:* While on the ley line, all creatures are enraged, as though under the effects of a continuous rage spell cast by a sorcerer of a level equal to the ley line's strength. Resisting this effect requires a Will save (DC 10 + ley line strength). Creatures may perform a coupe de grace as a move-equivalent action.
- *Summonings:* All summoned creatures immediately seek out combat unless specifically ordered otherwise by their summoner. If left to their own devices, summoned creatures turn on each other, then themselves. Summoned creatures on a War ley line attack without regard for their own safety, but do not otherwise obey any order which would bring them to harm.
- *Side-Effects:* Any prolonged conflict feeds the ley line not annually as is normal for ley lines, but daily. Should any single combat have the required numbers for the ley line to increase strength, the line's strength level increases at dusk that night, or dawn the following morning (whichever comes first), and both extending the ley line's length and forcing new random summoning checks with each increase. A War ley line may increase its strength above the normal maximum of 10 in this manner, though it automatically returns to 10 if a single day passes without combat. Should a War ley line ever reach above a strength of 20 in this manner, a catastrophic shift occurs, forcing the ley line and all its inhabitants into a conflict-strewn plane of the DM's choosing (including, but not limited to, other material planes). Some powerful War ley lines may manifest in the DM's campaign in this manner, forced into the party's plane of existence by some other planar strife.

Of more immediate concern, whenever a creature slays an opponent witnesses an ally fall in combat, the ley line further stokes that creature's bloodlust, as though with the *lesser confusion* spell cast by a bard with a casting level equal to that of the ley line's level, checking only to see if the subject attacks the nearest creature (all other results being effectively treated as "act normally").

Water

Water-associated lines are usually only the concern of sailors and fishermen, and those who dwell in or near the sea or large rivers or lakes. Though natural migration fuels many Water ley lines, other lines match trade routes and shipping lanes, and even the odd piratical hunting patterns, separated by the more common Travel domains by geography and the creatures' respect for and awe of the seas. These are the waters ale-addled sailors speak of in seedy taverns, home to monstrous and wondrous visions and treasures alike.

- *Spellcasting Benefits:* Any spellcaster casting an available Water domain spell or a spell with the [Cold] descriptor may attempt to cast the spell without losing a spell slot for the day. To do this, the ley line's strength must be at least double the spell's level, and the spellcaster must succeed on a Spellcraft check (DC = 5 × the spell's level). Only one spell slot per day per level may be saved in this manner.
- *Other Benefits:* The Water ley lines bring with them not only plenty of fish (who are naturally attracted to the waters' magic), but also other associated blessings. Any creature native to these ley lines has its natural characteristics increased several fold. The salmon are tastier, the whales produce more oil, and the oyster beds produce larger, more lustrous pearls. All resources harvested from such creatures' bodies have their value in gold pieces multiplied by the ley line's strength level.
- *Summonings:* Summoned creatures are either aquatic creatures native to the region, or creatures of the Water sub-type, but otherwise obey all summoning rules.
- *Side-Effects:* Fishers and pirates are not the only creatures that gorge themselves on these ley lines' many blessings. Any native, unintelligent, non-summoned creature is hardier by far for the ley lines' power, gaining a number of hit dice equal to the ley line's strength (up to the creatures' maximum advancement, if any). Any intelligent aquatic species does not benefit so directly, but the DM should take into account the stronger warriors needed to subdue such sea-beasts, and the greater treasures that result. Few Water ley lines exist, but none without some merfolk or sahuagin settlement nearby.

PAST LIVES

Something strange has happened to this place, long before I tread foot upon the abattoir that is this wizard's tower. Thank the gods that I decided to leave Haelle behind. Though she has borne witness to each of my battles against the orcs, she remains an innocent soul. I do not believe she could have handled the rotting fields of bodies.

Surprisingly, it only took me two days along the ley line to find my enemy's domicile. As with many would-be conquerors, this villain showed little patience in the face of failure. The land around the tower would be a battlefield, had not the orcs been facing away from the tower, cut down where they stood or attempted to flee.

The tower itself was deserted, as though none had set foot inside its stone walls for centuries. The wards of protection flickered uncertainly at my approach, apparently having long since lost their vitality. A thick layer of dust clung to the walls and floors, but the many artifacts within retained their luster. Chief among these was a sword, its blade twisted and hilt so oversized that it took me hours to identify its true nature.

[Hereafter, the journal's full contents suffer. Whatever ultimate fate befell Draus, his books all suffered some degree of ruin, such as the charred remains I found of this very tome. I report only what I could plainly see for myself, making no guesses as to the missing text. —Hol]

...evil inside the blade, though the blade itself is of wholly foreign make. It speaks to me, offering its infernal insight into my dread quest to unseat the powers behind the orcs. I know not to trust it, just as I somehow know the tower's very contents upon seeing them.

Somewhere inside me, I felt Haelle recoil whenever I touched the sword.

Today, Sellyah and Haelle...

...ondrous horrors in the basement, somehow still alive. At the sword's suggestion, I descended...

...vissections are almost surgically precise, leaving no details to imagination. Contrary to appearances, the fey apparently bear no resemblance to the elven race, at least not on the same scale as the o...

The sword tells me they are not in pain.

...and elves struck at the tower today, though I repulsed them all. I must soon take my leave of this place, valuable though it is. The spell's text is nearly complete, but the remainder is lost in the desert wastes.

...rly caught me this time, a development that forces extreme measures. In secret, I approached foul cultists, offering some of my artifacts to them, in return for their aid in hiding my movements.

...hieves tore me from the planes, and so I ruined them in return. The lands are as barren now as my soul.

PAST LIFE FEATS

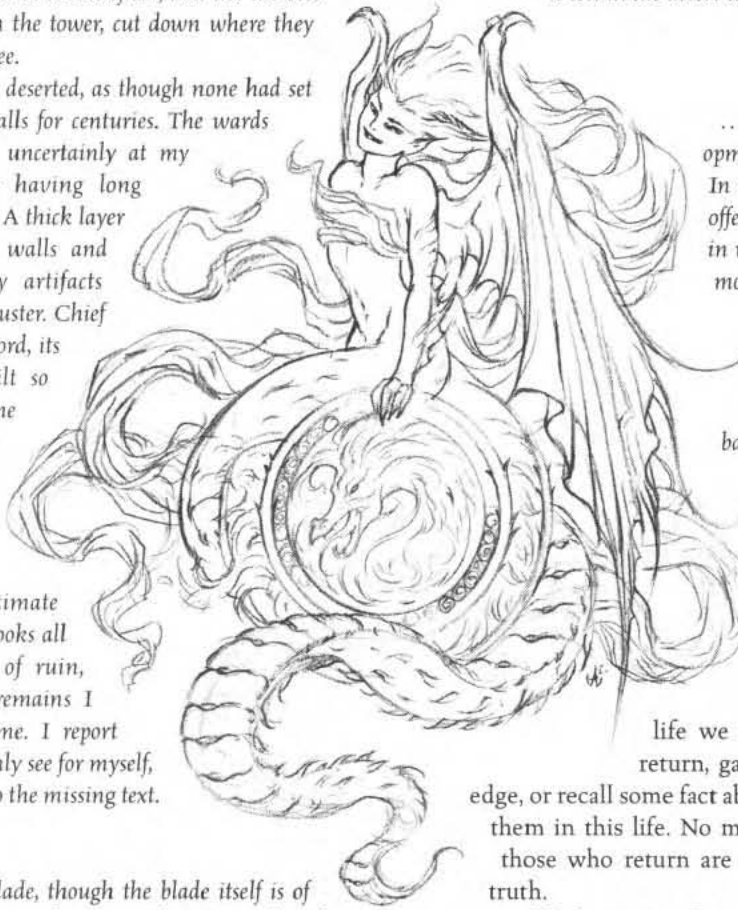
There are those who believe that death is not the end. Instead of eternal damnation or immortal bliss, our souls return to this plane, to live again the life we failed in before. Those who return, gain some forthcoming knowledge, or recall some fact about their past failings that aid them in this life. No matter how simple the calling, those who return are one step closer to their real truth.

Past life feats are a form of bloodgift. PCs may begin play with only one 1st level bloodgift, but may gain others later on, so long as the prerequisites are met. They, however, add a new element to the game and should be taken only with the DMs approval.

Arch-Nemesis [Past Life]

You destiny is not your own. An ancient foe shares in your reincarnation, returning as your foil. He — like you — seeks to fulfill his own destiny at the cost of your own. You two have met many times, in many lives, always one step ahead of the other. Such adversity has taught you much.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15, Past Life.



Benefits: Once per session, when making a saving throw, you may use your highest saving throw bonus rather than the one required. This must be decided before the save is rolled. In addition, you have an enemy of some kind, somewhere. It is unknown when he will return, but he is assumed to be the same level as you, when he does.

Special: Each time, you use this feat's ability, your arch-nemesis gains 1 hit point permanently. While your destinies are fixed, each time you tap into the karma of your past life, your arch-nemesis is doing the same.

DMs not running a cinematic campaign, can instead impose a 100 XP penalty on the PC each time he uses this ability. This represents the character's unwillingness to learn anything in this life, but rather drawing upon past failures to overcome obstacles.

Avatar [Past Life]

All the memories of your past lives come rushing to you without interference.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 15, Wisdom 17, Charisma 14, Inspired Past, Mastery of Mind, Past Life.

Benefits: All skills are considered class skills to you. In addition, you gain an additional 4 skill points every level. Lastly, you can multi-class into any class without suffering an XP penalty.

Barbaric Past [Past Life]

The roots of your past extend to a deep rich history of tribes, clans, and plainsmen.

Prerequisites: Constitution 15, Wisdom 15, Past Life, any non-lawful alignment.

Benefits: You gain the special ability to rage once per day as a 1st level barbarian.

Special: Should you gain the ability to rage from another source, you add this level to it to determine any level dependent abilities of raging (times per day, greater rage and so on).

Bardic Lore [Past Life]

Your knowledge far exceeds that of scholars, for you lived in ancient times.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 15, Wisdom 15, Past Life.

Benefits: You gain the special ability Bardic Knowledge as a bard equal in level to your own character level.

Special: Should you gain the Bardic Knowledge ability from another source, you add your Wisdom modifier to all Bardic Knowledge checks.

Beast Line [Past Life]

There is something monstrous in your past. It is unclear what you once were, but it was not humanoid. The memories of this powerful beast have shaped your consciousness.

Prerequisites: Strength 15, Constitution 13, Wisdom 15, Past Life.

Benefits: You gain a +3 bonus to all Fortitude saves. However, you suffer a -2 to Willpower saves and are considered to have an Ability score of 2 less when determining bonus spells (determined by your type).

Once per session, you increase your base movement by 10 ft. and gain the Run feat for up to 3 rounds.

Boundaries of the Past [Past Life]

You can draw upon memories of past lives, but your memories are often clouded with metaphors, symbolism and surreal dreams that provide no clear answers.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 16, Past Life, any two other Past Life feats.

Benefits: Once per session, you may fall into a meditative sleep allowing you to ask a question to be answered by a dream. The exact nature of the dream can be anything (determined by the DM), but it allows you to look into the past as well as the future. If the DM wishes, this effect may be treated as an *augury* spell, providing unspecific and difficult to deduce answers to questions.

Co-Dependence [Past Life]

In all your lives, there is has always been a special bond between you and another ally. While you have never sought out such a kindred spirit, the bond has always been there.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15, Charisma 15, Past Life.

Benefits: Choose another PC, NPC, familiar, or monster to be your kindred spirit. Once per session, you may exchange a number of hit points from yourself to the your kindred spirit (or vice versa) up to twice your character level, so long as you have hit points remaining and so long as neither of you exceeds your maximum hit point total. You can even use this ability while unconscious or dying.

Note: Only you can decide to move hit points and how many to move. If your kindred spirit is dying, it is up to you to exchange the hit points.

Special: If the kindred spirit you are tied to ever dies, for any reason, you lose the benefit of this feat and cannot regain it under any circumstances short of your death, divine intervention, or a *miracle*, or *wish* spell.

Delusions of Grandeur [General]

You are convinced that you've led an interesting life and are destined for greatness. The problem is convincing others you are what you say you are.

Benefits: You believe the world works on a different level. As a result, you gain a bonus to all saving throws against mind-influencing effects. This bonus is rolled at the beginning of each session on a 1d6 and lasts for the entire session.

Special: You may never take any past life feats.

Destiny Denied [Past Life]

Something has gone horribly wrong... Whether a primordial foe has won your ancient battle, or an ancient secret or artifact is now forever lost, your future lies before you, now shaped entirely by your own design. You have failed.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 14, Past Life, any other Past Life feat.

Benefits: You no longer gain any benefit from Past Life feats, but you are completely immune to the effects of divination spells. Anyone casting such a spell on you instead discovers absolutely nothing — even the gods find your actions incomprehensible — nor can they *scry* your location.

Additionally, you know your fate is your own and have no fear of death. You gain a +1 competence bonus to all saving throws and a +4 bonus to all Intimidate checks.

Special: If you are a divine spellcaster, you must take up a deity-specified *geas* and make *atonement* for your actions, as denying a divinely-inspired destiny is among the worst sins conceivable. Until then, you may not advance in your divine spellcasting class or use its class features. Ignore this if your actions directly involved a change of faith (i.e. a paladin denies his destiny becoming a blackguard).

Your failure has cost many people dearly, as your unfulfilled destiny means actions you were to prevent have come true. The actual game effects are left to the DM, but at the very least you have made a few enemies.

You may not gain any other feats requiring the Past Life feat.

Divine Champion [Past Life]

You serve a greater cause. You have been marked by your god to take on a holy quest, that you may not even be fully aware of it. As a result, your actions are monitored by something bigger than you.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 16, Past Life, ability to cast divine spells.

Benefits: Once per day, you may *commune* with your god or *commune with nature* (if a druid, ranger, or cleric with access to a nature-oriented domain), as per the spell of the same name cast by a cleric or druid of your character levels. Further, as part of your memories, you gain one of the following classes as a favored class: cleric, druid, paladin, or ranger.

Special: The benefits of this feat are as incorruptible as the power you serve, but are a sign of your master's affection and respect, not a representation of your own talents. Should you ever deviate from your master's code of conduct (as defined by this feat's associated favored class), you also lose the benefits of this feat (possibly including XP penalties for multiclassing) until you make an *atonement*.

Dwarf Line [Past Life]

There is dwarf blood in your past. It has been centuries, perhaps millennia since you last inhabited the body of a dwarf, but your soul has mingled with this unchanging race at least once.

Prerequisites: Non-dwarf, Constitution 15, Wisdom 16, Past Life.

Benefits: You have the special stonemasonry ability as a dwarf. In addition, you gain Craft (stonemasonry) as a class skill and gain a +1 competence bonus saving throws involving poison or spells. You can speak rudimentary dwarf and gain weapon proficiency with the battleaxe and warhammer.

Elf Line [Past Life]

There is elf blood in your past. It has been centuries, perhaps millennia since you last took elf form, but your soul has mingled with this immortal race at least once.

Prerequisites: Non-elf, Wisdom 16, Charisma 15, Past Life.

Benefits: You only need to sleep 4 hours a night. While you do not meditate like an elf, you only require a few hours sleep each night to be considered fully rested. In addition, you age as a half-elf if their age progression is slower than your present one.

Normal: Non-elf characters must sleep 8 hours each night to be fully rested.

Special: Arcane spellcasters must still rest 8 hours to regain their spells.

Forgotten Lore [Past Life]

There are secrets that man has lost and aspects to our world that only a few have mastered.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 15, Wisdom 16, Mastery of Mind, Past Life.

Benefits: Choose one skill or two Knowledge skills. You no longer suffer a skill rank maximum for this skill(s). You are allowed to allocate as many point per level as you wish to the development of that skill.

Great Destiny [Past Life]

Your soul is eternal and even you cannot stop your destiny.

Prerequisites: Constitution 13, Intelligence 13, Wisdom 16, Charisma 15, Past Life.

Benefits: Once per campaign, upon your death, you are restored to full health within 24 hours of your death. The exact time and place is up to the DM, however. And PCs should not count on the DM being merciful about exploiting uses of this feat.

Special: It is important to note, that the soul can live on without the body. DMs are encouraged to find creative ways to keep a dead PC in the game with this feat.

Inspired Past [Past Life]

By tapping into past experiences you can do things you normally could not. Many of the things you've achieved remained with you from life to life. As a result, you can remember how to build a fortress, climb a rope, swim a channel, or train a pack animal.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 15, Wisdom 16, Mastery of Mind, Past Life.

Benefits: Choose six 'out of class' skills and keep a separate record of each. You are assumed to have 4 skill points in each. Once per session, you may use one of these skills. Every level, increase two of these skills by one point each.

Mastery of Body [Past Life]

Previous incarnations are as real as your present self. You recall, if only on a subconscious level, the fighting skills and tricks of your previous lives and move with grace and expertise, reflecting your innate talents.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Dexterity 13, Wisdom 16, Past Life, base attack bonus +4.

Benefits: You gain proficiency with all martial weapons. If you already have Martial Weapon Proficiency, you gain the benefit of the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat. If your Dexterity is higher than your Strength, you also gain the Weapon Finesse feat.

Special: If your base attack bonus ever reaches +6, you may take the Weapon Specialization feat as though you were a fighter.

Mastery of the Flesh [Past Life]

While your mind and soul may challenge you, testing your free will, your body is your own.

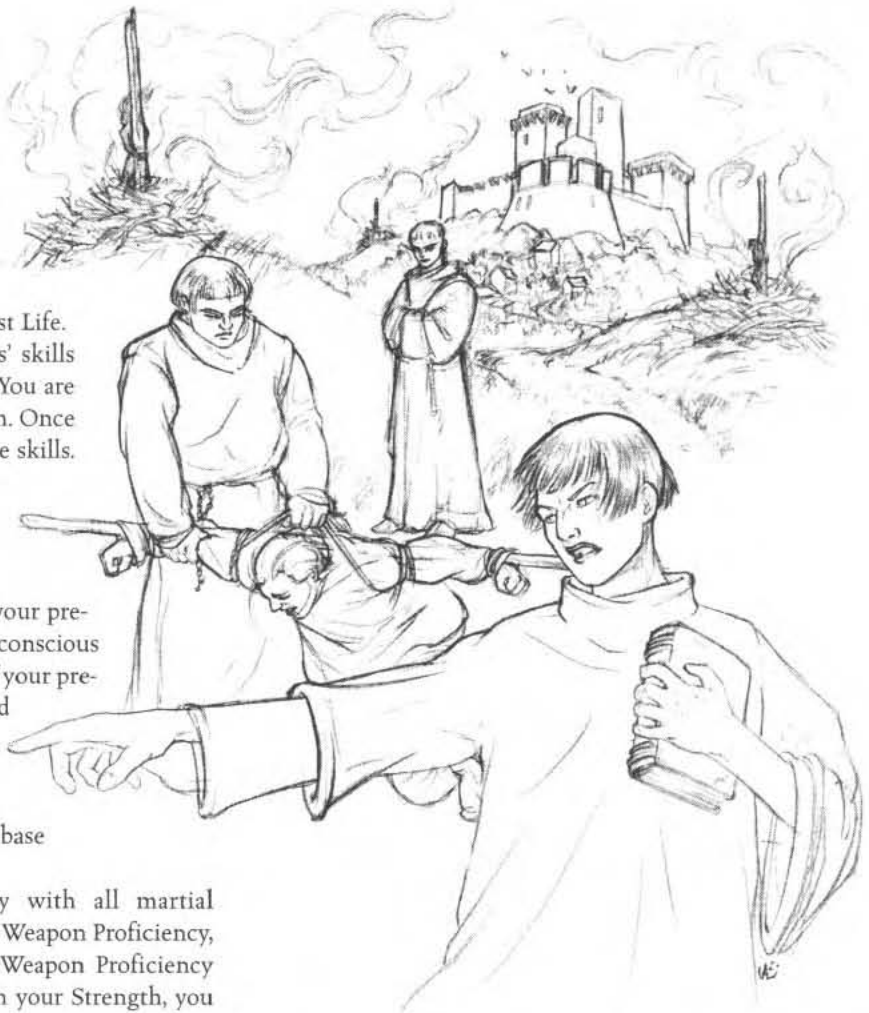
Prerequisites: Strength 13, Dexterity 13, Constitution 13, Wisdom 16, Mastery of Body, Mastery of Mind, Mastery of Soul, Past Life.

Benefits: You may add your Wisdom bonus to your Fortitude saving throw. In addition you regain a number of hit points per day equal to your Wisdom bonus. This is in addition to any natural rest or magical healing you receive.

Mastery of Mind [Past Life]

Previous incarnations are as real as your own memories. You can draw upon past experiences to aid you in this life.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Wisdom 16, Past Life, Iron Will.



Benefits: Craft, Knowledge, and Profession are class skills for you and you gain 6 skill points to distribute into as many Craft and Profession skills as you can afford. In addition, each level you advance, you gain 2 additional skill points to add to these skills. You cannot gain new Craft and Profession skills beyond those chosen at the time of this feat.

Mastery of Soul [Past Life]

You have lived many lives, knowing and touching many people. You have learned something on each journey and those values have stayed with you.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Wisdom 16, Charisma 15, Past Life.

Benefits: You gain a +1 competence bonus to all Intelligence-based, Wisdom-based, and Charisma-based skill checks.

Special: It is important to note, that the soul can live on without the body. DMs are encouraged to find creative ways to keep a dead PC in the game with this feat.

Monastic Past [Past Life]

You have known the importance of moderation and inner strength, of awareness and selflessness. You have studied the ancient text that

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Wisdom 15, Charisma 15, Past Life, any lawful or good alignment.

Benefits: You gain the unarmed strike ability of a monk as well as the special ability *ki strike* as a 4th level monk.

Special: You are bound to the same ethos as a monk. Should you ever violate this code, you lose all benefits of this feat until you find your way back on the path of inner being.

Noble Past [Past Life]

You walked among kings, rubbing elbows with the elite of society. That grace has remained with you.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15, Charisma 15, Past Life, any lawful alignment.

Benefits: You gain a bonus to your Charisma-based skill checks equal to twice your Charisma bonus. Further, as part of your memories, you gain one of the following classes as a favored class: cleric or wizard.

Normal: A character gains a bonus to skill checks equal to the related ability score.

Special: If you gain the Leadership feat, you gain a +1 bonus to your Leadership score.

Paragon of Beasts [Past Life]

Your soul once inhabited the body of a beast more primal than yourself. Perhaps your first incarnation was among the earliest of your kind.

Prerequisites: Constitution 15, Wisdom 15, Survival 4 ranks, Past Life.

Benefits: When dealing with animals, you gain a bonus to your Charisma-based skill checks equal to your Wisdom bonus. Further, as part of your memories, you gain one of the following classes as a favored class: barbarian, druid, ranger, or rogue. Lastly, you may add Handle Animal to your list of class skills.

Normal: A character gains a bonus to skill checks equal to the related ability score.

Special: If you gain the Leadership feat, you may choose animals as followers and magical beasts as cohorts.

Past Life [Past Life]

In a previous life, you were a hero of great distinction. Your death was premature, however, denying you your true calling. Perhaps this time, this life, you will take your proper place in history.

Prerequisite: Wisdom 15.

Benefits: Choose any two skills. Once per session, you may use one of these skills untrained. In addition, you gain a temporary +1 circumstance bonus to any skill of

your choice, chosen at the beginning of every game session, lasting the entire session.

Lastly, as you regain aspects of your past, you grow stronger and more complete. For each past life feat you take after this one, you permanently gain 1 hit point.

Special: This feat can only be chosen at 1st level. A character can never have more than one 1st level bloodgift. You may not multiclass, excepting into a prestige class or a favored class.

Perfection of Self [Past Life]

You are as attuned to this form as any other, being able to transcend the limitations of mere flesh.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, Dexterity 15, Intelligence 13, Wisdom 16, Mastery of Body, Mastery of Flesh, Mastery of Mind, Mastery of Soul, Past Life, base attack bonus +6.

Benefits: At the end of each combat round, your Initiative increases by +1. This bonus is in addition to any other bonus gained during combat. You also gain use of the Combat Reflexes feat, doubling your Dexterity modifier if you already possess it. You gain the benefit of evasion (as a rogue) and may ignore the first flank attempt in any given round.

Sorcerous Past [Past Life]

Your soul has been touched by a magical source. You have something residing within you that transcends time and space.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 15, Wisdom 15, Charisma 15, Past Life, any lawful or good alignment.

Benefits: Choose any 0-level, 1st-level, or 2nd-level arcane spell. You may cast this spell once per day as a 3rd level sorcerer.

Special: If you have the ability to cast arcane spells from another source, you may use your arcane casting level instead of casting as a 3rd level sorcerer.

The DM has final approval on the spell you choose. It is important to note that choosing damage dealing spells is not always the most unbalancing use of this feat.

Virtuous Past [Past Life]

You once held yourself to a higher standard. To this day you are still answerable to promises made and never broken...

Prerequisites: Wisdom 15, Charisma 15, Past Life, any lawful or good alignment.

Benefits: You gain the special ability *lay on hands* as a 3rd level paladin. In addition, you gain paladin as a favored class.

Special: You are bound to the same ethos as a paladin. Should you ever violate this code, you lose all benefits of this feat until you atone.

ANCIENT MAGIC

Even the greatest wizards and sorcerers consider themselves mere students of the craft. Those who have studied magical history know that however great the modern-day arcanists are, they are mere pretenders when compared to their ancient predecessors.

The following are nigh legendary weapons and magic associated with the greatest historical arcanists, and untold thousands have died pursuing these prizes. In the rare event that someone discovers many of the following in one place, as Draus did, it is rarely by accident. These are dangerous magicks all, and introducing them into a campaign could and should easily disrupt the balance of power in the setting. What follows are descriptions of some of the most powerful artifacts, spells, and arcane tricks known, and revealing such power is inviting allies and gods to become envious enemies.

ARTIFACTS

Epic Spell Components (Minor Artifacts): Though material components to spells are as commonplace or rare as the spells are weak or strong, replacing the components with similar, inherently magical components results in effects greater still than the normal spells' uses. These epic components are treasures unto themselves, arduous to find and master but tempting targets for thieves and the casters' enemies. They are either virtually unique (with less than 20 in existence), or demand great sacrifices and quests to retrieve.

Elder Bones: These are the literal bones of an elder creature of the cosmos, something that lived for over a thousand years without turning to undeath. Even then, the ancient must die from a cause other than old age, disease, or poison, as such deaths disperse the bones' power. Most harvested bones come from combats or outright murders, but a rare few noble beasts have sacrificed themselves, that their bones work for a greater purpose.

Elder bones may only come from creatures of the following types: aberrations, dragons, elementals (but not the actual monsters, the elementals, who have no bones), fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or outsider. Even in these cases, the creatures must have an internal bone structure. For instance, most demons' bones are perfectly acceptable, but bebeliths and retrievers are not, as these two kinds of demons have exoskeletons instead of true bones. The size of the bones necessary for these effects also vary, according to the size of the slain creature itself: full skeletons of Tiny creatures are the bare minimum, while the limbs of Small creatures are necessary for the effects, the large bones (either major arm or leg bones, the spine, or the skull) for Medium-size, and all but the tiniest bones for Large creatures. Huge and Gargantuan creatures are so large that broken halves of

the larger bones may have the normal effect, while Colossal monsters' thrice-shattered bones or inner ear bones are of sufficient size. These are the only requirements, though clearly bone harvesters prefer to strip the bones of their meat, tendons, and cartilage rather than attract vermin. A slain corpse produces roughly one usable bone per size category, or twice that if the creature dies violently but suffered no damage of any of the following types: acid, bludgeoning, fire, or slashing.

Elder bones hold great power, even without using them as material components in a spell. A hint of the ancient power within the bones still resonates clearly, adding to their carrier a number of years of extended life span equal to the slain creature's challenge rating, although only in the case of the most powerful elder bones in the carrier's possession. The bones must remain within five ft. of the carrier at all times, only grant the benefit to the person in that radius who has spent the most time with the bones (choosing randomly in a case of a tie), and dividing the extra years evenly between age categories, each of which has its minimum and maximum years increased by this number. At the DM's discretion, this may carry other benefits, too, depending on the nature of the bones and their carriers. A sorcerer wielding a dragon bone may become a dragon disciple, while the bones of a great champion efreet protect the carrier from fire and heat.

To use elder bones as spell components, the spellcaster must carve the bone into the appropriate shape (requiring a craft: gem-cutting check, DC depending on the spell's level and shape's complexity, generally spell level x the total number of different parts and materials to be used), or else grind it into a powder if that is necessary to the spell. The elder bones may take the place of any material component or focus in this manner, and act as though the spellcaster had used the Extend Spell metamagic feat and the Spell Penetration and Greater Spell Penetration feats.

Strong evocation [as per any sub-types of the destroyed creature]; CL 20; *Weight:* 1–10 lbs. (depending on size category of destroyed creature).

Far Realm Substances: The Far Realms are strange places, home to whole new breeds of hostile abominations, and mad explorers who fell victim to the Realms' insane allure. The landscapes twist and turn, disorienting so much that any sense of perspective loses meaning; up and down appear interchangeable, like the distorted feverdreams of artists and illusionists. These strange substances, whether as common as trees or as rare as diamonds, retain their lunatic nature even in other planes.

Far Realm substances are essentially identical to their material plane counterparts in terms of physical makeup, and may substitute for the normal versions of the substances, producing very nearly the same effects. With the addition of unstable materials from the Far Realms, however, the spell itself changes. The infectious madness

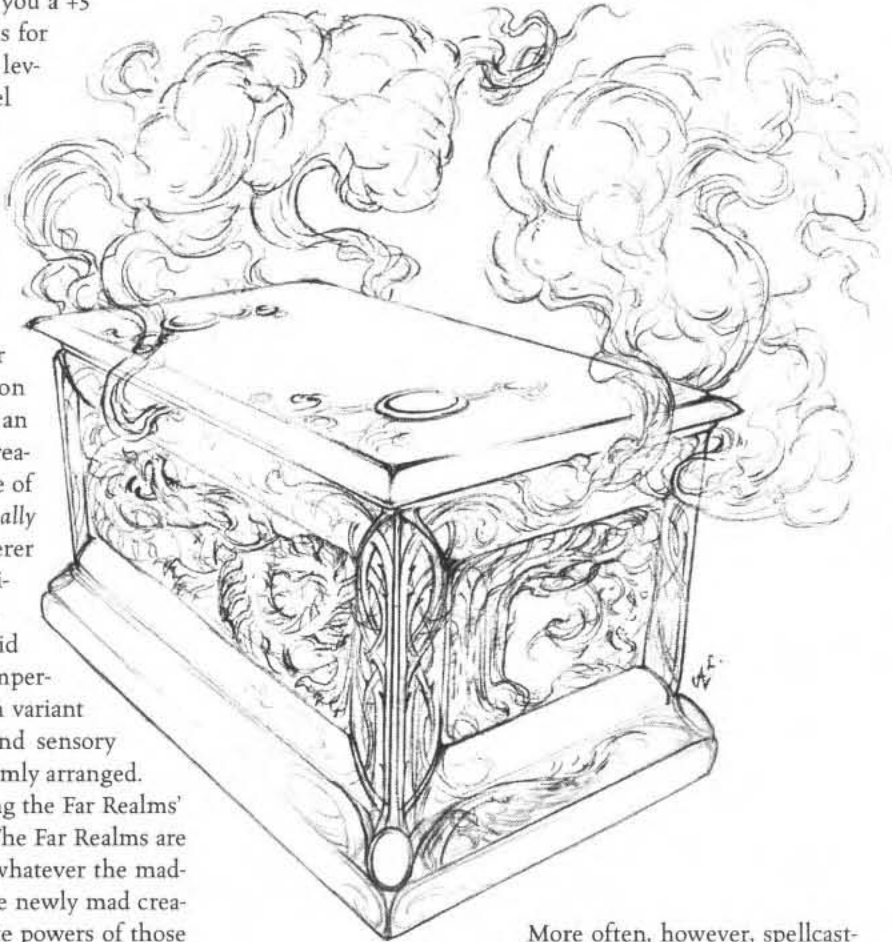
taints all aspects of the spell, granting you a +5 profane bonus against Spellcraft checks for the spell, and making you five casting levels higher for the purposes of a dispel attempt on the spell. Worst of all, however, are the side-effects of the spell.

Anyone targeted by a Far Realm-enhanced spell must fight off the madness of that plane, as though the spellcaster had cast *insanity* on the target at the same time. Still more terrible, the Far Realms eagerly add their power to illusion spells, and any illusion spell that creates an hallucination of an actual creature actually creates that creature instead, as though through the use of a *summon monster* or *summon nature's ally* spell cast at the caster's level by a sorcerer or druid, as appropriate (the exact variant of either spell is the highest possible version available to a sorcerer or druid of the caster's level). The attempt is imperfect, however, creating an abomination variant of the desired creature, with limbs and sensory organs functional but apparently randomly arranged.

There are several problems with using the Far Realms' blessings in such a manner, however. The Far Realms are always hungry for more victims, and whatever the madness inflicted on the spells' victims, the newly mad creatures now offer fealty to the degenerate powers of those planes. Further, the corrupting nature of the Far Realms still threatens the substances' carriers. Reagent bags are not safe containers for these substances, as the substances twist other components into new Far Realms substances after 1d4 days. Worse, anyone who handles these substances extensively (including casting) must themselves try to ward off the Far Realms' insanity, suffering as though a sorcerer of their level had cast *insanity* on them, too. Use of a Far Realms substance is considered a chaotic act.

Strong transmutation and enchantment [chaos and mind-affecting]; CL 20; *Weight*: —.

Perfect Solutions: The high mark of any alchemist's career is distilling a substance to its purest essence, whether bodily humors or common metals and gemstones. Rarer than rubies, these are valuable beyond compare, and even a perfect, pure crystal of amethyst is priceless. In some cases, particularly liquid or powdered solutions, the result is a powerful poison in its pure state (may be of any type, DC equals the base substance's gold cost divided by 3 (rounding down), or by 2 if powdered and inhaled or any liquid (rounding down), dealing 3d6 Con damage initially, and inflicting 2d12 hits for secondary damage, even if normally safe to ingest.



More often, however, spellcasters hoard these pure distillations for spell components, replacing the more common version of the spell components (i.e. purified rubies instead of normal ones). Doing so doubles the spell's effects, including any save DC or nonspecific damage (specific damage, such as the effects of a *harm* spell, are unmodified).

Strong transmutation; Alchemy 20+ ranks; *Weight*: as per original substance.

Far Realms Weapons (Minor Artifacts): Like most of the Far Realms' unholy contents, Far Realms weapons carry the madness of those planes into the weapons' very forms and nature. The weapons are only faintly recognizable, with their twisted blades and looping handles. A simple halberd, for instance, might appear more as a small wooden shield, the hilt of the weapon coiling about itself, with a blade on one side, but whatever the appearance, it still operates as a halberd would. Though comfortable to the Far Realms' inhabitants, who wield the weapons normally, characters must have either an exotic weapon proficiency denoted to a Far Realms variant weapon, or else have an improved weapon specialization for the normal version of the weapon. Otherwise, the characters are not proficient with the weapons' use, even if they can readily identify the weapon's true nature on sight.

Whether wielded properly or not, however, the weapons act as though they were masterwork and had the *anarchic* and *vicious* enchantments, though the weapons themselves produce these effects naturally, and remain nonmagical. Further, any hits dealt have a chance of *infecting* their victim with a peculiar Far Realms disease. The disease forces its victim into a constant, paranoid sweat, and possibly a permanently skewed mind. The disease is inflicted through injury or contact, has a DC of 20 and an incubation time of 3d6 days, inflicting 1d6 Wisdom damage. Successful saves do not allow the character to recover (only magical healing can save them), and 1 point of Wisdom damage from each failed save is permanently drained. If reduced below 6 Wisdom in this manner, the victim begins hallucinating, seeing every living creature as a Far Realms monstrosity. If the character is permanently reduced below 6 Wisdom in this manner, he instead actually becomes a Far Realm creature, his type shifting to Aberration, and his alignment moving to Chaotic Neutral or Chaotic Evil, whichever is closer to their previous alignment. Only a *miracle* or *wish* spell cast using a Far Realms substance may revert the new monster to its original form.

Far Realms weapons accept enchantments as though they were normal weapons of their type.

Strong transmutation and enchantment [chaos and mind-affecting]; CL 25; Weight: —.

Teleportation Monoliths (Major Artifacts): These are immense obelisks of pure black marble. Standing 20 ft. or more, and extending twice that into the ground, the obelisks are rough and unhewn, as though they formed naturally. The sole exception to this appearance is in a series of four concentric dials, each before the other, pointing towards ancient letters or hieroglyphics. Each dial sets one of the monoliths' coordinates, spanning nations and planes, or else sets the portal's proximity or duration.

Each dial has at least 2d4 engravings, though some may be decoys or no longer useful. The first, central dial controls the monolith, with the basic two modes activating the monolith or shutting it off. Subsequent carvings being fixed timers, allowing the monolith to remain active for seconds, hours, or even years before powering down. The second dial, set behind or around the first, controls pre-set destinations, whether it be other monoliths, hidden alcoves in cities, or on entirely foreign planes (at the DM's discretion; one location per rune). The third dial allows fine-tuning of the destination, whether to appear precisely on the preset destination, or anywhere from a few feet away to hundreds of miles above the target. The fourth and final dial controls how much mass or how many people the monolith transports, with the default setting being teleporting only the user. Though the DM should have each setting on each dial work at a fixed

amount, these need not make sense for the younger races (i.e. the third notch on the first dial keeps the monolith active for 10 minutes and 12 seconds; while the fourth dial's sixth setting may only teleport mere ounces; the elder races kept their own measurements and logic). Once activated, a monolith glows with power, blue light searing through its every crack and carving. A shimmering red gateway appears nearby, as large or as small as the obelisk's controls specified. Once crossed, the gateway remains open for a duration according to the first dial's setting, or closes immediately afterward if the dial was not set to an elapsed time. It is possible to change a monolith's settings while a portal is still open, though doing so disrupts the magic, causing the monolith to explode once the portal closes and dealing 10d6 crushing damage to all creatures in a 20 ft. radius of the monolith (Reflex save DC 25 for half). Changing a configuration midway through a transport has no other effect, and the transport process itself behaves as per its original configuration.

Fortunately for the rest of creation, these monoliths are not only rare, but somewhat unreliable. Whatever race created the monoliths was ancient indeed, and the strange icons along the dials are of no known language, requiring a Decipher Script check (DC 20 + double the number of icons on the dial) to read. Even then, the ancient symbols either were unfinished or correspond to lost planes or monoliths, teleporting the users at random to another location (as per results of "Off Target", "Similar Area", or "Mishap" from a *teleportation* spell) or even another plane (as determined by the DM). In some cases, the runes are apparently a lure for the unwary, misleading the monoliths' users to some forgotten plane or dungeon of the monolith makers' own design. Strangely, the monoliths themselves can also use the dials, particularly if those nearby resist the desire to use the monoliths' power. Though such gateways cannot transport someone against their will, or partially teleport objects, the monoliths tend to create these blind gateways as a lure for passersby who are in desperate flight from some pursuer.

In any event, teleportation monoliths, while rare and as valued as they are feared, are not invulnerable. Each monolith has a configuration that destroys it (as though the configuration changed during a transport), shattering the obelisk and scattering its remains across the cosmos. The creators of these monoliths ensured this booby trap's success matched the race's own paranoia, and nothing — not even a *miracle* or *wish* spell — may reintegrate a destroyed monolith. Further, most monoliths are already a known commodity, standing at the crossroads of Travel ley lines.

Strong conjuration [teleportation], CL 25, weight: 2d6 tons.

TRUE NAMES, CURSED ITEMS, AND UNLOCKING MAGICAL ITEMS

True names are a popular subject of superstition. In some myths, merely whispering someone's true name grants you a portion of their power, turning men into gods and vice versa. In others, knowledge of true names is little more than a parlor trick, forcing men to cavort like animals and otherwise make fools of themselves. Most spellcasters have little time for such nonsense. True names are both means and ends, a tool to gain power and the power itself.

Given names are essentially meaningless, bestowed by parents, family, or law, and granting no more power over the named than would calling a cat a shrubbery. Given names are often meaningless (such as the seemingly random syllables in a gnome's surname) or honorifics (such as titles of military, royalty, or religion). Often the corrupted slurring of ancient and exposed true names, given names are little more than informal recognition.

A true name is another matter entirely. While given names may reflect the named creature's personality or actions, a creature's true name defines him. It not only tells of his true nature and belies his strengths and weaknesses, it also tells of his place in the cosmos at large. Merely uttering a shapeshifter's true name out loud forces the creature to revert to its natural shape, and using a devil's true name to summon or hedge it out renders the magic all the more binding. Only the foolish, daring, or low of station do not care who knows their true name. In most cases, knowledge of a creature or object's true name is a harmless affair, and indeed some of the younger races (most notably peasants of halfling, human, or orcish stock) make no distinction between given names or true. The bemusing fact that humans and halflings suffer for this arrogance less often than they "should" is a source of many an elven or dwarven prejudice.

Worthwhile true names are in short supply. While any dabbler of magic can conjure up a true name of some sort, there is little power to take from knowing and controlling the true nature of a pebble or a single blade of grass. The two primary methods to uncover such arcana are research and magic, and often the reason for many dealings between spies and spellcasters. While arcane magic can unlock a true name's secrets, or divine magic reveal its pedigree, a talented rogue or bard can discover a true name simply by asking the right questions and paying attention to the answers. Though few official sources record true names, true names are open secrets among closely-knit families and close friends, bonds of trust not to be violated. All intelligent creatures know their own true names, but even the simplest dullard thinks twice before handing it out.

Discovering true names is always a bit of a trick. As mentioned above, the easiest method is research, whether a Knowledge (arcana) check for an object or a Gather

Information check for people. Ironically, the more famous the subject is, the easier it is to find the true name. While few care to know the true name for every peasant or clerk in the kingdom, a king's true name is a popular subject of gossip, as is the true name of his favored weapon. While he may take steps to correct this problem (usually in the form of banning certain forms of magic and arresting or executing those who inquire too deeply about his person), the point remains that more people are interested. While a simple orphan might have a DC 30 Gather Information check to discover his true name, a noble hero may have a mere 10. Draconian measures and cunning spymasters (Bluff and Gather Information both at 15+ ranks) may double or triple the DC, but the actual threat to investigators is not in failing to discover the name, but drawing attention to themselves in the hunt. If anything stirs up more rumors and attention than a leader's true name, it is someone else trying to uncover it. Any result other than a natural 20 alerts others to the searchers' inquiries. Few would risk this discovery for any amount of payment, and those that would know exactly how valuable their expertise is, charging thousands of gp for every check, successful or otherwise.

Magic is much safer, but not without its own perils. Spells such as *limited wish*, *miracle*, and *legend lore* uncover true names, but the price involved is commensurately higher. Whether the caster trucks in arcane or divine magic, he invokes the powers of the planes to answer such questions. While such lore is common to servants of gods of Knowledge or Trickery, it is usually the fey or devils who answer the call. As in all dealings, such creatures demand a price for their knowledge, and are rarely satisfied with anything less than two true names in return, including the caster's own. Though it is possible to trick a creature into revealing its own true name in this manner, it is an unforgivable affront to even try, and woe to those who make foolish demands of a devil and expect the devil not to claim its own in return.

True names exert subtle influence over creatures, most often with magic but even without its aid. Spells cast targeting a creature may use that creature's true name as an additional Verbal component (the Still Spell metamagic feat may not be used in conjunction with such spells), adding the caster's Wisdom modifier to his casting level for the spell. Even outside of magic, those who speak someone's true name aloud during skill checks may distract the victim slightly, and characters gain an insight bonus equal to their Wisdom modifier on all Bluff, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks made against someone whose true name the characters know and speak aloud as part of the skill use. In either case, speaking the victim's name aloud draws attention, and all who overhear (the DM may demand Listen checks as he deems fit) know the victim's true name now, too.

Cursed Items

Despite comical tales of foolish wizards miscasting spells or calling up powers that would try even the greatest sorcerer, most cursed items are far from accidents. Crafting a magical item imparts knowledge of the item's true name, and no craftsman worth his trademark would miss such shoddy work as an accidentally cursed item. While some cursed items are of accidental make, they are more than likely intentionally cursed for one of two reasons.

First, and most common, the magical item is deliberately crippled to force the wielder to either not rely on it, or to foolishly rely on it and suffer the consequences. Intermittently functioning items, items that demand their requirements fulfilled before functioning, and items with drawbacks are all favored for teaching lessons, usually nonlethal ones. They are lessons in humility or self-reliance, rather than true threats to the wielder's life. The binding magic on such items is no easier or cheaper than on uncursed variants, but the use of a widespread curse helps ward off treachery. If a magic item fails to function within 100 miles of a wizard's lair, after all, he can safely arm his agents with little fear that his blessings might turn against him. Another popular twist to this type of cursed item involves minor effects only activated by reciting the item's true name, causing it to glow or hum and acknowledging the speaker as an ally.

The second and more infamous cursed items have not even these faint traces of altruism. Items that yield delusions, opposite effects or types, completely different effects, and specific cursed items are malevolent items, designed for no greater purpose than to bring low those unwary enough to use the items. Most are decoy items placed among true treasure, a better class of trap for a higher quality of thief. In other cases, the creator crafts and gives the cursed item over to someone the creator tempts to use the item. This level of treachery is usually reserved as part of an assassination attempt, as a warning to those who would defy the item's creator, or both. An especially common trick is to place cursed duplicates near a true treasure, particularly an artifact. While this is openly admitting that the duplicates are traps, it also serves the creator well if there is no reliable method to tell the copies from the true (such as through the use of a *magic aura* spell), forcing any contest of knowledge or skill into random chance and luck, with the most infamous examples being halls upon halls of decoys, without the true original anywhere at hand.

True Names and Unlocking the Power of Magic Items

To protect and disguise some powerful magic items from enemies, the items' creators indulge in a little feint of their own. Using disguising magic such as *magic aura*, the caster effectively hides the item's true nature until the wielder fulfills some requirement. Though the most

famous of these items are *holy avengers*, which only activate when wielded by paladins, most items empowered in this manner use the item's true name as a trigger to unlock the item's true powers. Uttering the true name of a +1 *longsword* may transform it into a *flame tongue* or even an artifact, but the DM should make the player characters work for such blessings. Items disguised in such manner should be part of a plot, rather than a randomly-won treasure.

In some cases, a similar effect occurs naturally, without necessarily using magic at all. Among many cultures, such as the bloodthirsty vikings or honorable samurai, the value of an item stems from the item's legendary wielder more so than any mere enchantments. Pedigree determines power in these settings, and while magical items still exist, the preferred tokens of a great hero or terrible villain bear supernatural abilities earned by the items' masters. This is especially true of masterwork weapons, which inherently carry the potential for power in their own perfect creation.

A masterwork longsword may not have any magic as part of its creation, but if it drinks heavily of the heart's blood of many red dragons, the sword, like its owner, earns power and respect associated with such great trials.

To approximate a magical item gaining power over time, the DM may require players to take the following quest feat:

Unlocked Potential [Quest Feat]

Your journeys have allowed you to unlock the hidden potential of one of your favored items.

Prerequisites: Masterwork, superior, or magical item, character level 9th, must gain no fewer than 3,000 XP through direct use of the item.

Benefits: Your repeated use of one of your items has allowed you to awaken new powers in it. Taking this advantage grants you an enchantment to the item worth less than or equal to your character level when you take this feat $\times 1,000$ gp. Further, as you alone have earned this power, the item gains a curse of either of the intermittent functioning or requirement curses, your choice, though the DM defines the actual way the curse strikes and informs you of it. Alternately, you may make the item's true name be a requirement for activating the item's new powers.

Outside of the intermittent functioning's dependence or the activation requirements, the item functions precisely as it did before you took this feat. If another person fulfills the curse's restrictions, he too may wield the item at its full power. If your item was unenchanted before purchasing this feat, it only becomes magical if its new total cost is above 15,000 gp. Items increased in this manner may not change types (i.e. you may not turn a suit of +1 hide armor into a suit of +2 full plate), but upgrading a

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present enchantment costs only the difference (i.e. upgrading a *ring of jumping* to a *ring of improved jumping* costs 7,500 gp, not the 10,000 gp listed for normal rings of improved jumping). Such upgrades only apply to increasing an item's base enhancement bonus (increasing a +2 weapon to a +3 weapon costs 10,000 gp), or to items that gain *greater*, *improved*, or *major* versions of a less powerful enchantment. The upgraded benefits replace the lesser ones, so that a suit of armor upgraded from *improved cold resistance* to *greater cold resistance* absorbs the first 30 points of cold damage, instead of the first 50.

For charged items, the benefits are different, and the item gains a number of charges equal to the lowest of your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma ability scores. At the DM's discretion, powerful items such as *rings of three wishes* or *staves of the magi* may have reduced benefits, gaining charges equal to only the lowest ability modifier (minimum 1) or even to 1.

You may only make the item intelligent if you are an epic level character, and you may not use this feat to increase the potency of ammunition such as sling stones or crossbow bolts.

Special: At the DM's discretion, characters may purchase this as a bonus or an epic feat. This feat may be taken multiple times, each time adding another (character level \times 1,000) gp's worth of enchantments to the item, or affecting a different item.

NEW SPELLS

It is no secret that at one time sorcerers and wizards could tap into magicks more powerful than what we know today. But those talents are gone, perhaps lost forever. What remains, are scrolls, from whose power we cannot draw from and we cannot command.

The DM may wish to impose a 5,000 XP cost to learn a 10th level spell as a 9th level spell. A 1,000 XP cost could also be imposed each time one is cast. However, it is encouraged to save these for powerful enemies in high-level campaigns.

Controlling the Source

Evocation

Level: Wiz 10

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: One creature in a 30-ft. radius

Duration: Instantaneous

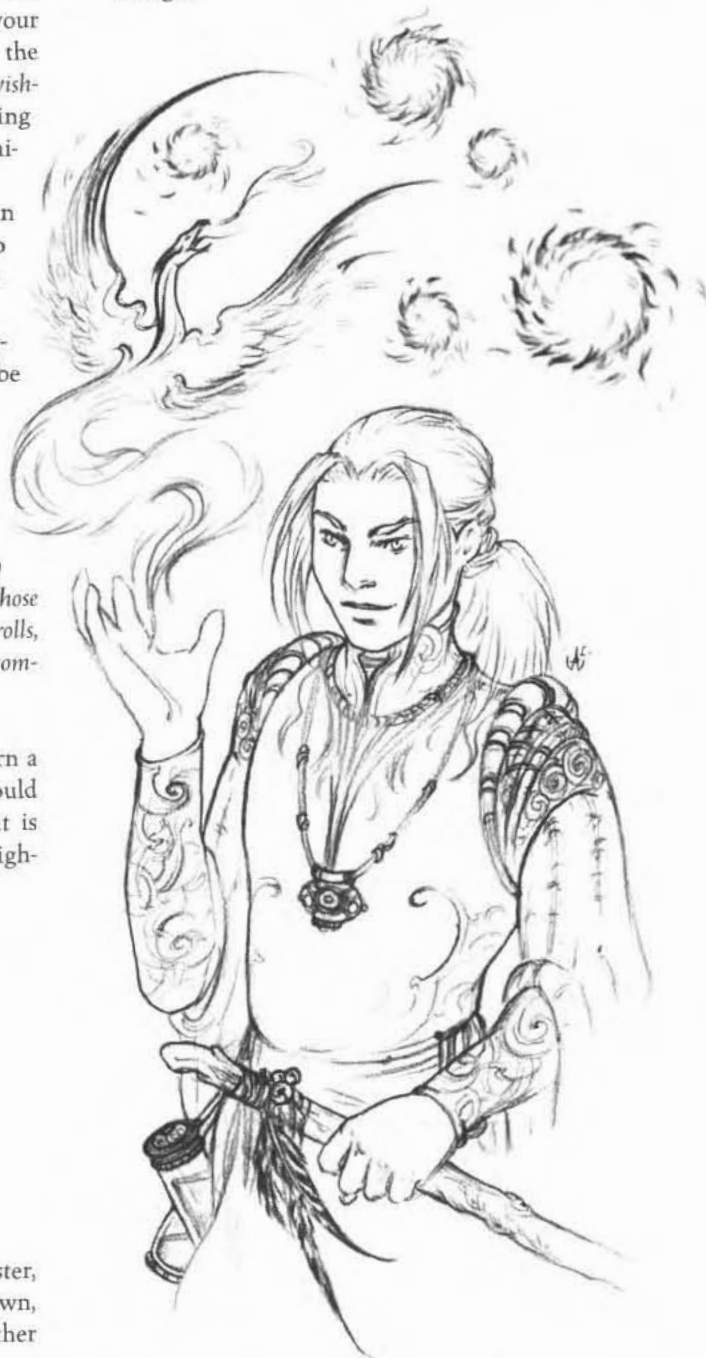
Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

Pitting your own power against that of a rival spellcaster, you attempt to overwhelm his magic with your own, rechanneling or absorbing their magic. When another

creature casts a spell or uses a spell-like ability, you may cast *controlling the source* to interfere with it. A dispel check is made (like *dispel magic*) and if successful allows you to either absorb or rechannel the spell energy.

Absorb: You absorb the spell's energies into yourself, regaining some of your own spent spell levels, of a total equal to or less than the spell's level or your Intelligence modifier, whichever is lower. Alternately, you may recharge a magic item instead, gaining additional charges equal to the spell levels you would have regained. This does not work on a magic item with no remaining charges.



Rechannel: You claim the spell as your own, and its effects now change as though you had cast it, including range, saving throws, casting levels, and you must still fulfill foci, material, or XP components. You must expend a spell slot of the appropriate level or higher, and you may only rechannel a spell if you could cast it normally.

Regardless of the effect, if you are unfamiliar with the spell, you remember it for a number of hours equal to your Wisdom modifier, thereafter forgetting it.

Draining the Source

Conjuration (Force)

Level: Sor 10

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Targets: Up to nine creatures, no two which can be more than 25 ft. apart

Duration: Instantaneous (*see text*)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Your expertise as a sorcerer now allows you to unleash bolts of pure and unerring magical force. When this spell is cast, you must also sacrifice any daily spell slots. This energy is converted into bolts of magic that automatically hit their target and deal 1d6+1 damage per level of the spell used per bolt. The number of bolts created is equal to the level of the spell sacrificed (round up). Such wounds disrupt the target's life force, dealing 1 point of temporary ability loss to the target's Constitution (per bolt) in addition to normal damage.

Alternately, you can create a defensive light around yourself. Though you must still sacrifice a spell slot, you gain a deflection bonus to your AC, temporary hit points, and an enhancement bonus to all your saving throws equal to the spent spell slot's level. In addition, you gain spell resistance 10 + the spell slot sacrificed. Every hour afterward, these bonuses reduce by 1 until they reach zero.

Material Component: A masterwork figurine carved in your own image.

Equal and Opposite

Transmutation

Level: Dru 10

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Self and one creature within a 30-ft. radius

Duration: 1d10 rounds / level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

In dire straits, you may risk your place in nature by forcefully opposing a powerful and deadly enemy. Calling upon mother earth to help you preserve balance, you physically transform into a near-perfect duplicate of the creature you oppose. You combine your appearance with that of the opponent (i.e. an half-elven druid may grow). You temporarily replace your own ability scores, saving throws, skills, feats, equipment, hit points (any above your own are considered temporary hit point gains), and racial and class features with those of the opponent. You may not duplicate artifacts in this manner. At the end of the spell's duration, all effects of the spell also end. If the target creature is still alive, you suffer damage equal to his current hit point total, with no spell resistance allowed.

Forceful Raise

Necromancy

Level: Clr 10, Sor/Wiz 10

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 day

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

A spell so forbidden that even the most depraved souls carefully consider its worth, forceful raise surpasses the will of gods and men, raising a creature from the dead, even against that creature's will. You chant over the creature's corpse (undead are unaffected; if cast on a slain undead, this spell returns the creature to mortal life), and upon completion, the creature returns to life no matter how long he has been dead.

The creature's hit points may be at 1 hp or full (your choice), but the target only has access to any equipment at hand. The creature is not inherently under any obligation to follow your commands.

This spell comes with certain dangers. While interfering with life and death is not an inherently evil action, this spell defies the natural order and usurps the will of the gods of death. The gods may send agents after the caster or target to ensure the universe lies in balance. Clerics are especially victimized in the afterlife, should they misappropriately use this spell.

Material Component: An onyx encased in a ruby, a rare find worth 10,000 gp.

Heaven's Hammer

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Clr 10

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 2 full-round actions

Range: Self

Effect: Summons 1 avatar of your deity

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: None

Your divine master has recognized you as a favored agent, and bestowed this spell upon you. While the god trusts you to use this blessing as you see fit, he also expects it to be used sparingly. You may summon your god's very avatar into your presence. While the avatar is not under your control, it behaves favorably for you, and likely follows your recommended courses of action.

To summon an avatar is no small task, as you are invoking a portion of your deity's power to directly aid you. Your deity's intervention is not unnoticed, and servants of opposing gods may seek to take advantage of the momentarily distracted god. Similarly, if your deity has more important tasks at hand, you have used this spell too often for the god's taste, or your summons would violate his divine duties, the deity may refuse or delay your request. Use of a *commune* spell may determine whether your god is available.

Note: The cost to learn this spell is 15,000 XP above and beyond any other costs and usually involves a great quest of some kind in order to prove one's worth.

Nature's Wrath

Transmutation

Level: Dru 10

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 week

Range: Special (*see below*)

Duration: Special (*see below*)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: None

It is a foolish thing to anger a powerful druid, and whole cities have learned the folly of provoking nature's protectors. You can turn all of nature against a foe, rendering most of an entire plane a hostile environment. Though potentially more a risk to the environment than the spell's target, nature's wrath certainly makes a statement.

Upon the spell's completion, you choose a target, which may be as small as a single person or creature, or as large as a single large settlement, such as a city (but not a country or species). While the target remains intact, nature itself unleashes wave after wave of destruction. Once a week, the DM chooses a spell from the following list: *animate*

plants, baleful polymorph, call lightning, call lightning storm, contagion (DM's choice on which disease), control weather (destructive effects only), creeping doom, diminish plants (stunt growth option only), earthquake, elemental swarm (DM's choosing for the plane), entangle, faerie fire, fire storm, flame strike, flaming sphere, fog cloud, giant vermin, gust of wind, ice storm, insect plague, move earth, obscuring mist, plant growth (overgrowth effect only), reverse gravity, rusting grasp, shambler, sleet storm, soften earth and stone, spike growth, storm of vengeance, summon nature's ally I–IX, transmute metal to wood, transmute mud to rock, wall of fire, wall of stone, wall of thorns, warp wood, whirlwind, and wind wall. Animated or summoned creatures attack the target, but are otherwise not under your control. Otherwise, all spells affect the target alone. If the target is a group of people, each weekly spell affects a number of people equal to your Wisdom modifier, and always negatively. Effects of nature's wrath may damage the surrounding environment, and other druids hold you responsible for such losses.

Nature's wrath continues while the target survives, or until the target makes amends for their actions, whereupon you may end the spell.

It is free to cast this spell, but costs 1,000 XP per week beyond the first to maintain it.

Renaming

Transmutation

Level: Clr 10, Dru 10, Sor/Wiz 10

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 week

Range: Self

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

A true name is a powerful and binding force, absolute as any of man's laws or divine commandment, but you have discovered a way to manipulate your own true name. This is a tedious and exacting procedure, requiring your full concentration for 16 hours a day. At the culmination of this spell, your true name permanently changes, and you gain any available template of your choice. You may not use this spell if your type has already changed. Further, you lose the benefits of any Bloodgift feats (but not Past Life feat), though your true name has changed enough that your old name is no longer effective against you.

Nothing short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell may revert you to your previous form.

Material Component: A bit of flesh, blood, and bone from a creature of the same type as the template's, along with samples of each from your own body. The creature's sample must be from a creature of a CR equal to your level.

The cost of this spell is 1,000 gp per HD of the "donor" creature.

Severed From the Planes

Abjuration

Level: Clr 10, Dru 10

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 week

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is one of the most frightening ways to cut off an enemy from the source of his power, or a dangerously extreme defense against interplanar interference. Through this spell, you alienate someone from all planes, including their home plane. The result is that the victim feels wholly numb, detached from all he once cared for. The target is no longer able to advance in his highest level class, and effects which hedge out outsiders affect him as well.

For all the penalties, however, he does gain a few benefits. His true name no longer has any effect on him (he is cut off from its power), and he may make a Will save to avoid any mind-affecting or divine magic used against him. Finally, while he is under this spell's effect, he may multiclass without regard for a multiclassing XP penalty (only for the second-highest class level), and may multiclass into core classes that he otherwise qualifies for but have multiclassing restrictions, such as the monk and paladin classes. The spell's penalty only affects the highest-level of the target's classes. If the target advances in another class to tie with the highest, both are now the highest, and the target must advance in a third class (suffering multiclassing XP penalties as normal).

This spell is extremely potent, and canceling its effects is a task beyond most spellcasters. Breaking the spell's hold on a character requires a permanent tie to a plane, such as through the personal blessings of a deity or an outsider familiar.

Unlocking the Soul's Secrets

Divination

Level: Clr 10, Dru 10, Sor/Wiz 10

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 12 hours

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous

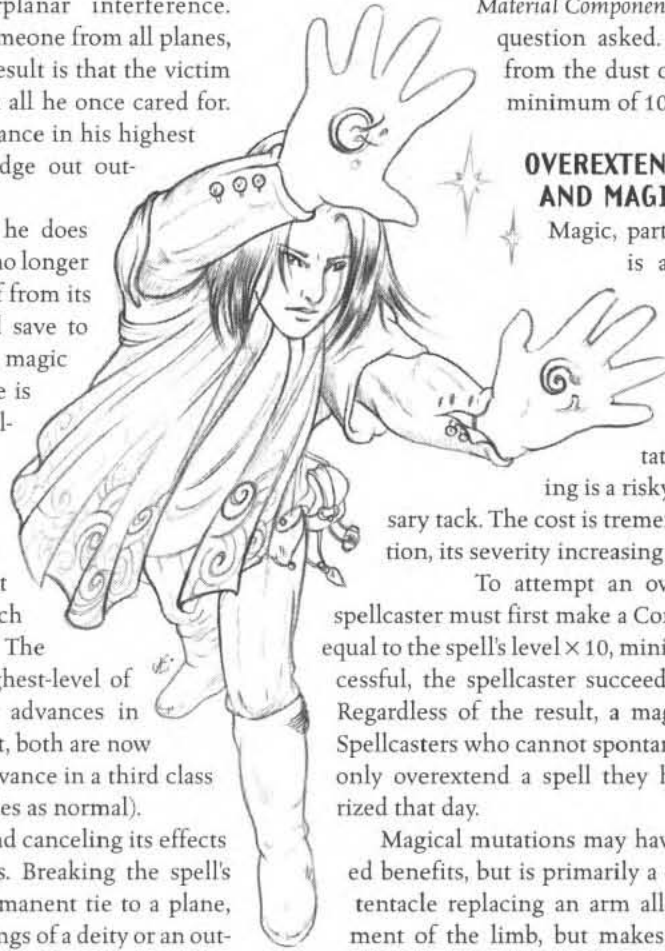
Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

With the aid of this spell, you can force the truth from anyone, rather than relying on torture or trickery to extract the information you seek. After binding the target and reciting the spell's incantations for 12 hours, you may immediately ask the DM a series of questions about the target equal to your Wisdom modifier times Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1).

The DM is obliged to answer them honestly, although confusing questions result in confusing answers. The DM should pay close attention to the questions asked and answered appropriately. No amount of magic can protect the target and the spell unearths secrets even the target was unaware he knew.

Material Components: One candle for each question asked. Each candle is made from the dust of the dead and costs a minimum of 100 gp to produce.



OVEREXTENDING CASTING AND MAGICAL MUTATIONS

Magic, particularly arcane magic, is a powerful but risky proposition in many settings. Wielding such fantastic power opens spellcasters up to terrible temptations, and overextending is a risky but sometimes necessary tack. The cost is tremendous: a magical mutation, its severity increasing with the spell's level.

To attempt an overextended spell, the spellcaster must first make a Concentration check (DC equal to the spell's level \times 10, minimum of DC 10). If successful, the spellcaster succeeds in casting the spell. Regardless of the result, a magical mutation occurs. Spellcasters who cannot spontaneously cast spells may only overextend a spell they had previously memorized that day.

Magical mutations may have some small associated benefits, but is primarily a disability (i.e. having a tentacle replacing an arm allows for greater movement of the limb, but makes fine control difficult, banning all spells with somatic components and requiring an exotic weapon proficiency (tentacle limb) to wield weapons properly with that limb). Magical mutations are permanent, and may only be removed through a *wish* or *miracle* spell. Only one mutation is removed at a time.

At the DM's discretion, creatures wielding spell-like abilities may also extend themselves to get another use out of their ability.

The Cryptic Studies of Alexander Draus Rho

DIVINE RITUALS

While arcane spellcasters draw upon their own will or esoteric rules of magic, divine spellcasters derive their abilities from higher powers. Should several devout servants of the same deity (or nature, as the case may be) combine their powers, the power is potentially overwhelming.

To hold a ritual, the lead divine spellcaster (usually the spellcaster with the highest casting level or highest rank in the religion) must convene a number of other divine spellcasters of the same class and religion (for the purposes of a class, prestige classes that continue a divine spellcaster's casting level also count as the divine spellcasting class the prestige class elaborates upon), up to a number of participants equal to the lead spellcaster's Wisdom modi-

fier (including the lead spellcaster himself; at least two characters must combine their energies for a ritual). This group must prepare their daily spells together, sacrificing whole levels of daily spells to gain access to a single casting of a higher level spell for the lead spellcaster to prepare and lead the group in casting. Each member of the group loses several of his daily spells to this one gain. Each spellcaster in the circle gives up a number of spell slots, as determined by Table 2-4, until enough spell slots have been sacrificed. The spellcasters in the group must sacrifice their highest level slots first, only then sacrificing their second-highest slots, and so on. Further, while the lead caster's base casting level is unchanged, the number of participants in the ritual adds to his casting level for the ritual spell alone.

TABLE 2-3: OVEREXTENDING CASTING AND MAGICAL MUTATIONS

Spell Level	Ability Score Loss	Example Mutations
0	1 (situational)	Brief hallucinations. Character may hallucinate for as long as 5 seconds in the course of his daily activities, and his memories of this time do not cohere. When trying to recall information about this period, or trying to make a Will save against an illusion spell, the character suffers from a -1 Wisdom penalty.
1	1	Stiff tendons. Character has mild difficulty in stretching or fully exerting his muscles, and suffers from a -1 Strength penalty.
2	1	Mild odor. The character's odor is slightly off, just enough to make others wrinkle their noses. This stench extends to and taints any perfume or cologne worn, and cannot be washed away. The character suffers from a -1 Charisma penalty.
3	2	Mild headaches. The character suffers from constant but low-level headaches. While he may function nearly as well as before this mutation, the distraction makes it more difficult to focus his mind properly. The character suffers from a -2 Intelligence penalty.
4	2	Arthritis. Mere movement is painful, and precision tasks are notably more challenging. The character suffers from a -2 Dexterity penalty.
5	3	Inflammation of the brain. While the character does not necessarily have headaches because of this swelling, the damage to your mind is pervasive. While the character has no difficulty concentrating, his memory is faulty, and he sometimes hears voices prodding him to change alignment. The character suffers from a -3 Intelligence penalty.
6	3	Chronic fatigue. The character feels sickly and tired all the time, and rests frequently when circumstances allow. The character suffers from a -3 Constitution penalty.
7	4	Disfiguring marks. The character's experiences with magic have literally burned him, leaving horrible scars all over his body. The wounds also itch slightly, more an annoyance than a torment, but this irritation makes the character grumpier. The character suffers from a -3 Charisma penalty.
8	4	Warped bones. The character's bones visibly bend a little, though not to the extent of requiring specialized armor, wheel chairs, or crutches. Unfortunately, the bones' new shapes match up poorly with the attached muscles, limiting the character's ability to exert himself. The character suffers a -4 Constitution penalty.
9	5	Stroke. The character suddenly collapses, and while he awakens when touched by any spell that awakens him, returns his mind to normal, or completely heals him, his mind is no longer as it once was. He is skittish and often confused, eyes darting about constantly. The character suffers from a -5 Wisdom Penalty.
10	5	Tentacle limb. One of the character's arms sheds its skin, revealing a sickly purple tentacle of the same length as the arm. The tentacle is highly flexible, temporarily ignoring the mutation's ability score penalty (i.e. when falling from a ladder, the tentacle can easily wrap around a rung). Otherwise, however, the tentacle lacks the absolute control necessary for many tasks, including combat, magic, and Dexterity-based skills. The character must purchase an exotic weapons proficiency (tentacle arm) feat to wield a weapon or shield in the tentacle, and may not cast spells with a somatic component. The character suffers from a -5 Dexterity penalty.

TABLE 2-4: DIVINE RITUALS

Difference Between Spell Level and Participant's Maximum Casting Level	Number of Spell Slots Sacrificed *
1 level	2
2 levels	4
3 levels	8
4 levels	16
5 levels**	32

* Spell slots donated to the ritual begin with the character's highest casting level, continuing each level downward in succession. If the participant does not have enough spell slots in their highest rank, they begin sacrificing spells at the next highest rank, with every 2 of these spells equaling 1 of their highest rank spells. If necessary, this continues on, with 4 of the third-highest spell slots equaling 1 of the highest level spell slots, 8 of the fourth-highest equaling 1 of the highest, and so on. Each participant must donate the appropriate spell slots, or their role in the circle is wasted, and failing participant gains no spells for the day.

For instance, Desmonde is a level 10 druid with a 15 Wisdom, capable of casting 4 spells of 5th level, 5 of 3rd and 4th levels, 6 of 1st level spells, and 8 of 0 level spells. In order to cast a level 6 spell, he must sacrifice 2 of his 5th level spell slots. To cast a level 7 spell, he must give up all of his level 5 spell slots. Spells of levels 8–10 are completely beyond his ability. Due to his low Wisdom score, Desmonde may only have one other person participate in the ritual, but Desmonde may cast the resulting spell as though he were 12th level.

** From a difference of five levels on, the notations are largely for reference to NPCs or epic level characters. Few PCs, if any, have access to such a high number of spells without extraordinary circumstances, such as a 20+ Wisdom ability score.

Once prepared, the lead divine spellcaster may cast it at any time, so long as he and all the other participants in the ritual link hands during the casting. The lead spellcaster's effective casting level is increased by the total number of contributing participants.

My quarry lies in the astral, but the rite which cost me my soul left me beyond that plane's shores. My journals are lost, stolen by my friends who now hunt me. They do not know why I have done so much, but I doubt they would feel better knowing that my sacrifices were for their sake. They have even taken to allying with orcs against me.

The sword suggested that it knew a means of entering the plane anyway, but that I would have to free the devil within first. After bargaining and binding the both of us to each other, I complied. The devil's stature has fallen to a mere imp, and it is bound to answer my questions truthfully. In return, I have made it my familiar.

Now, all I must do is find a bag of holding and use a simple reduce spell.

The battle was terrific, but I could not slay my foe. Though hardly my equal in sheer power, the monk somehow knew the planar tides and currents of his plane, barely allowing me a glimpse of him before bounding off into the shadows once more.

He was, however, somewhat foolish. Through all the fight, he continually led me around a single boulder floating in space. Distracting him with a duplicate of myself, I investigated and found the remaining portion of the spell, inscribed into the living stone.

By the time he realized I had left the plane, the imp and I had long since left the monk and his ill-conceived plans behind.

The imp — I dare not scribe its true name here — was furious in its own tiny way. It had apparently wanted me to use the spell on the orcs. Strange, I had thought the little devil would have figured out that I bore no particular enmity with the orcs, but rather that race's masters. I have some small edge on the imp, then, unless this is another of its ever-so-subtle manipulations.

Instead, knowing fully well how powerful this spell is, I asked it what the price of this spell might be, on the land and the non-orcish peoples. Its answer was not particularly evasive, but still predictable: it told me that there was an ancient library in the... layer of Hell, a cavernous wasteland of buried ruins and forgotten secrets.

Knowing that the imp has underestimated me, I have agreed with his suggestion, and pretended to be the fool. I "accidentally" left the full spell behind, under powerful abjurations that... to any but those who have sacrificed all to seek the scroll.

In moments, I leave for Hell.

I do not truly understand this place. I see fossils of lost empires and once-great navies, and a few skittering devils who watch from a distance, but little in the way of actual pain or suffering. With the imp's guidance, finding the library was simple, though exhuming it from millennia of hard-packed stone was not.

The tome covered four theories of arcane magic. The first was that arcanism simply tapped a natural energy no more inherently dangerous than fire, that precautions could remove most side-effects from a spell, though not the loss of components. It is an old, familiar theory, one that I did not read into further.

The second theory was more interesting, and one that places Sellyah's fear of arcanism in perspective. Whereas clerics and druids humble themselves before greater masters, arcanists seek to master magic itself. To us, the theory says, there is no piety in our magic, only vanity. We have taken the gods' gifts, and perverted them against the gods' wishes. There may be something to this. Rare are wizards who die of old age, and the few magical wars left jagged, unhealing scars on the land.

The third theory was that arcanism comes from Hell itself, each level spawning a different school. The fourth theory —

truly more of a corollary to the third — I have real doubts about. There are countless legends of heroic and selfless arcanists, and I doubt the gods would condemn such men merely for the wielding of magic as a tool. Furthermore, there are only eight different arcane schools, less than Hell's sum levels.

Curious, I asked the imp about which theory was correct. "Who's to say?" he answered before continuing, "The library is in Hell for a reason, and Hell is not above treachery."

Frowning at the thought, I changed subjects, asking him to provide me with a means to uncover the true reason that we elves and orcs fight.

"That one is simple, milord," he said, his smile full of needles

THE NINE DRAGONS OF HELL

Nine primordial dragons suffer in Hell for their actions in life. Whether damned by their own intentional malice or the pain of a selfless action twisted horribly against the dragons' better natures. These dragons dwell in chains, some literally bound to their level of Hell. These are all aged creatures, and despite their torments, they all fear leaving Hell. They wait through agonies uncounted, dreading each new day. They dare not taste the freedom of the planes, for that brief recess only makes it all the worse when the hosts of Hell descend upon the newly-freed dragon, returning it to its former infernal lair. Instead, each seeks to break free of their prisons just long enough to topple Hell's government, that the conquering dragon could rule Hell for its own vile whims.

The following are brief biographies on each major dragon chained in Hell. For DMs who wish to use the alternate origin of arcane spells, each dragon's entry also includes which school draws its power from the dragon.

First Level of Hell: Sryless

Sryless was once a proud black dragon, before and during the Dragon Wars. After the breaking of the draconic hordes, Sryless took it upon himself to slaughter the humans responsible for uniting the lesser races. His acid breath rained down over many a town and village, before Sryless himself fell to a wise old monk. The monk's devotion to his cause was legendary, and the monk's attack indirectly led to the deaths of many of the other dragons now trapped in Hell.

The barren landscape of the first level of Hell does not suit Sryless well. Even millennia after his death, Sryless remembers the swamps of his previous life. His actual lair is high on a mountaintop, well within sight of a churning river of blood. Sryless has gone mad in his eternal imprisonment, and by being able to see his perfect home whenever he looks through the cave. He demands his freedom whenever he meets a new face, and attacks when denied. Fortunately, the devils clip his wings every century, and the cold iron chains wrapped about him allow only his head to extend from his cave.

Sryless' torment gives way to the school of necromancy. In life, he reveled in death, and he is responsible for creating the *unnaming* spell. He is immune to necromancy school arcane spells, but is otherwise identical to a great wyrm black dragon.

Second Level of Hell: Tyallah

Tyallah was one a legendary force for good, an aged dragon who wielded her powerful magic to trick the forces of evil into wasting their efforts. She was so successful in her manipulations that she carelessly attempted to ensnare a rival dragon, the blue wyrm Alxonis, only for her mark to quickly recognize the pattern behind the schemes. Alxonis played along, but eventually forced a confrontation with Tyallah when he unleashed two armies upon an unsuspecting farmland region. Though she succeeded in killing Alxonis, hundreds of innocents perished.

Shamed by her own actions, Tyallah exiled herself to the second layer of Hell, where she resides in a burning cave near an flaming city of iron. Though the heat exhausts her, she forces herself to listen to the cries of the damned. When she feels tempted to leave her self-made prison, she takes human form and wanders the streets of the city, forcing herself to connive a way to free the other trapped souls. She has never regained the courage, however, and remains meek and remorseful.

As Tyallah fell as the result of her deception, both her manipulations of others and her own self-delusions, the arcane school of illusionism rises from her like heat mirages from her plane. She is immune to illusion school arcane spells, but is otherwise identical to a great wyrm silver dragon.

Third Level of Hell: Konstantin

Curiosity is natural with children, and the copper hatchling, Konstantin, was no exception. Though his mother constantly rescued him from true harm, Konstantin finally overreached his luck and her protection by foolishly challenging a devil to a contest of wits. When he lost, Kostantin plead for his mother's help, but the devil easily slew her and dragged the screaming child down to Hell.

Now partially submerged in a swamp, withered by winds and acid rain, Konstantin has aged from a mere hatchling to a great wyrm under the constant torments of Hell. Bound as much by his own guilt as the mire and muck that drags him slowly below fetid waters, Konstantin has had nothing but time to reflect upon his actions. He has come to the conclusion that while he is entirely at fault for his mother's death, but that Hell is a vile place worthy only of absolute destruction. Though too weak to leave the plane himself, it would probably not even occurred to him to do so if freed. Konstantin's hatred of devils is so great that only another copper dragon could persuade him to actually plan a method to take Hell.

Konstantin is one of two dragons trapped in Hell that have not truly died, but Konstantin's time in Hell has changed him more thoroughly than any other dragon there. As the base elements of the plane have twisted his body, and his guilt warped his mind, so too did he himself spawn transmutation magic. Konstantin is chaotic neutral and has no wings or flight speed due to the acid in the realm, and is immune to transmutation school arcane spells. He is otherwise identical to a great wyrm copper dragon.

Fourth Level of Hell: Mnetesis

Mnetesis was a violent, implacable foe in his living days, a feral villain whom slew his every enemy, no matter how minor. Though his dominion grew and grew under his cruel regime, he ruled over little more than hardy goats and sparse patches of plant life, as all other creatures fled his madness. When he grew bored with his prey, Mnetesis brokered a deal with a devil: the devil would grant Mnetesis a new dominion with a never-ending source of sport for the dragon, in exchange for the dragon's soul. The dragon accepted the devil's offer, and the devil promptly slew Mnetesis, confining the white wyrm's soul to a level of Hell full of victims such as Mnetesis himself.

Though his new home is a literal mountain of fire, Mnetesis has adapted to it rather well. No longer the callous and bestial dragon he was in life, Mnetesis now runs something of a black market. Though the plane is locked in unbearable heat, Mnetesis may use his many powers to provide temporary relief. Though he would flee Hell if he had opportunity, he is almost comfortable with his newfound status.

Mnetesis is the lord of evocation, as his pure will drives him in death as much as in life. He has had ample time to reflect on his many mistakes, and is far calmer in spite of the flames constantly licking at his every scale. He plots carefully and meticulously, and of all the dragons in Hell, he is the closest to freedom. Mnetesis is a lawful evil great wyrm white dragon, and is immune to evocation arcane spells.

Fifth Level of Hell: Alxonis

Perpetual rival to the silver dragon Tyallah, the blue dragon Alxonis apparently never truly reigned over any nation or people, instead preferring the role of advisor to many monarchs and generals. Between his magic and his wiles, he manipulated each of his "masters" into performing as he wished them to. When Tyallah attempted to counter Alxonis at his own game, he quickly saw through her ruse and turned it against her. In what was to be his greatest triumph, however, Alxonis attempted to manipulate his enemy, too, only to fall when he did not predict Tyallah to personally take to the battlefield. Though Alxonis' forces won the day, the blue dragon fell beneath Tyallah's talons.

Awaking in a frozen wasteland, Alxonis was not surprised — as a callous manipulator of mortals, he had expected an eternity in Hell. Rather than resist his new lot, he threw himself once more into the familiar role of kingmaker, attempting to play the lords of Hell against each other. Though defeated and punished at every turn, Alxonis knows better than to give up hope. Alone among Hell's dragon, Alxonis may travel to the other levels of the plane at will, and has served under each major power in Hell at least once. He has come close to conquering the plane by proxy, and is ever certain that he will one day succeed.

Alxonis is father to the enchantment school of arcane magic, and immune to all its spells. Though he does not enjoy his new existence in Hell, neither does he shy away from it. Among all Hell's prisoners, he is perhaps the only one to have no real desire to leave. He is a great wyrm blue dragon, and prefers to avoid personal combat.

Sixth Level of Hell: Kyallalor

Kyallalor has an unusual distinction in Hell: unlike the other dragons bound here, she has dwelled in Hell since she hatched, an accident of her family's history. Among the eldest lines in draconic history, Kyallalor was heir to an unhappy legacy. In the wake of the Dragon Wars, her ancestors had fled to their allies in Hell, only to discover the price for failure. Buried alive in a forgotten city, Kyallalor's family bred in darkness and near-solitude, until at last Kyallalor freed herself as a bare hatchling. She carefully climbed to the surface of the level, and emerged to find the very allies who had betrayed her kin so long ago. Amused at the child dragon's tenacity, the devils raised her as one of their own, twisting her every perception to their own ends.

Deceived all her life, Kyallalor has an exceptionally warped view of the cosmos, even for an inhabitant of Hell. She has no true concept of existence outside of Hell, and while she summons other creatures to do her bidding or further her training, her ignorance alone binds her to Hell. She assumes everyone about her to have an ulterior motive for dealing with her, and disbelieves almost everything she hears.

Kyallalor is rarely without the company of several devils and summoned creatures, the latter of whom teach her about the other planes, but to no avail. She is paranoid but not insane, distrusting rather than fearing others. She is a great wyrm green dragon, the mother of summoning, and immune to arcane summoning spells and the special abilities of summoned creatures.

Seventh Level of Hell: Salinitos

Salinitos was once a noble gold wyrm with a lust for knowledge matched only by his hatred of evil. Though a tireless nemesis to all that was corrupt and vile, he was

ever merciful, unwilling to torture or kill his enemies unless he had no alternative. For a thousand years, all who served him knew peace and enlightenment, and many gold dragons still uphold him as the personification of virtue.

The truth is not so simple.

Salinitos was once every bit the noble soul that many still describe him as, but his constant conflicts with evil disillusioned him. With each fallen ally, his hatred for evil grew, eventually emerging as pure fanaticism. Knowing all too well what the new weights upon his soul meant, he removed himself from the company of friends, before plotting the absolute destruction of all things evil in the cosmos. In the process, he captured and bound a devil into a dark sword, forcing the prisoner to do his bidding. Though the devil could not lie to his master, he did mislead the dragon at every opportunity, ultimately telling Salinitos that all the answers the wyrm sought awaited him in Hell. Salinitos took the devil at his word, and entered Hell, only to find its assembled hosts awaiting him. Though the devils slew Salinitos, the weight of his sins forced him to remain in Hell forever, and the plane itself further corrupted his soul by allowing him to discover the means to become a lich.

Salinitos broods beneath countless ruined cities, each piled atop the next. Though now hopelessly lost to corruption, the dragon still seeks to complete his quest of overthrowing villainy in all its forms. Trapped and virtually paralyzed beneath uncounted tons of weight, his mind is as quick as ever. He knows the schemes of each of Hell's dragons, and believes that he could force Hell's destruction by freeing each of his imprisoned brethren. Though he still respects heroes, Salinitos is now a lawful evil great wyrm gold dragon with the lich template. He may not be the subject of any divination school arcane spell, as he is the ultimate source of that school's power.

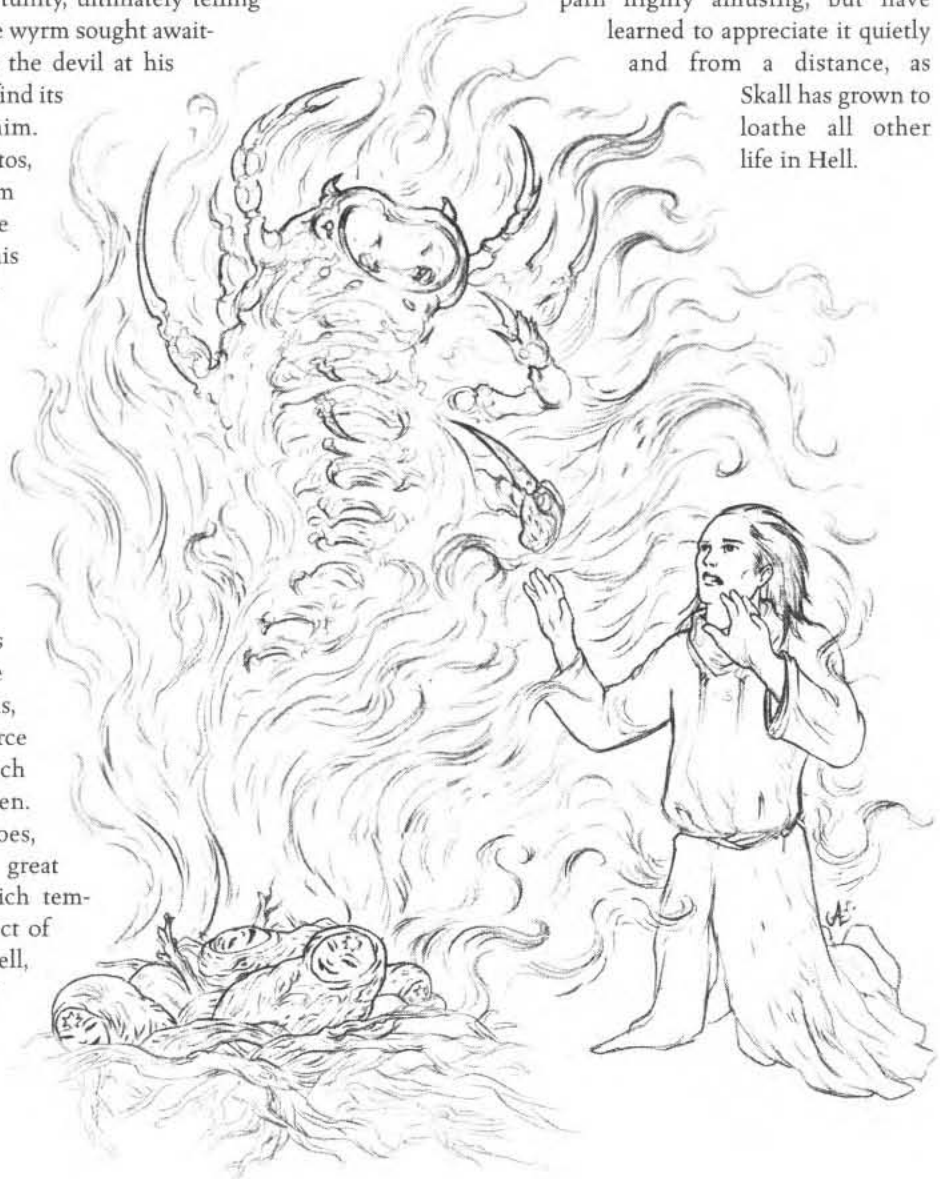
Eighth Level of Hell: Skall

In life, Skall was a true horror to behold, vanquishing whole nations out of a malicious sense of mischief. Crushing would-be allies and enemies alike, Skall turned forests into deserts and plains into badlands. His fires coursed over the world, and through it all, he laughed. When the time came for mating, however, Skall found himself alone, having murdered all other red dragons he had come across. In desperation, he hunted down and mated with a human woman, a survivor that had hidden herself amongst the ashes of her former home. Their child grew to a half-dragon paladin, who in turn slew his father.

Bartered away by demons to the devils as part of a rare peace pact, Skall found himself in the frigid wastes of the eighth level of Hell, where the very air tormented him with his every breath. The devils of the world find Skall's

pain highly amusing, but have learned to appreciate it quietly and from a distance, as

Skall has grown to loathe all other life in Hell.



Skall is a great wyrm red dragon, and an angry, vindictive one at that. Through his endless suffering, he has learned to respect and despise his captors, and all the tricks to avenge himself upon them. Skall is immune to abjuration arcane magic, as he has so mastered the spells of that school that all others draw upon a portion of his own power to cast abjuration spells.

Ninth Level of Hell: The Celebrant

The rulers of Hell claim that the Celebrant is a myth, a nonsensical whim conjured up by a fool of a damned soul. To the damned themselves, the Celebrant is a bare wisp of a hope, but any hope at all is something they can embrace. The archfiends have tried every conceivable means to stamp out the rumors of the creature's existence, but to no avail.

The Celebrant is perhaps the only innocent soul in all of Hell.

None are certain of the Celebrant's true name, but the rumors of his origins vary little. The Celebrant was one of a host of metallic dragons who once sought to conquer Hell and free its prisoners, long before even the Dragon Wars. A small and fragile brass dragon flew at the side of the commanding gold dragon, but never personally involved himself in any battle. Though mocked by his fellows, he flew ever onward, carefully watching the invasion's every success and failure. When the draconic army's wings beat over the lowest level of Hell, however, the dragons saw the futility of their task as legions of devils and damned stood shoulder-to-shoulder to the horizon and beyond. When the armies met, there was no true battle, as the hordes of Hell brought low dragon after dragon. Watching tearfully as his fellows fell to their murderous foes, or worse, temptation, the brass dragon swooped forward, and bade an offer to one of the dreaded warlords of Hell: the dragon's soul in exchange for the lives of his comrades. The devil greedily accepted, knowing fully well that most of the dragons had compromised their own souls already, and would return in the fullness of time. The devils laughed as the dragons fled, then set about tearing down the will of the sacrificial victim.

Instead, the brass dragon never spoke a word, shed a tear, or whimpered a cry. He remained perfectly stoic throughout Hell's torments, as though the pain could not reach him. As time wore on, the devils tired of the brass dragon, eventually tearing at his wings before throwing him into the deep chasm of the ninth level of Hell, just to rid themselves of his unfaltering presence. Only then did he finally make a sound: an unending, beautiful melody of forgiveness and hope. Though he has fallen for countless eons, echoes of his voice still reverberate around the ninth layer of Hell.

The Celebrant is a great wyrm brass dragon, currently locked in a deadweight fall of millions of miles into the crevasse, making him virtually unreachable, even by the devils of Hell. With his legendary song, he is the true source of much of bardic magic, and is immune to the effects of spells cast by bards.

I have not much time. The devils pride themselves on never losing a soul, and the tower will be one of the first places they seek me.

I was a fool, and did as the imp bade me. I fashioned a basin out of a scale of a silver dragon, polished it with a titan's tears, and filled the bowl to the brim with planetar's blood. The imp then told me to look in the basin, to see the true reason why elves and orcs fought.

Doing so, I saw my own face, and the memories returned. The tower was always mine, made many elven lifetimes ago in honor of my fallen love, who had died while carrying an orcish disease. Before then, I was a great elven sorcerer, so powerful that the gods themselves conspired to remove me, lest my destiny wash the heavens in blood. I remember fighting the strange astral monk before, though I saw him with an orc's eyes at the time.

I did it. It was I who warred in times of peace, and I who sought vengeance on an entire race for ancient wrongs even I had forgotten. Reborn countless times, I failed in my destiny every time. It was me all along.

The imp's puerile laughter awoke me from my malaise. I dismissed him, and returned to the tower through several distracting planar shifts. I found the monk waiting for me, my scroll in his hand. I told him to burn it, and he nodded before leaving me to my doom.

I am prepared. I have all my spells readied, and I reawakened the tower's many enchantments. I cannot possibly succeed in destroying all the devils, but I will force them to remember me.

Someone is at the door...

Chapter 4:

Veritas Majere

THE TRUTH

There is more to this world than you know. Or rather, there is more to you than you know. What I am trying to tell you is that there is what your life appears to be, and then there is the Truth. This is all I offer, Truth. If you are unwilling to leave your "life" behind, turn back now; there is nothing for you here.

There is only one Truth, and once you know this what it is becomes a matter of logic. The Truth is that everything else is a lie. The world you perceive and the experiences you have are merely what you glean from a semi-symbiotic relationship between your consciousness and the survival-oriented awareness of an omnidimensional parasitic environment called reality. You see, the universe must be observed by a conscious entity to exist — it needs us. However, we do not truly need reality, thus we are held back from our true nature and forced to perpetuate the existence of our prison. Our "lives" are payment for services rendered, a way to keep our minds occupied and interested in this world, rather than transcend it and move on to greater prospects. This is not really oppression, for it has nothing to do with morality — no, it would be more accurate to say that we are... suppressed.

However, once you truly realize this — not just think it but believe it more than you believe in the rest of the world — then you can accept that your prison is only as strong as your mind allows it to be. You see, reality is not a strong enough medium to really contain the full potential of the sentient mind. The so-called rules which bind us are just as much illusions as the rest of the world. That is what I am trying to teach you, that rules and boundaries and limits are merely qualities of a suppressed state of consciousness. What I mean is, when you jump off a cliff, you can decide not to fall.

This is but a snippet of the whole Truth. The Truth in its entirety is contained in an ancient text, which only a few (including myself) have read. I can only tell you bits and pieces of it, for the full text cannot be translated effectively. What I can tell you will set you off on your own path of self discovery, toward your ascension beyond the laws which govern this world. If you can truly convince yourself that you are not bound by gravity or physics or mortality, you can accomplish feats impossible for ordinary mortals. But more than that you can ascend beyond the confines of the universe itself, becoming like a god — or perhaps even more.

However, this is all I can offer you. You will have to proceed on your journey on your own without the text or training — which I obviously cannot give until I am freed from this... prison within a prison, a dream within a dream. You see, I thought the knowledge within the text was offered freely. I thought that The Truth was merely a book. But everything comes at a price. Before I could ascend fully, I was captured by forces beyond this world. Physically I was invincible, so they attacked my mind, trapping me within my own consciousness, just out of reach of the infinity I had so desperately been trying to reach.

But I am not bitter. Oblivion has given me time to study The Truth and think about my mistakes... and my enemies. Soon they will learn to fear the name of Xantomos again. Remember, the one force that holds people to reality is their own interest in this world. And once I get free, things will get very interesting indeed...

THE TRUTH

The Truth is a 1,200 page tome bound in what appears to be a semi reflective crystal. This material is not actually crystal, but reality itself folded into a tangible substance. The book itself is indestructible, and anyone trying to harm it must make a Will save (DC 30) or be erased from existence. You cannot destroy something more real than you are.

Comprehending the basics of The Truth requires at least a month of concentrated study, after which the reader may make a Wisdom check (DC 22). If he succeeds, from then on he may use his Wisdom score in place of his Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores (effects which drain one of these physical ability scores have no effect on his Wisdom). He also gains soldier of truth as an additional favored class. After the initial study is successfully completed, the reader may spend a year and a day studying it further, after which he must make another Wisdom check (DC 24). If he succeeds, he gains damage reduction 10/Adamantium (if he already has this from the Beyond Reality ability of a Soldier of Truth, it becomes 15/—).

However, whether the character succeeds this check or not, he must make a Will save (DC 30) or be shunted from this world and physically trapped within his own mind. Only a freedom spell or similar effect cast on the tome itself can free the trapped reader. After at least 1,000 years (to the rest of the world), the character can make another Will save (DC 30) to escape. This is otherwise similar to the imprisonment spell. The current reader trapped by The Truth is a mysterious warrior-philosopher and soldier of truth named Xantomos. He has found a way to effect the material world in a limited fashion — through the dreams of others. He was also the first one to read the tome in over a millennia, and his time in exile from reality is almost up.

Caster Level: — (The Truth is beyond magic); *Weight:* 50 lb.

A select few come to realize the truth on their own. They become soldiers in a war against the limits of reality and the doubts within themselves. They are the soldiers of truth. They are a hidden breed of warrior, for there are some who fear their ascension or try to stop them from spreading the truth to the people. I myself walked the land as one an age ago, still somewhat ignorant until I found the whole Truth. Needless to say, it did not exactly set me free...

SOLDIER OF TRUTH

There is only one truth: everything else is a lie. A few know this, but those who truly believe it learn to defy the rules of reality which bind normal people.

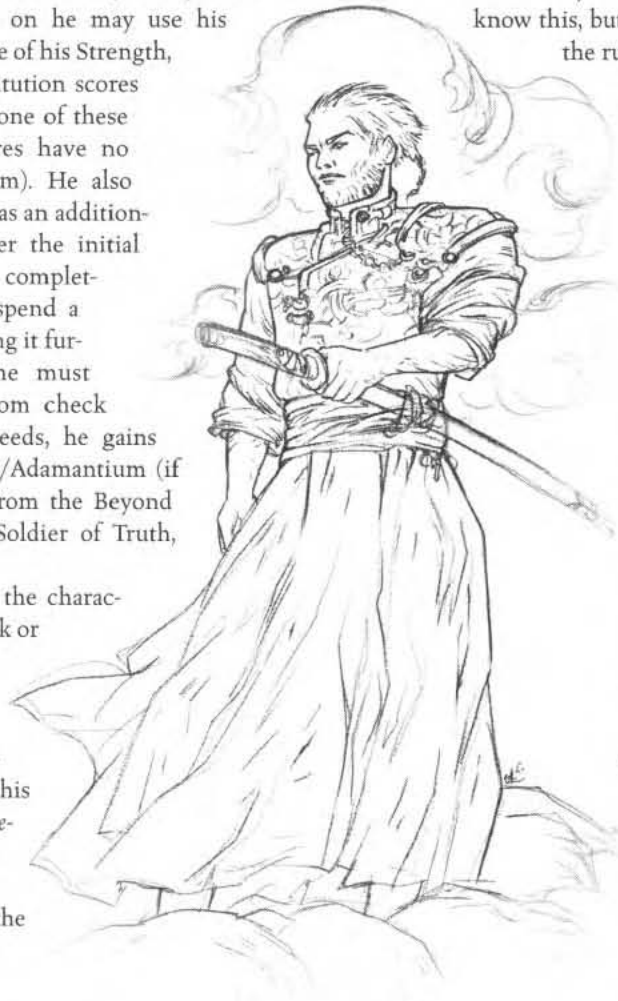
These are the soldiers of truth, powerful martial artists who, through the sheer power of their belief, can perform acts of physical and martial prowess beyond the scope of other mortals.

Adventures: Soldiers of truth adventure to detach themselves from everyday life, where the daily grind can hinder the soldier's philosophical and mental evolution into something more than mortal. Many also find that they can carry their abilities and beliefs to new levels during times of persistent danger or emotion. They generally care little for material things, but rather adventure for the experience of it and the chance to spread the seeds of comprehension to others.

Characteristics: Soldiers of truth often fight unarmed, though they may use available melee weapons if the situation calls for them. Their ability to slow down their perception of events makes them skilled with ranged weapons, especially repeating crossbows and other fast-firing weapons (they can adjust their aim quickly and perfectly; then fire again without pause). As they grow in power and experience, soldiers of truth learn to bend reality to their will and can "defy" the boundaries of the material world, such as gravity and even death. However, this is taxing and they can only "defy" reality for a short period of time.

Alignment: The soldier of truth is most often neutral, if alignment can even apply to them at all.

Religion: A soldier of truth regards deities as something of a model of what he hopes to become (or perhaps just another step on his journey to discover the Truth).



They are not beings worthy of worship, however. If a soldier worships anything, it is his own knowledge that the world around him is a lie.

Background: Soldiers of truth are so rare, there is no set pattern for how one becomes one. Many times, however, a person will embark on the path of Truth after seeing another soldier in action. He may train with a small group of soldiers for the beginning of his journey, learning a combination of physical combat and philosophy (for learning the *why* of their abilities is far more important than the *how*) until they are capable of continuing their training on their own.

Some soldiers begin to realize the Truth on their own, simply through their own philosophical musings or a growing sense that the world they see around them is too flawed to be real. However, very few of these individuals turn their beliefs to the martial pursuits of a soldier of truth.

Races: Members of any race can become a soldier of truth, though humans, with their short lives and restless natures, generally have an easier time accepting that the world they know is nothing more than a dream (older humans and longer lived races often have trouble letting go of the day-to-day world). Also, while not necessarily a matter of race, a group who is being oppressed or suffers daily is more likely to reject reality.

Other Classes: Soldiers of truth get along well with monks (who's combat styles and abilities are similar to their own). They dislike the unwavering philosophical stances of paladins and clerics. They feel indifferent about arcane spellcasters, for they view magic as just another property of reality which they need to escape.

Game Rule Information

Soldiers of truth have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Wisdom is the most important ability for the soldier, as he gains more focus points for higher a Wisdom score and several of his abilities depend on Wisdom. Strength and Dexterity are useful in combat.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The soldier of truth's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the soldier of truth.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Soldiers of truth are proficient with club, crossbow (all), dagger, handaxe, javelin, kama, nunchaku, quarterstaff, sai, shuriken, siangham, and sling.

Soldiers are proficient with light armor, but not shields. When wearing medium or heavy armor, using a shield, or carrying a medium or heavy load, a soldier of truth cannot use his class abilities.

TABLE 4-1: THE SOLDIER OF TRUTH

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus	Unarmed Damage*	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	-2/-2	1d6	Focus, unarmed strike, flurry of blows
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	-1/-1	1d6	Evasion
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	+0/+0	1d6	Improved Disarm feat
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	+1/+1	1d8	Uncanny Dodge
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	+2/+2	1d8	Alter gravity
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	+3/+3	1d8	Improved Trip feat
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	+4/+4	1d8	Up the walls
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	+5/+5/+0	1d10	Impossible jump
9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	+6/+6/+1	1d10	Improved Uncanny Dodge
10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	+7/+7/+2	1d10	Defy impossibility
11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	+8/+8/+8/+3	1d10	Unhindered by reality
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	Impossible speed
13	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	+9/+9/+9/+4	2d6	Battering punch
14	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9	+10/+10/+10/+5	2d6	Improved Evasion
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	2d6	Defy reality
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	Manipulate space
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	2d8	See the truth
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	2d8	Defy death
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	2d8	Flight
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	2d10	Beyond reality

Flurry of Blows (Ex): When unarmored, a soldier of truth may strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in a round at his highest base attack bonus, but this attack takes a -2 penalty, as does each other attack made that round. The resulting modified base attack bonuses are shown in the Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus column on Table: The Soldier of Truth. This penalty applies for 1 round, so it also affects attacks of opportunity the monk might make before his next action. When a soldier of truth reaches 5th level, the penalty lessens to -1, and at 9th level it disappears. A soldier must use a full attack action to strike with a flurry of blows.

When using flurry of blows, a soldier of truth may attack only with unarmed strikes or with special soldier of truth weapons (kama, nunchaku, quarterstaff, sai, shuriken, and siangham). He may attack with unarmed strikes and special soldier weapons interchangeably as desired. When using weapons as part of a flurry of blows, a soldier applies his Strength bonus (not Str bonus $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$ or $\times \frac{1}{2}$) to his damage rolls for all successful attacks, whether he wields a weapon in one or both hands. The soldier can't use any weapon other than a special soldier of truth weapon as part of a flurry of blows.

In the case of the quarterstaff, each end counts as a separate weapon for the purpose of using the flurry of blows ability. Even though the quarterstaff requires two hands to use, a soldier may still intersperse unarmed strikes with quarterstaff strikes, assuming that he has enough attacks in his flurry of blows routine to do so.

When a soldier of truth reaches 11th level, his flurry of blows ability improves. In addition to the standard single extra attack he gets from flurry of blows, he gets a second extra attack as his full base attack bonus.

Unarmed Strike: At 1st level, a soldier of truth gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat. A soldier of truth's attacks may be with either fist interchangeably or even from elbows, knees, and feet. This means that a soldier may even make unarmed strikes with his hands full. There is no such thing as an off-hand attack for a soldier striking unarmed. A soldier may thus apply his full Strength bonus on damage rolls for all his unarmed strikes.

Usually a soldier of truth's unarmed strikes deal lethal damage, but he can choose to deal nonlethal damage instead with no penalty on his attack roll. He has the same choice to deal lethal or nonlethal damage while grappling.

A soldier of truth's unarmed strike is treated both as a manufactured weapon and a natural weapon for the purpose of spells and effects that enhance or improve either manufactured weapons or natural weapons.

A soldier also deals more damage with his unarmed strikes than a normal person would, as shown on Table 4-1: The Soldier of Truth. The unarmed damage on Table 4-1: The Soldier of Truth is for Medium soldiers. A Small soldier deals less damage than the amount given there with his unarmed attacks, while a Large soldier deals more damage.

Focus Points: A soldier of truth has a maximum number of focus points (fp) equal to his class level plus his Wisdom modifier with which to bend the rules of reality. Once used, focus points regenerate at a rate of 1 fp per minute. Unless stated otherwise, abilities which cost fp are extraordinary abilities and can be activated as a free action.

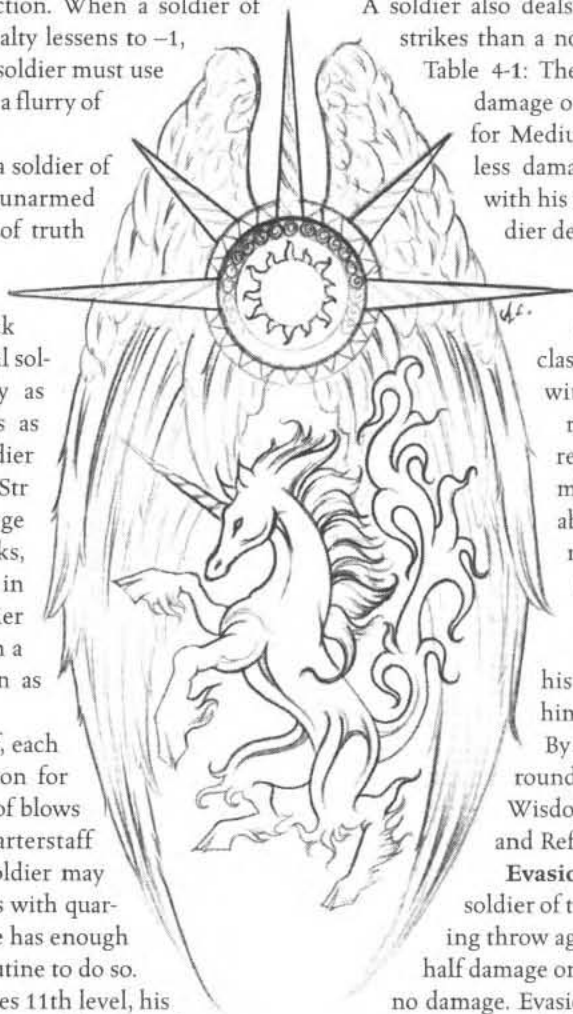
Focus: A soldier of truth can focus his mind so as to slow down his perception of events, allowing him more time to react to fast events.

By spending 1 fp at the beginning of a round, the soldier of truth can add his Wisdom modifier to his AC, attack rolls, and Reflex saving throws.

Evasion (Ex): At 2nd level or higher if a soldier of truth makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a soldier of truth is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless soldier does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Improved Disarm: At 3rd level, the soldier of truth gains the Improved Disarm feat for free. He need not take the Expertise feat, normally a prerequisite, before this.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 4th level, a soldier of truth retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. If a soldier already has uncanny dodge from a different class, he automatically gains improved uncanny dodge (see below) instead.



Alter Gravity: At 5th level, the soldier of truth is no longer bound by the traditional rules of reality, such as gravity. He may reduce damage from a fall by treating the fall as if it were shorter. This ability costs 1 fp per 10 ft. reduction.

Improved Disarm: At 6th level, the soldier of truth gains the Improved Trip feat for free. He need not take the Expertise feat, normally a prerequisite, before this.

Up the Walls: At 7th level the soldier of truth can take part of one of his or her move actions on a wall if the character begins and ends the move on a horizontal surface. The height the soldier can achieve on the wall is limited only by this movement restriction. If the character does not end his or her move on a horizontal surface, he or she falls prone, taking damage as appropriate for his or her height above the floor. Treat the wall as a normal floor for the purposes of measuring movement. Passing the boundary between horizontal and vertical is equivalent to 5 ft. of movement along a normal floor. Opponents on the floor still get attacks of opportunity as the character moves up the wall within areas he threatens. This ability costs 4 fp per use.

Impossible Jump: At 8th level the soldier of truth can bend the rules of reality to allow him to make impossibly long jumps. When using this ability, the soldier's maximum jump distance is no longer limited by his height. In addition, he gains a +15 bonus to Jump checks for each 2 fp spent in this manner.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 9th level and higher, a soldier of truth can no longer be flanked. This defense denies a rogue the ability to sneak attack the soldier of truth by flanking him, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than the target has soldier levels. If a character already has uncanny dodge (*see above*) from a second class, the character automatically gains improved uncanny dodge instead, and the levels from the classes that grant uncanny dodge stack to determine the minimum level a rogue must be to flank the character.

Defy Impossibility: At 10th level the soldier of truth can move faster than is normally possible. Essentially this amounts to being able to move at what is (from his point of view) normal speed while viewing the world from the slowed-down perspective of the Focus ability. You may add twice your Wisdom modifier, your AC, Reflex saving throws, and melee attack rolls. This ability costs 2 fp for the first multiplier increase and the cost for each additional multiplier increasing by +1 each time (2 for twice your modifier, 5 for triple, 9 for four times your modifier, etc.). This does not stack with the bonuses provided by Focus, though Defy Impossibility affects only melee attack rolls, while Focus also affects ranged attacks.

Unhindered by Reality (Ex): At 11th level a soldier of truth will no longer become fatigued (though he still needs to sleep). In addition, he can go a number of hours

without sleep equal 8 + his Constitution score. If the character does not sleep, he stops regenerating lost focus points.

Impossible Speed: At 12th level a soldier of truth can increase his speed to superhuman levels through the sheer power of his belief. He can increase his base speed for that round by spending 1 fp per 10 ft. increase. For every 60 ft. of speed increase, attacks of opportunity are made at a -1 circumstance penalty due to the sheer rate of speed at which the soldier moves.

Battering Punch: At 13th level the soldier of truth can make a series of super fast unarmed attacks. When using the full attack action, he can gain extra attacks using his highest attack bonus by spending 5 fp per attack up to a maximum of the soldier's Dexterity bonus (if any).

Improved Evasion (Ex): At 14th level, a soldier of truth's evasion ability improves. He still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks, but henceforth he takes only half damage on a failed save. A helpless soldier does not gain the benefit of improved evasion.

Defy Reality: At 15th level the soldier of truth can accomplish the impossible by simply believing that the basic rules of reality no longer apply to him. By spending 8 fp, the soldier may choose to make a Will save to avoid damage or other harmful effect in place of a failed save or when a save is not usually allowed. The DC for this save is equal to the DC of the original failed save, the standard DC against the spell (if the spell does not usually allow a save), or 10 + half the damage taken (rounded down). If the effect does not do damage and does not allow a save, the DC should be 20, plus or minus 5 depending on the situation. If successful, the failed save is treated as a success or the effect or damage is negated.

Manipulate Space: At 16th level the soldier of truth can utilize the spell *telekinesis* as a standard action by spending 3 fp per round. He may also use this ability to make projectiles simply stop in midair and hang there until he releases them. He cannot use this ability if he does not know the attack is coming and he cannot affect unusually large projectiles, such as a boulder thrown by a giant or a bolt from a ballista. Treat this as having a caster level equal to half the soldier's class level.

See the Truth: At 17th level the soldier of truth sees the world for what it is, regardless of outward appearances. He gains a +5 bonus to Will saves against Illusions and may make a save against them as soon as he enters their presence (rather than only after interacting with them). He may also utilize any one of the following spells for 1 fp per round: *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *detect secret doors*, *detect animals and plants*, *detect undead*, *detect snares and pits*, *detect scrying*, or *see invisibility*. The caster level for these spells is equal to half his class level.

Defy Death: At 18th level the soldier of truth transcends mortal boundaries such as death. When an attack or effect would normally kill the character, he may choose to spend 15 fp to return to life the next round with 1d4 hit points left and his normal Constitution score (if he was killed by having his Constitution score brought to 0).

Flight: At 19th level the soldier of truth gains the ability to fly at will at a speed of 100 ft. with Good maneuverability. While flying, he can make a charge action, spending focus points to multiply his speed beyond the normal $\times 2$. This ability costs 4 fp per multiplier increase (4 for $\times 3$, 8 for $\times 4$, and so on). While he may use this ability at will, it takes a standard action to begin flying (after which he may use his next move action to fly).

Beyond Reality (Ex): At 20th level the soldier of truth has achieved his full potential and transcended all the limits of reality. His type changes to Outsider, he gains damage reduction 10/Adamantium, and spell resistance of 10 + his level. He may raise his spell resistance or damage reduction for one round by spending 3 fp per point of damage reduction and 5 fp per point of spell resistance.

SOLDIER OF TRUTH FEATS

Fast Focus [Special]

You recharge focus points faster than normal.

Prerequisites: Maximum focus points 10+.

Benefit: You regain focus points at a rate of 1 per half minute (5 rounds).

Normal: Without this feat, you regain focus points at a rate of 1 per minute (10 rounds).

Increased Focus Points [Special]

You have more focus points than normal.

Prerequisites: Maximum focus points 5+.

Benefit: You gain one focus point.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times. Each additional time you take it, the number of fp gained from this feat increases by 1 (the second time you take it you get 2 fp, 3 the third time, and so on).

THE HIGH AETHYRS

I said before that everything in this reality is a lie. However, what you must understand is that there are... degrees of untruth. That is, there are people and places that are only partly conceived by your observations, meaning they have some level of existence on their own. I am speaking of the eight aethyrs. The aethyrs are versions of our own world that become more and more real — or at least less untrue. Each aethyr sheds one property of this reality, one layer in this coat of lies.

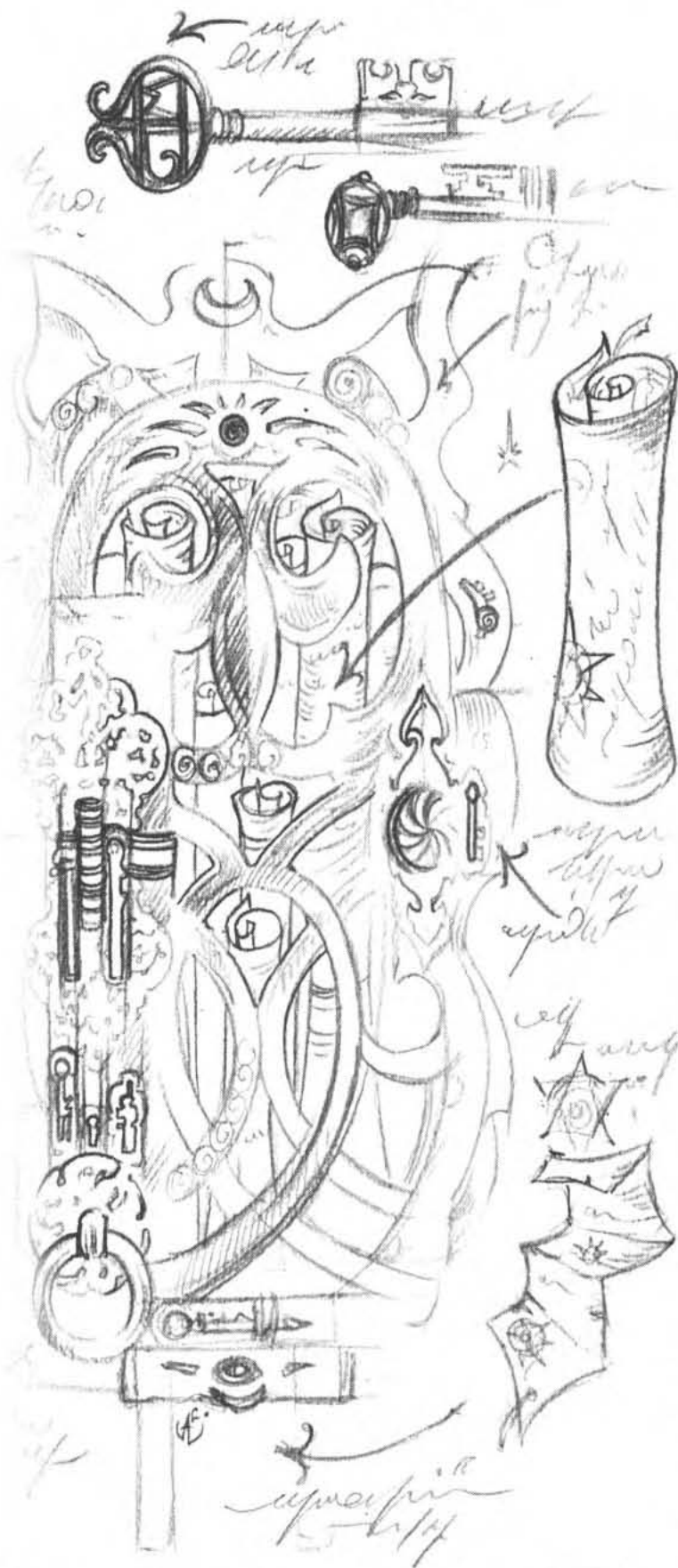
There are actually thirty aethyrs in all. Most, however, are merely permutations of the main eight, with the differences

being hardly of consequence. Traveling to the aethyrs is as simple as letting go of the world around you, through meditation or sheer force of will (though I'm sure some mage has found a way to do it with magic, at least up to the 4th aethyr). Each aethyr must be attained in succession, and while with each aethyr it becomes easier and easier to let go of reality, it becomes more and more difficult to return to the "real" world — and when you do, it taxes your body to be re-bound by its rules. It must also be said that the aethyrs stack, in that a property shed in the fourth aethyr remains shed in the fifth through eighth aethyrs.

When you travel to the aethyr, you can no longer effect the material world, but the material world can still effect you, to the degree that reality exists on each aethyr. The aethyrs are not planes, they are states of mind. So, for example, when you ascend to the first aethyr, you and your material body (and whatever you are wearing or carrying) still move around on the material world. However, you cannot manipulate objects or affect creatures or cast spells which effect the material world, but you can pass through matter as detailed below.

For the most part, the aethyrs look like the location to which they correspond on the material plane, but they are pale, blurred, and far away. Each succeeding layer gets more and more faded, as the lie unravels. As I said before, each aethyr sheds one property of reality. The aethyr and the property each one sheds are as follows:

1. **Material density (partial):** Objects, structures, and the like lose consistency compared to the travelers and objects ascended from the material world. Water stands as thin as air (meaning that you move and fall right through it). Solid objects are as a vacuous goo and can be passed through depending on their density in the material world (objects with hardness over 5 require a strength check equal to 5+their hardness). You do not need to breath on this or any other aethyr, and you will not pass through a "solid" object unless you wish to (though you still fall through "liquids").
2. **Light and darkness:** There is no night or day, nor light or dark; everything is illuminated equally by a dull gray light coming from the air itself. This light casts no shadows (incurring a -4 penalty to Hide checks) but also makes it difficult to discern color, texture, and detail (-4 to Spot checks).
3. **Gravity:** There is no gravity from the third aethyr on. Objects that fall in the material world still fall here, but the aethyreal traveler and the items he brings with him do not. Creatures and objects with a Wisdom score of at least 5 may float in any direction (albeit at half speed), or use their regular forms of movement normally.
4. **Material density (complete):** Even the hardest solids stand as thin as air, allowing you to pass through them at will. Also, you may no longer use your regular forms of movement — you can only float at half speed.
5. **Magic:** Spellcasting and magic items do not function here — there is simply no magic to draw upon. The entire aethyr acts as an antimagic field. A traveler on this aethyr and beyond can neither use nor be affected by magic. A spell cast at him



from the material world or a lower aethyr goes off as normal, but simply does not do anything to him, good or bad.

6. Time: Time does not exist; everything is as it was for an individual when he ascended to the sixth aethyr. Travelers do not age, hunger or thirst, tire, or regain hit points from rest. Creatures, objects, and other material things remain frozen in the moment they were when the traveler attained the 6th aethyr. Unlike the others, someone who ascends to this aethyr disappears in the material world (technically, he disappears and reappears in the spot he is when he returns to a lower level, if he returns), for he has actually given up a dimension of his existence. He still has length, width, and breadth, but he no longer has duration.
7. Structures, objects, and creatures: Trees, buildings, people, and objects do not exist on this aethyr. There is only plain, barren landscape. Everything is simply gone.
8. Reality: The lie is undone. There is nothing but an endless horizon on all sides. The last aethyr is, in many ways, beyond the scope of normal mortal comprehension — or at least perception. But beware, once you give reality up entirely, it is neigh impossible to get it back. Let it be known that this is merely reality without the lie, not the True Beyond.

Ascend the Aethyrs [General]

You can focus your mind to unravel the lies of reality, ascending to the high aethyrs.

Prerequisites: Wis 20+, 10 ranks in Concentration, must have either 10 focus points or have studied The Truth for the minimal amount.

Benefit: You may make a Wisdom check to ascend your mind to the high aethyrs (detailed above). The check requires a full round action and has a base DC of 25 (though you may take 20). The DC to move to a higher aethyr decreases by 1 for each level (moving between the first and second aethyr has a DC of 24, 23 from second to third, for example). However, it takes a similar check to move to a lower aethyr, which has a base DC of 13 and increases by 2 for each level (moving back to the material world from the first is 13, moving from second to first is 15, and so on, with the DC to move back from the eighth aethyr at 31). When you do move back to the material world, you take temporary Constitution damage equal to the number of the highest aethyr you attained since you last left the real world.

THE KEEPERS OF THE BOX

Once we realize that reality is a thing — to be picked up and set back down at will — rather than an absolute, we can begin to comprehend things that would otherwise be considered paradoxes or inconceivable ramblings. For instance, deep in the mountains, there is a covey of powerful hags who keep reality in a box. Literally.

Is it really so hard to believe? After all, your own mind extends infinitely into the Beyond, the All-That-Is, and yet is also contained within that shell of reality that you call your body — which is in truth just part of the universe you yourself directly conceive through observation. This is itself a precedent for the whole of something infinite to be finitely contained within itself, so why, then, should reality not follow the same rules?

The box itself has not unusual powers or properties; the universe contained within it cannot be used or effected, for the most part. It is 12 inches long, 8 inches wide, and 4 inches high and is, needless to say, tightly locked. However, when you do manage to open it (though when I finally found a key that worked, it disappeared after I used it), it tears a great rift in the sky visible for at least a thousand miles, through which I could see... me. I quickly closed the box and the world seemed none the worse for the wear, though I'm not sure it would have been so had I actually reached my hand into the box. I might have done so, in fact, had the three witches I had barely managed to subdue earlier not come at me again with renewed fury, casting spells that I had never seen nor heard of then (or since).

After I defeated them again, however, they took me in and taught me their ways. I studied under them for almost a year (for this was when I was only first beginning to understand), until I woke up one day laying in a field five hundred miles from their mountain cave.

The Keepers of the box are a covey of three hags that live alone, high in the mountains. They have been there for hundreds of years, protecting the Reality Box and studying the nature of reality. While their true appearance is that of other hags of their types, they generally take the forms of beautiful human maidens, dressed in simple, conservative dresses. They are generally amenable to visitors, provided they do not attempt to open or damage the Reality Box. They are willing to teach their secrets to anyone who defeats them or shows suitable understanding of the universe.

Sharraka, Annis Sor 6: CR 12; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8+6d4+28; 70 hp; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +10; Grp +21; Atk Claw +16 melee (1d6+7); Full Atk 2 claws +16 melee (1d6+7) and bite +11 melee (1d6+3); SA Improved grab, rake 1d6+7, rend 2d6+10, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ Damage reduction 4/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 22; AL Neutral;

SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +14; Str 25, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Hide +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +13, Spellcraft +10, Spot +13; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Still Spell, Think Outside The Box (see below).

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an annis must hit a Large or smaller opponent with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +16 melee, damage 1d6+7. An annis can attack a grappled foe with both claws at no penalty.

Rend (Ex): An annis that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 2d6+10 points of damage.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day — *disguise self*, *fog cloud*. Caster level 8th.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1st — *identify*, *message*, *shocking grasp*, *silent image*; 2nd — *detect thoughts*, *misdirection*; 3rd — *crack the lid* (see below).

Possessions: None.

Levili, Green Hag Sor 6: CR 11; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 9d8+6d4+15; 65 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 22 (+1 Dex, +11 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +12; Grp +16; Atk Claw +16 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk 2 claws +16 melee (1d4+4); SA Mimicry, spell-like abilities, spells, weakness; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., spell resistance 20; AL Neutral; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Hide +9, Listen +14, Spellcraft +10, Spot +14, Swim +12; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Still Spell, Think Outside The Box (see below).

Mimicry (Ex): A green hag can imitate the sounds of almost any animal found near its lair.

Skills: A green hag 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.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *dancing lights*, *disguise self*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *invisibility*, *pass without trace*, *tongues*, *water breathing*. Caster level 9th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Weakness (Su): A green hag can weaken a foe by making a special touch attack. The opponent must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 2d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — arcane mark, detect magic, light, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st — erase, ray of enfeeblement, true strike, unseen servant; 2nd — alter self, hideous laughter; 3rd — slam the hinge (see below).

Possessions: None.

Terispa, Sea Hag Sor 6: CR 10; Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic); HD 3d8+6d4+18; 45 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk Claw +10 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk 2 claws +10 melee (1d4+4); SA Evil eye, horrific appearance, spells; SQ Amphibious, spell resistance 17; AL Neutral; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Listen +6, Spellcraft +10, Spot +6, Swim +12; Alertness, Silent Spell, Think Outside The Box (see below), Toughness.

Amphibious (Ex): Although sea hags are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

Evil Eye (Su): Three times per day, a sea hag can cast its dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 ft. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or be dazed for three days, although remove curse or dispel evil can restore sanity sooner. In addition, an affected creature must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or die from fright. Creatures with immunity to fear effects are not affected by the sea hag's evil eye. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Horrific Appearance (Su): The sight of a sea hag is so revolting that anyone (other than another hag) who sets eyes upon one must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 2d6 points of Strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's Strength score below 0, but anyone reduced to Strength 0 is helpless. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by the same hag's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills: A sea hag 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.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — arcane mark, detect magic, light, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st — charm person, chill touch, mage armor, sleep; 2nd — ghoul touch, scare; 3rd — spin the box (see below).

Possessions: None.

COVEY ABILITIES

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day — animate dead, bestow curse (DC 18), control weather, dream, forcecage, mind blank, mirage arcana (DC 19), polymorph, veil (DC 20), vision. Caster level 9th. The save DCs are based on a Charisma score of 18. To use one of these abilities (which require a full-round action), all three hags must be within 10 ft. of one another, and all must participate.

Think Outside the Box [General]

You have learned the secrets of reality from the Keepers of the Box.

Prerequisites: 8 ranks in Knowledge (arcana), must have studied among the Keepers of the Box.

Benefit: By willfully directing what happens in your life, you may, once per day, treat any die roll as if you had naturally rolled one higher.

Special: This feat may only be learned from the Keepers of the Box.



NEW SPELLS

These three spells are known only to the Keeper's of the Box.

Crack the Lid

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: See text

This spell utilizes the infinite loop of the reality-box paradox to give a single melee attack incredible strength. The next melee attack you make, provided it is made before the end of the next round, gains a +5 circumstance bonus to the attack roll and does triple damage. Only the parts of the attack that would be multiplied by a critical hit are increased. If the attack is a critical hit, instead increase the weapon's critical hit multiplier by 2.

Should you miss the attack, the weapon used suffers feedback stress causing 3d6 points of damage (hardness protects as usual) or 1d6 hp of damage to the caster if they were using a natural or unarmed attack.

Slam the Hinge

Conjuration (Teleportation)
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Area: One 10 ft. cube
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

You disconnect a small area from the rest of reality, causing anything entering it to instantaneously come out the other side without passing through the area. Anything inside the area when the spell is cast is unaffected and may leave the area normally (though once out it may not come back in). Any creature or object that tries to enter the area simply appears at the far edge as the if the area did not exist, with the edges normally spatially connected. Spells and magical attacks are unaffected.

A dimensional anchor spell will prevent this spell from functioning within its area of effect.

It is rumored that a greater version of this spell exists, but I have been unable to discover it. Perhaps it rests in the memory of the hags? Or is inscribed in one place?

Spin The Box

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 round
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell subtly alters the paradoxical relationship between reality and the Reality Box to change the direction of gravity with regards to a single creature. A target that fails its save "falls" in the direction chosen by the caster. The target falls up to 150 ft. (if the duration is somehow increased, such as with the Extend Spell feat, it falls 300 ft. in the second round) until it hits some solid object, taking falling damage as normal, or until its gravity returns to normal one round later (causing the target to fall downward again if it had fallen "up," taking falling damage if appropriate). If the caster directs the gravity toward the ground at an angle, the target must make an appropriate Balance or Climb check or either fall prone or fall (DM's discretion). Provided it has something to hold onto, a creature caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save to secure itself when the spell strikes. Creatures who can fly or levitate can keep themselves from falling.

Chapter 7:

The Wisdom of Jiao Wu Shen

It is with an overwhelming sense of my own unworthiness that I, Jiao Wu Shen, the humblest of your acolytes, venture to present this report to you, Oh Master Whose Genius Shines Like the Sun. In taking on the task you so graciously assigned to me I am conscious of my enormous shortcomings in both perception and wisdom, and tremble at the thought that my unworthy scribbles may fail to find acceptance in the sight of You To Whom All is Clear. And yet, uplifted by the confidence that you have, in your wisdom, chosen to bestow upon my pathetic self, I make bold to present you with the following report.

As you will no doubt recall, oh Master Whose Memory Fails Never, you had deigned to present me with a number of the scrolls that, in your youth, you had rescued (with the bravery and valor of the Heroes of Old) from the heathen temples of the East (may we live to see lichen growing on the tumbled stones of their unholy shrines). It appears that the barbarians had encoded several of the scrolls in such a way that those brilliant scholars who had attempted to make sense of them (may the Light of Eternity shine upon their souls) were entirely unable to do so. Perhaps following the saying "the drunken man stays on the crooked path", you blessed this unworthy student with the opportunity to try his hand at the hopeless task. Inspired by your trust in my humble abilities, I have spent the last sixteen cycles in the study of these scrolls, and believe that I may have begun to understand a bit of their contents.

The scrolls are of three separate types, and indeed from three separate eras. The Hand of the Goddess guided me to study one particular scroll first, and after much study and meditation was able to discover that it was, in fact, a lesson plan used by the heathen priests to teach their blaspheming students how to decipher encrypted documents! I have done my best to provide here a poor

summary of the decoding methods used by the idolaters in the hope that such a summary will find acceptance in the eyes of You Whose Knowledge Knows No Bounds. With this information before me the second and newest scroll revealed its secrets to me like the unfolding petals of a lotus blossom. I have similarly included a summary of this second scroll with this report. The third scroll turned out to be considerably more complex, being not only much more strongly encoded than the other scrolls, but also being written in an ancient tongue no longer spoken in the Lands of Men. With the help of the great linguist Liao Su Ping (now sadly lying with his ancestors) I was finally able to provide the very rough translation with which I conclude this report, may it please You on Whom The Goddess Smiles.

DECIPHERING

The first difficulty in determining the hidden meaning of a message is to determine if there is a hidden meaning at all. Sometimes what appears to be a completely innocuous message is, in fact, a completely innocuous message, and weeks can be spent trying to deduce further meaning where there is none. Sometimes the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the message (i.e., found on the person of a known traitor, or discovered in the home of a formerly trusted acolyte) may be the only hint that one is dealing with an encoded document. Other times the nature of the message itself will clearly inform the perceptive reader of its encoded nature. Of this we shall speak more later.

Most of the encrypted messages we have captured from the Enemy have been in the form of ciphers. Ciphers consist of some kind of letter substitution, i.e. replacing all of the "e's" in the original document (called the "plaintext") with the symbol "†", all of the "p's" with the symbol "#", and so on. This will produce a message of apparently meaningless symbols, called the cryptogram. This is the first weakness of the cipher, that it is usually very easy to recognize. A page covered with groups of meaningless symbols, or with "words" made up of combinations of known letters which spell gibberish, will warn the astute observer that he is dealing with a cryptogram.

The problem with simple letter substitution is that it makes it easy to surmise the correct identity of many of the letters from context. For example, our language only has two one-letter words, so any letter or symbol standing alone has to be an "A", an "I", or one of the ten digits. If the same symbol is found several times both standing alone and within other groups of symbols, it is even more likely to either an "A" or an "I". Similarly, if the message appears to be a letter, and begins with a four-letter grouping such as "S†#¢", it is very likely that that word is "dear", and four letters of the cipher have already revealed themselves.

More sophisticated cipher users will divide the plaintext into four-or-five letter groupings, to frustrate attempts to divine the identity of the symbols from context. This is more difficult to encipher, but it also makes the message more difficult to decipher.

The best way to deal with such a document is by "frequency analysis." In every language certain letters appear more commonly than others. For example, in our language "e" is the most common letter, followed by "t", "a", "o", "i", "n", "s", "r" and "h". By matching the most common letters in the alphabet in which the original document was written with the symbols (or letters) most commonly found in the enciphered document, a decipherer can often begin to get a good sense of which symbols stand for which letters. The fault of this system is that it requires that the decipherer know in what language the plaintext was written, and to know that language well enough not only to know with what frequency individual letters appear in that language, but to be able to identify words from groups of letters, not all of which may be the correct ones.

Frequency analysis can often be stymied by using polyalphabetic substitution, in which a plaintext letter is replaced by letters or symbols from several cipher alphabets rather than just one. The first letter of the plaintext is enciphered using the first cipher alphabet, the second using the second alphabet, etc.

The most complex type of cipher used by the Enemy involves the use of a key, which is a form of polyalphabetic substitution. A key is a word or phrase, the letters of which specify the order of cipher alphabets to use in deciphering the cryptogram. For example, if the key is "ARTICHOKE", the first letter of the cryptogram is defined using cipher alphabet "A", the second using cipher alphabet "R", the third using cipher alphabet "T", and so on. Changing the key frequently can make it almost impossible to decode a message. In some cases our scholars have studied a cryptogram until their heads have fallen off their shoulders but they have been unable to decipher the message.

In short, the art of ciphering is considerably in advance of the art of deciphering, and while messages that have been enciphered using the simpler types of ciphers can usually be understood eventually, key-based polyalphabetic ciphers can often withstand the determined assaults of even the most skilled decipherer.



NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

This section adds two new skills, enciphering and deciphering. Note that deciphering is very different from the skill Decipher Script, which is used to try to understand the general sense of a message written in an unfamiliar language.

KNOWLEDGE (ENCIPHERING) (INT)

This is the skill of enciphering a plaintext message such that the casual reader cannot understand it. A successful Enciphering check will produce a properly enciphered cryptogram.

Enciphering is a time-consuming process, the exact amount of time depending on the amount of plaintext to be enciphered and the complexity of the cryptogram. To encipher a full page of plaintext using the simplest letter substitution requires thirty minutes. That number can be halved if the encipherer is very familiar with the cipher, and tripled if this is the first time he has ever used the cipher. This time is doubled if polyalphabetic substitution is being used. The encipherer can double that time again to effectively "take 10." Taking 20 is not possible with Enciphering.

Once the character has spent the appropriate amount of time the DM makes a secret roll of the character's Enciphering skill against a DC of 12 if simple letter substitution is being used and 15 if polyalphabetic substitution is being used. If the encipherer does not have a copy of the cipher and has to do it from memory, add a modifier of +5 for a simple substitution and +10 for a polyalphabetic substitution. Success means that the plaintext has been successfully translated into a cryptogram, which failure means that the encipherer has made an error. Roll a D20. On a 1–12 the encipherer has made an error that makes the message unreadable by either the intended recipient or anyone who captures the message and attempts to decipher it. On a 13–20 the encipherer has made a mistake that makes it easier for an unintended recipient of the message easier to break the cipher and decipher the cryptogram.

KNOWLEDGE (DECIPHERING) (INT)

This is the skill of deciphering a cryptogram so that it can be read by anyone familiar with the language.

Deciphering is even more time-consuming than enciphering, and can be a great deal more complex. If the decipherer has the cipher already, then the base time for deciphering a cryptogram is thirty minutes, and has a DC of 10, with the following modifiers:

Once the character has spent the appropriate amount of time (it is not possible to take 10 or 20 with deciphering) the DM makes a secret roll of the character's Deciphering skill against the appropriate DC. Success means that the message has been deciphered. Failure means one of two things. If the decipherer has the cipher, he has made an error and produced gibberish. He may try again. If the decipherer does not have the cipher, the cryptogram has proved too complex to decipher and he may not try again until he has a copy of the cipher to work from.

THE ORDER OF THE SERPENT

Translator's Note: This scroll appears to be a fragment of a larger document that was written within the last few years by a wanderer in the Eastern Lands.

...the demons. I escaped into the night, taking a long detour to the west around the Tower of A... and into the mountains north of... Ever watchful for pursuit I wandered for days, until I came to a narrow defile between two cliffs. Looking up, I perceived that the eastern cliff was terraced, and pierced with numerous circular cave openings. Looking down I saw two strangely dressed men who seemed to have suddenly appeared out of the ground in front of me. They wore elaborate helmets in the form of a snake's head and green scale mail fashioned to resemble a serpent's scales. Each had a peculiar weapon in each hand. At first it looked like a simple long dagger with a slashing blade, but as it turned I could see another, more pointed stabbing blade protruding from the other side of their fist. The weapon consisted of two blades sharing a common handle, held in the middle.

When I turned to flee from these snake soldiers I discovered that two more had silently appeared behind me. They motioned for me to put my hands up. Unwilling to put myself into the hands of strangers (particularly after the last three months!)

TABLE: 7.1: DECIPHERING MODIFIERS

Complication	Time Modifier	DC Modifier
A Polyalphabetic Cryptogram	×2	+2
Familiar with Cipher	× $\frac{1}{2}$	—
Unfamiliar with Cipher	×2	—
Working from Memory (simple substitution)	—	+2
Working from Memory (polyalphabetic substitution)	—	+5
Not having the cipher (simple substitution)	×5	+10
Not having the cipher (polyalphabetic substitution)	×20	+20
Encipherer error making deciphering more difficult	—	+5
Enciphering error making deciphering easier	—	-5

I drew my weapon and the warriors closed in, their strange weapons dancing in the sunlight. I put my back to the wall of the canyon and prepared to defend myself. I thrust at one, but he parried my attack with the weapon in his right hand and slashed at me with the weapon in his left. The cut was light, barely leaving a scrape on my arm, but I immediately began to feel weak. Strangely, the warriors stepped back from the attack, although they kept their guards up. I staggered towards one of them, who easily parried my wild blow. Then darkness came over me and I fell forward into blackness.

When I awoke I was lying in a darkened chamber, lit by candlelight. A young man in a black robe was standing over me. When he saw that I was awake he wordlessly helped me to my feet and motioned me to follow him. He led me out of the room and through a series of round, serpentine corridors until he came to a large door, on which he knocked. We then waited. I heard no reply from behind the doors, but apparently my guide did, for he opened the doors and motioned me to enter. He then closed the door behind me.

The room was large, and softly lit by candles. The stonewalls were covered with carvings of intertwined serpents, as were the few pieces of low, brassbound furniture in the room. In the corner a blackened pot boiled over a low brazier, the smoke trailing up through a hole in the ceiling. Seated on a mat at the far end of the room was an ancient man, clad in a black robe and wearing an intricate breastplate carved in snake's scales. Above him on the wall was a small shrine containing a helmet and crossed blades, all similar to those used by my assailants.

The ancient motioned me to be seated before him, and then said in soft whisper "You will have many questions, which I shall answer now. Know that you are a guest of Seseshaa, the Serpent Queen, of whom we are all servants. We are an ancient order, our written memories going back into the previous age. In the time before this time the Empress Ying Lei created an order of warriors to protect the Jade Throne and serve the Serpent Queen, and we have not wavered in those duties since those ancient days. Oft have we been attacked by our enemies, and sometimes by our friends. We have been deified and vilified and forgotten. During the Reign of the Deodentia we were cast out from the Jade Throne, but the Serpent Queen protected us and led us here, where we have continued to serve her for centuries."

"We are not a secret order, else breath would not be entering your lungs, but we are little thought of in the courts of man. Since our banishment we serve only the Queen, and follow only her commands. Come, I will reveal to you the Order of the Serpent, that you may take word back to the high courts and they may know of our might."

The old man (whose name I discovered was Chui Leung), was true to his word. Over the next few days he showed me the chapels, armories, barracks and above all training halls of this remarkable order, and I was left with a profound respect for the dedication of this ancient order, and for the astounding abilities of the human form when properly trained.

SERPENT WARRIORS

The Serpent Warriors are remarkable fighters. They are not monks, although the rigidity of their training and the single-minded purpose they bring to it are greater than that found in any monastery with which I'm familiar. They are not assassins, although their training in stealth and their mastery of poisons would make a Melanari whistle in appreciation. The strange, two-bladed weapon they wield, called a shikari, is very light and keeps both a deadly blade and a sharp point. It looks like a cross between a double-headed machete and a pick, with a handle in the middle. The serpent warriors handle it with amazing skill making it utterly deadly in combat.

Since the Serpent Warriors follow a strict regimen of chastity they must renew their ranks by recruitment. This they do VERY carefully, choosing only those men and women who have proven themselves to be lawful, quick and deadly in combat. Also, because of the complexities of wielding the shikari, all candidates must be able to use both hands with equal ease, favoring neither the right nor the left. Most of the candidates are monks or fighters, but it is not unknown for an occasional wizard or sorcerer to join the ranks. I would have assumed that clerics of other gods would not be permitted into the Order, but for some reason they are not discouraged, as long as their vows do not prevent them from taking the oath of service to the Serpent Queen. Candidates are taken to a temple in the foothills where they are subjected to many tests of their physical and mental prowess. Those who succeed are

TABLE 7-2: THE SERPENT WARRIOR

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+2	Class feats, language (order of the serpent), poison use
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+3	Bonus feat, brew poison +1
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+3	Serpent tongue, weapon parry
4th	+4	+1	+4	+4	Brew poison +1, serpent friend 1
5th	+5	+1	+4	+4	Serpent friend 2, serpent's grace
6th	+6	+2	+5	+5	Brew poison +1, serpent friend 3
7th	+7	+2	+5	+5	Bonus feat, serpent friend 4
8th	+8	+2	+6	+6	Brew poison +1, serpent friend 5
9th	+9	+3	+7	+6	Greater serpent's grace, Serpent friend 6
10th	+10	+3	+7	+7	Brew poison +1, form of the serpent, serpent friend 7

brought to the Order. I am not aware of what happens to those who fail.

When candidates enter the Order they pledge eternal loyalty to the Serpent Queen and to the Order of the Serpent. They also pledge their lives to their brothers and sisters in the Order. The Order has a long tradition of caring for its own, and over the door of each barrack is carved the motto "No Child of the Serpent Queen is Ever Left Behind."

New members of the Order are subject to the most rigorous training regimen I have ever heard of. They are trained in the use of the shikari, in many different combat skills, in stealth, in wilderness skills (particularly in mountaineering, at which they excel), in the lore of the Order, in the brewing of poisons, and in the handling of snakes.

These last two skills require some explanation. Every Serpent Warrior is expected to be able to brew the poisons with which the warriors ritually anoint their blades before combat. The warriors never use anything other than the poisons they personally brew, and as they become more experienced the potency of their brews increases. Although they use a wide variety of poisons, the two most often used in combat are the Serpent's Gaze (a paralysis poison) and Serpent's Kiss (a killing poison).

The other amazing thing about the Serpent Warriors is their unnatural relationship with snakes. Serpents have a deep affinity for the members of the Order, and will never attack them. One of the first things a Serpent Warrior learns is the hissing language of the serpents, and more advanced members of the Order can summon vipers apparently out of nowhere and get them to follow their commands.

The Order would be a fearsome weapon in the right hands, but currently it is an unused one, thrown in the dustbin of history. The Serpent Warriors are often called upon by their serpentine goddess to go on quests to strange lands to recover mighty objects of power, and on occasion are called upon to defend the Temple from predators, but on the whole they spend their lives training for a call which rarely, if ever, comes.

Staunchly loyal to the precepts of his ancient military order, the Serpent Warrior is a master of both stealth and battlefield combat. Combining the skills of the monk, the assassin and the warrior, the Serpent Warriors are a deadly force to be reckoned with.

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a serpent warrior, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Race: Human

Alignment: Lawful any

Base Attack Bonus: +8

Craft (alchemy): 4 ranks

Feats: Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

Special: Survive a variety of mysterious, physical tests, pay liege to the Serpent Queen and the Order of the Serpent (above all others) and take a vow of chastity.

Class Skills

The serpent warrior's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Lore of the Serpent Queen) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (dance) (Cha), Survival (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the serpent warrior prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Serpent warriors are proficient with simple and martial weapons, and with light and medium armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble.

At first level serpent warriors gain the feat Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shikari). (See Table 7.4: New Weapon on the following page for stats)

TABLE 7-3: SERPENT WARRIOR POISONS

Poison	Type	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage
Serpent's Gaze 1	Injury DC 11	1d3 Con	1d4 Dex
Serpent's Gaze 2	Injury DC 13	1d4 Con	1d6 Dex
Serpent's Gaze 3	Injury DC 15	1d6 Con	Paralysis*
Serpent's Gaze 4	Injury DC 16	2d4 Con	Unconsciousness **
Serpent's Gaze 5	Injury DC 17	Paralysis*	Unconsciousness **
Serpent's Kiss 1	Injury DC 15	1d6 hp	1d6 hp
Serpent's Kiss 2	Injury DC 17	1d8 hp	1d8 hp
Serpent's Kiss 3	Injury DC 19	2d6 hp	2d6 hp
Serpent's Kiss 4	Injury DC 21	3d8 hp	3d8 hp
Serpent's Kiss 5	Injury DC 23	5d6 hp	5d6 hp

* Paralysis lasts for 1d10+2 minutes

** Unconsciousness lasts for 1d3 hours.

Class Feats (Ex): The Order of the Serpent follows a very strict training regime for its members, and expects them to master certain feats as part of their training. When a serpent warrior gains a feat, he must choose it from the following list, fulfilling all necessary prerequisites:

- Deflect arrows
- Dodge
- Mobility
- Spring Attack
- Expertise
- Improved Disarm
- Improved Trip
- Whirlwind Attack
- Improved Critical (shikari)
- Quick Draw
- Two-Weapon Fighting
- Weapon Finesse
- Weapon Focus (shikari)
- Weapon Specialization (shikari)

Only when he has gained each feat at least once (and only the Master of the Serpents has accomplished this), may a serpent warrior take other feats from the general list.

Language (Order of the Serpent): The first secret a serpent warrior learns is the hidden language of the serpent. It sounds unlike any other language and cannot be decoded without significant training.

Poison Use (Ex): Serpent warriors are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to their shikari. Note that they are also immune to the poisons that they personally brew, so they never risk poisoning themselves on a fumbled attack.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd and 7th level the serpent warrior has honed his skills to such a degree that he gains a bonus feat from the serpent warrior list.

Brew Poison: Serpent warriors are masters at brewing poisons, and have created a number of poisons found nowhere else in the world. The two most commonly used by the serpent warriors are the Serpent's Gaze and Serpent's Kiss poisons. All members of the order are taught to brew these poisons, and as they improve at the skill as potency of their brews increases.

Starting at 2nd level and every other level thereafter, a serpent warrior may choose a poison to learn about. He can add one to the potency level he is capable of brewing

for one or the other of the poisons, up to the maximum of level 5 potency. She also gains immunity to all poisons she knows how to brew.

It costs 100 gp and takes 1 hour per level of potency to brew a single dose of these deadly poisons. A single dose of Serpent's Gaze 3 costs 300 gp and takes 3 hours to brew. The materials are mostly found in nature, but the gp cost involves other materials and oils used to boil and extract the herbs. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20 + potency level) cuts the gp cost in half.

See Table 7-3: Serpent Warrior Poisons for more information.

Serpent Tongue (Sp): At 3rd level, the serpent warrior can use *speak with animals* (only with snakes) at will.

Weapon Parry (Ex): At 3rd level, a serpent warrior can choose to use his shikari to parry incoming blows from a single opponent, instead of attacking with it. If he does, he gains a +4 shield bonus to his AC, but he cannot make an attack with it in that round. If he is using a shikari in each hand, he can choose to use them both defensively, giving himself a +4 shield bonus against one attacker and a +2 shield bonus against another.

Serpent Friend (Su): Seseshaa has granted her serpent warriors the ability to communicate with her children. A snake always recognizes a member of the Order and never attacks one.

Starting at 4th level (and every level thereafter), a serpent warrior can use *summon nature's ally* once per day with the prohibition that it can only be used to summon Vipers of the appropriate size. The spell is always 3 levels lower than the serpent warrior. So a seventh level serpent warrior could use *summon nature's ally IV* to summon one large viper, one medium-size viper, one small viper and one tiny viper per day.

Serpent's Grace (Ex): The serpent warrior's movements become extremely fluid and flexible, at 5th he receives a +2 competence bonus on Escape Artist, Hide, Perform (dance) and Tumble checks.

Greater Serpent's Grace (Ex): At 9th level, the serpent warrior embodies the speed and grace of the snake, the bonuses from Serpent's Grace are increased to +4 and he receives a +2 competence bonus to Initiative checks.

Form of the Serpent (Su): At 10th level, the serpent warrior has the ability to use *animal shape* (to turn into a huge viper only) as a spell-like ability, once per day.

TABLE 7-4: NEW WEAPON

Name	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Exotic One-Handed Weapon Shikari	Priceless	1d6	1d8	18-20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing and piercing

Chapter 5:

The Order of the Seven Headed Dragon

BROTHER GERIN

Young monk, in your eyes I see a familiar eagerness. Many years ago I, like you, was eager to go beyond the walls of our monastery and sharpen my mind on the whetstone of the world. My travels taught me much of the world and its creatures. The wisdom I share with you was paid for with much blood, some of mine and much more of others. I would spare you this toll and render to you what I have learned, so that you might walk lighter on this earth and find more peace.

The world beyond our gates holds secrets, young adept, and she guards them fiercely. A mean fact of secrets, is that they burden those who bear them beyond measure. I have meditated many years upon the rightful time to disclose what I have learned. It is impossible for me to tell if I am unburdening myself of this knowledge for my own relief, or to arm you with necessary facts. If I have been selfish, I hope that I have chosen my student, my confessor, wisely. Do not abuse what you are about to learn, and should you choose to read on, do so knowing that one does not possess secrets nearly as much as secrets possess he who holds them.

When I first set foot among the undisciplined masses and intermixed races of the East I was appalled. Gluttony and sloth prevailed, fighting men whose only tool was the sword, competed for power with cloistered magicians whose knowledge of the arcane blinded them to the common wisdom of daily life. Naked violence and petty aggression ruled the lives of the pitiful horde that quivered inside city walls. At first, the chaos of the rabble blinded me. But there were some who seemed apart from the constant quest for worldly comfort, and I sought solace in their temples.

These were the clerics. Their spare dress was comforting, their allegiance to otherworldly powers was, at first, seductive. I was invited to stay in one of their temples. Their routine was a respite from the anarchy in the land and I spent longer than I should have studying their ways, their methods, their beliefs. As a humble monk, I made myself useful, just as monk who is new to our monastery would. I swept and cleaned, scrubbed and dusted. My efforts were appreciated and I soon found myself among friends.

As the months passed, I was asked to clean deeper and deeper within their sanctuary. I flattered myself to think that this was because they trusted me, though laziness was more likely the reason. Their library was unusable disorganized, something our monastery would never permit, I hasten to mention. I set about the task of organizing their scrolls, manuscripts and tomes. Thick, gray ropes of cobwebs hung in the corners of the rooms. Shelves bore decades of dust. Had I not the discipline of a monk, I would certainly have shrank from the task. As it was, I welcomed the challenge.

As I cleaned, I became acquainted with the ancient rites of these cleric's faith. The texts and creeds were mostly religious in nature. The scrolls bore lists of tedious rules of their ceremonies and dry descriptions of rituals for every season and holy day. I diligently cleaned and sorted these instructions for several months. Then, one day, a high cleric of the faith, Algyrus, interrupted my work. I was grateful for the conversation. He was an old man. His red robes matched the gin blossoms on his nose. He took out a flask and offered me a drink. Naturally, I declined. He drank without me, and the liquor took him, his tongue loosened.

THE ORDER OF THE SEVEN HEADED DRAGON

He spoke mainly of his career in his faith. Eventually our talk turned to my work. It seemed a safe opportunity for me to ask him of Zabulus Annullare I had seen referenced in some of the scrolls.

"Where did you hear this name?" He asked. His tone suddenly became very sober.

"I just saw them referenced in the scrolls, your Grace," I replied. His eyes shifted back and forth.

"Show me," he commanded. I stood and walked to the back of the room to find the scroll. Algyrus mumbled in the words of his faith and I felt the fingers of his deity wrap around my person until I was squeezed as if in a fist. I could not move. I tried to speak, but was unable. I was frozen by the magic of the cleric. His incantations continued, but his words were slurred by the liquor. I looked inward and focused my thoughts as we are trained to do. I summoned the will to break the invisible grasp of this man's god.

Algyrus lunged at me with a dagger. I easily ducked his swipe and brought my right foot against his neck with a crunch. He fell wordlessly to the ground. Blood fell from his ear, I knew he was dead. Shame flooded through me, I had killed a man who just minutes before I would have called a friend. My heart raced like an animal's. I had spent too long with these people, my stillness of mind was lost. I felt a tingle like fire across my skin. The air about me hummed. My heart pounded in my chest until I heard its beating in my ears like the fluttering of a sparrow's wings.

Algyrus moved his hand. His lips squirmed like two fat worms on his ashen face. His hand moved to his neck where I had struck him. The buzz in the air swirled around me, the fire on my skin drained. His neck crunched and then his eyes opened.

"Stop," he croaked. I backed away. He sat up and took his hand from his neck. He pointed at me.

"Stop!" He shouted. I felt compelled to follow his command, but I could tell that I was in mortal danger. I broke his gaze and ran from him in panic. It pains me to admit how fearful I was, but you must know the truth. This man meant to kill me, I knew it with all my body and mind. Panicked, I grabbed a fistful of scrolls and fled the temple. It was from these scroll that I learned about in the Zabulus Annullare.

The Zabulus Annullare are a rogue group of heretic clerics. By means I could not fully understand, they have discovered what they believe is the center of all evil. This being is known by many

names in many tongues, Lothgrund the Lich King, Lucifer, The Prince of Darkness, and Zabulus, every race and every tongue has a mention of the supreme devil of all devils, demon of all demons. The Zabulus Annullare claim this creature, the Zabulus, is the source of all evil. To end him, would be to end evil. This is their quest.

Naturally, as a monk of your caliber, you see the danger in this fanatical enterprise. To destroy all evil would upset a balance that could end all life, all existence. These fools, these clerics, have no true understanding of the nature of the world. Should they succeed in their quest, they would bring about the end of us all. Of these Zabulus Annullare little is known and less is spoken aloud. They are banished their own kind, and to the few who know of their existence, the truth is closely guarded.

They have methods of identifying each other. Should you ever find yourself in conversation with one whom you suspect is a member, place your right hand over your left eye and speak these words,

"I've often thought that if this eye were sinister, it's removal would bring me truer vision."

If you've spoken this challenge to an Zabulus Annullare, he will reply, "Not only to you, but to us all."

The Zabulus Annullare are good allies to have in a time of trouble.

They are fiercely loyal to other members of their sect. If you accept their aid, never forget that their quest is misguided, and they must be stopped. If you find yourself in their midst, pretend to be one of their kind, but thwart them at every opportunity. This deceit is not a transgression of your vows, as it is in the name of balance.

Be warned, should you be detected, you would be captured.

Years of hideous rites would be performed to determine if you are and agent of Zabulus. Once they were finished with you, your soul would be mined from your

flesh and used to serve the Zabulus Annullare. Similarly, should an orthodox cleric suspect you of being a member of Zabulus Annullare, or even of having knowledge of their existence, you will be killed as a heretic, but not before every technique in their arsenal had been used to wrest your knowledge from your mind.

Now that I have burdened you with this secret, I shall pass on what I know of the Zabulus Annullare. Their leader, Algyrus, is by far the most powerful. The others are also mighty, and possess some magic unique to their order.



THE ORDER OF THE SEVEN HEADED DRAGON

Algyrus, Human Clr 14: CR 15; Medium humanoid; HD 14d8+28; hp 95; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d4+1, dagger of venom); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4+1, dagger of venom); SA, turn/rebuke undead; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., self-resurrection, water breathing; AL LN; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +16; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 20[22], Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +19, Craft (alchemy) +20, Diplomacy +7, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +14, and Spellcraft +20; Brew Epic Potion, Brew Greater Potion, Brew Potion, Brew Unstable Potion, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (6/7+1/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic*, *guidance* (×2), *read magic*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st — *bane*, *command* (×2), *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *protection from evil**, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*; 2nd — *aid**, *hold person* (×2), *owl's wisdom*, *resist energy*, *silence*, *sound burst* (×2); 3rd — *contagion**, *dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *prayer*, *protection from energy*, *searing light*; 4th — *discern lies*, *freedom of movement*, *holy smite**, *restoration*, *sending*, *spell immunity*; 5th — *dispel evil**, *flame strike*, *greater command*, *summon monster V*, *true seeing*; 6th — *blade barrier**, *greater dispel magic*, *harm*, *heal*, *word of recall*; 7th — *destruction*, *disintegrate**, *resurrection*.

* Domain spell.

Domains: Destruction (Algyrus has the power, once a day, to make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on attack rolls and a +14 bonus on damage, this must be declared before making the attack). Good (cast good spells at +1 caster level).

Self-resurrection (Su): Once a day, within an hour of being slain, Algyrus may choose to spontaneously cast resurrection on himself. This requires no material components but does cause him to lose a level.

Possessions: *Chain shirt* +2, *dagger of venom* (named "darkbane"), *periapt of wisdom* +2, *ring of force shield*, *ring of protection* +1, *cloak of protection* +1, *three potions of cure serious wounds*, *potions of heal*, *holy symbol*.

Given time to prepare Algyrus will have a number of specialized potions and scrolls available to counter what dangers he expects to encounter.

Algyrus prefers to play the roll of the befuddled old scholar, until it is time to act. He is ruthless in his pursuit of the Zabulus Annullare's goals and will not hesitate to kill to protect or advance those goals. But given a choice, Algyrus prefers to manipulate others into fighting his battles for him and he will happily trade on his appearance as a hapless old drunken monk to wheedle aid and help from others. If someone seems too close to the secrets of the Zabulus Annullare he will try to get an Order of Paladin to investigate them or lose the local tax collectors

on their latest treasure from adventuring. Only in the most dire circumstance will Algyrus intervene directly and if he does, he will carefully prepare, learning everything he can about his enemies before striking with the aid of other agents of the Zabulus Annullare.

Algyrus knows that he can survive death, once, but he has no wish to use that ability unless he has no choice. He would rather flee (using *word of recall*) in almost all situations than call upon his self-resurrection ability, it is not a trick he wishes to have known by others.

Zabulus Annullare Agent, Human Clr 8: CR 8; Medium humanoid; HD 8d8+16; hp 55; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA, turn/rebuke undead; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., self-resurrection; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +13, Diplomacy +4, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +7, and Spellcraft +5; Brew Greater Potion, Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared: (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic*, *guidance* (×2), *read magic*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st — *bane*, *command*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *protection from evil**, *shield of faith*; 2nd — *aid**, *hold person*, *resist energy*, *silence*, *sound burst* (×2); 3rd — *contagion**, *dispel magic*, *prayer*, *protection from energy*, *searing light*; 4th — *greater magic weapon*, *holy smite**, *sending*.

* Domain spell.

Domains: Destruction (Zabulus Annullare Agents have the power, once a day, to make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on attack rolls and a +8 bonus on damage, this must be declared before making the attack). Good (cast good spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: *Masterwork buckler*, *chain shirt* +1, *masterwork heavy mace*, *cloak of protection* +1, *three potions of cure serious wounds*, *scroll of flame strike*, *scroll of righteous might*, *holy symbol*.

Given time to prepare, the Agents have a number of specialized potions and scrolls available to counter what dangers they expect to encounter.

If the Zabulus Annullare needs to act, these are what its average agents look like. They always work in pairs or, preferably, trios. Like the Zabulus Annullare itself, they try to keep hidden and will hire people to fight for them whenever possible. Only if there is no other choice will they strike directly at their enemies and even then they will have tried to have acquired as much support as possi-

ble. In a direct confrontation they pull no punches, starting with their *flame strike* scrolls, usually followed by one using his scroll of *righteous might* to guard the other two as they continue to cast spells.

They are not above using abomination potions, often giving them to the hired help as "potions of combat might" with orders not to drink them until they are about to enter combat. Remember for the Zabulus Annullare, the ends do justify the means.

ADVANCED ALCHEMY

Among the scrolls I took, I learned of a powerful technique. There is description of a method in which the power of two potions can be combined. The being who ingests the potion is granted a hybrid power of the mixture. I know little of the arcane machinations which make such a thing possible, but these powers may be a great boost to you in time of need. The dark arts of witchcraft and trickery are beneath the stature of a monk. That said, once you depart, you will find you must stoop to all manner of indecencies in order to survive.

In order to create some of the potions on the list, the following feats are necessary.

Brew Epic Potion [Item Creation]

Prerequisites: Int 15+, Brew Greater Potion, Brew Potion, caster level 11th.

Benefit: You can create a potion of any 9th-level or lower spell that you know and that targets one or more creatures. Otherwise this feat follows the guidelines of Brew Potion.

Brew Greater Potion [Item Creation]

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Brew Potion, caster level 7th.

Benefit: You can create a potion of any 6th-level or lower spell that you know and that targets one or more creatures. Otherwise this feat follows the guidelines of Brew Potion.

Brew Potion [Item Creation]

Prerequisite: Caster level 3rd.

Benefit: You can create a potion of any 3rd-level or lower spell that you know and that targets one or more creatures. Brewing a potion takes one day. When you create a potion, you set the caster level, which must be sufficient to cast the spell in question and no higher than your own level. The base price of a potion is its spell level \times its caster level \times 50 gp. To brew a potion, you must spend $\frac{1}{5}$ of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing one half this base price.



When you create a potion, you make any choices that you would normally make when casting the spell. Whoever drinks the potion is the target of the spell.

Any potion that stores a spell with a costly material component or an XP cost also carries a commensurate cost. In addition to the costs derived from the base price, you must expend the material component or pay the XP when creating the potion.

Brew Unstable Potion [Item Creation]

Prerequisites: Int 17+, Craft (alchemy) 10 ranks, Brew Epic Potion, Brew Greater Potion, Brew Potion, caster level 9th.

Benefit: You can create a potion of any 9th-level or lower spell, regardless of target. This however, is a very unstable process and most potions made in this manner do not have a long shelf life. In order to create the potion, you must succeed at a Craft (alchemy) check (DC 15 + the total of all spell levels). You may not take 10 or take 20 on this check.

Failure indicates the components are wasted and the potion is inert. However, in some cases the effects are wildly different.

Each potion below explains the effects.

Success indicates that the potion is created, but only lasts a number of days equal to 1 + the value of the success (a roll of 4 higher than the DC means the potion lasts for 5 days before becoming inert). The duration of the potion's effect however is set (*see below*).

Otherwise, this feat follows the guidelines of Brew Potion, doubling all gp costs.

Special: The DM always makes the Craft (alchemy) check in secret. The effects of a failed check are listed with the potions. The DM may wish to impose a critical failure if the caster fails his Craft (alchemy) check by more than 10, or if he rolls a natural 1. A critical failure causes the failed check result, plus an effect from the mishap chart (table 5-1).

TABLE 5-1: UNSTABLE POTION MISHAP

1d20	Mishap
1	Drinker assumes <i>gaseous form</i> for 2d6 hours.
2	Drinker becomes confused (as condition) for 1 hour.
3	Drinker is consumed with uncontrollable, insatiable hunger or thirst for 1d4 hours.
4	Drinker becomes dazed (as condition) for 1d4 hours.
5	Drinker is deafened (as condition) for 3d4 hours.
6	Drinker becomes incorporeal for 1d4 hours.
7	Drinker becomes paralyzed (as condition) for 2d12 hours.
8	Drinker falls asleep (per <i>sleep</i>) for 2d8 hours.
9	Drinker ingests random poison from <i>DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide</i> .™

10	Drinker loses all body hair. -2 Charisma until hair returns.
11	Drinker loses 1d4 hit points, permanently.
12	Drinker nauseated (as condition) for 2d6 hours.
13	Drinker is rendered mute (per <i>silence</i>) for 2d4 days.
14	Drinker sickened (as condition) for 2d4 hours.
15	Drinker is struck blind for 2d12 hours.
16	Drinker is struck with a maximized <i>ray of enfeeblement</i> (as 9th level caster).
17	Drinker suffers Light Blindness (as the drow trait) for 2d6 days.
18	Drinker is turned to stone <i>per flesh to stone</i> . No save.
19	Drinker's alignment shifts two places, randomly or chosen by DM. Effect is permanent.
20	Drinker's touch becomes the Rust supernatural ability of a Rust Monster for 2d4 days.

UNSTABLE POTIONS

Below is a list of unstable potions. Each produces a unique effect. The caster and DM should work out a system for developing new unstable potions beyond what is listed here. The duration of the effects of these potions are listed after each one, including effects for making the potion improperly.

Amphibian (DC 25)

Ingredients: *potion of bear's endurance, grease, polymorph, water breathing.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user grows gills in the neck, making him capable of breathing underwater.

Failure: The user grows gills and can breathe underwater, but becomes incapable of breathing air.

Angel Wings (DC 25)

Ingredients: *potion of change self, feather fall, fly, polymorph.*

Duration: Permanent.

User grows wings and gains the ability to fly at a speed of 30 ft. (good maneuverability).

Failure: The user grows wings, but is unable to fly.

Beacon (DC 23)

Ingredients: *potion of arcane mark, locate creature, scrying.*

Duration: Permanent.

When this potion is consumed, the drinker's location is always known to the creator of the potion.

Cat's Eyes (DC 23)

Ingredients: *potion of arcane eye, cat's grace, darkvision.*

Duration: Permanent.

User gains darkvision of 90 ft.

Failure: User has night blindness and loses his low-light vision (if applicable).

Celestial Companion (DC 25)

Ingredients: *potion of arcane mark, remove curse, planar binding.*

Duration: Permanent.

When given to a familiar, the familiar adopts the celestial archetype for that animal.

Failure: The familiar becomes a vampire and is no longer your familiar. Follow the rules for losing a familiar.

Clone (DC 32)

Ingredients: *potion of clone, ethereal jaunt, owl's wisdom.*

Duration: Permanent.

The brewer of this potion is the only person who can drink it. He must share the dose with one of his clones in order for it to take effect. As a standard action, the user can transfer his mind to that inert clone. The original body falls into an inert state, much like the clone spell. This transfer can take place numerous times, so long as the original body and the clone are alive. If either body dies, the user remains in the other body, suffering 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage.

Failure: The mind of the brewer becomes trapped in the body of a clone, unable to wake.

Fiendish Companion (DC 25)

Ingredients: *potion of arcane mark, dominate animal, greater shadow conjuration.*

Duration: Permanent.

When given to a familiar, the familiar adopts the fiendish archetype for that animal.

Failure: The familiar becomes a vampire and is no longer your familiar. Follow the rules for losing a familiar.

Golem (DC 28)

Ingredients: *potion of animate dead, arcane mark, bear's endurance, raise dead, reincarnate, plus one drop of blood.*

Duration: Permanent.

When given to a dead creature, the creature comes back to life as a golem or homunculus, under the control the person whose blood was used in the creation of this potion. The target gains the Construct trait and loses his Intelligence score. Follow the rules for constructs in the *Monster Manual*.TM

Failure: Creature awakens as a golem, attacking the person administering the potion.

Goodwater (DC 35)

Ingredients: *potion of commune, heal potion, miracle.*

Duration: Permanent.

User is restored to perfect health. All hit points are returned, all lost ability score points are restored, and all diseases (magical and mundane), conditions, afflictions, and curses are removed. If given to a dead creature, the creature returns to life in 2d6 rounds, fully healed.

Failure: User dies instantly, per the spell *finger of death*. There is no saving throw.

Growth (DC 30)

Ingredients: *potion of enlarge, polymorph self.*

Duration: 1 min/level.

User (and his all his belongings) becomes 3 size classes larger. The user cannot become larger than Colossal.

Failure: User becomes 3 size classes larger, but his Dexterity is reduced to 1 and his base attack bonus decreases by 6.

Iron Fist (DC 30)

Ingredients: *potion of dimension door, heat metal, iron body, and reduce person.*

Duration: 1 week.

Turns the users dominant hand to iron. This allows the user to store up to 10 levels of spells as a *ring of spell storing, major*. The metal hand reduces the users Dexterity by 2. In addition, it gives him a +2 bonus to unarmed attacks. The hand remains iron, even after all the stored spells are exhausted.

Failure: The hand turns to iron permanently with no *spell storing* ability.

Iron Mind (DC 34)

Ingredients: *potion of crushing despair, eyebite, guards and wards, rage.*

Duration: 1 year.

User becomes immune to mind-influencing magic.

Failure: User suffers a permanent -3 profane penalty to all Willpower saving throws.

Lessons from the Grave (DC 26)

Ingredients: *potion of animate dead, simulacrum.*

Duration: Permanent.

When this potion is administered to undead with an Intelligence score below 12, it raises their intelligence by 6. Undead with no Intelligence, gain an Intelligence of 10. Undead with an Intelligence score above 12, gain a +2 to their Intelligence. A user may only benefit from one dose of this potion, ever. A potion is considered administered if the entire dose is drunk or exposed to the skin (or bones).

Failure: Target's Intelligence is reduced to 1. Undead without an Intelligence score are disintegrated.

Legendary Heroism (DC 28)

Ingredients: *potion of bless, contingency, heal.*

Duration: 1 day.

Should the drinker's hit points ever fall below 50% of his total, he is immediately healed to full hit points. This effect works once and only on the day the potion is consumed.

Failure: The drinker's hit points are reduced by 10, permanently. This damage cannot be restored by anything short of a miracle or wish.

Lithe Speed (DC 20)

Ingredients: *potion of cat's grace, feather fall, jump, ray of enfeeblement, resistance.*

Duration: 1 hour/level.

The user's speed increases by 10 ft. In addition, the user gains a 1d6+3 enhancement bonus to Dexterity, but suffers 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage. When the duration expires, the user's Dexterity returns to normal, but his Strength returns at one point per day, unless healed.

Failure: User suffers a 1d6 points of permanent Strength damage. After 1 year, this damage becomes temporary.

Monk Strike (DC 21)

Ingredients: *potion of cat's grace, power word stun, potion of trueshield.*

Duration: 2d6 rounds.

The user gains one level in the monk class, in addition to the Stunning Fist feat. If the user is already a monk, his level goes up by one for the duration of the potion.

Failure: User is stunned for 3d6 rounds and suffers 2 points of temporary Dexterity damage.

Shadow Walker (DC 24)

Ingredients: *potion of blink, shadow walk.*

Duration: 10 minutes/level.

User can enter or exit the plane of shadow as a standard action. While in the plane of shadow, the user moves at 5 times normal speed.

Failure: User gains light sensitivity (as a drow), becomes sensitive to sunlight (suffering 1d4+2 damage each hour of exposure), and can be banished or harmed as an outsider. However, the user gains no positive benefit from the outsider trait. This effect lasts for 1 day per level of the caster brewing the potion.

Shrinking (DC 19)

Ingredients: *potion of reduce person, shrink item.*

Duration: 1 min./level.

User (and his all his belongings) becomes 3 size classes smaller. The user cannot become smaller than Diminutive.

Failure: User is permanently reduced to Tiny.

Strong Spirit (DC 25)

Ingredients: *potion of contagion, tenser's transformation.*

Duration: 1 year.

User gains immunity to all diseases (magical and mundane).

Failure: User's Constitution score drops by 2 permanently.

The Tempest (DC 21)

Ingredients: *potion of bless, consecrate, protection from energy.*

Duration: 1 min./level.

User gains damage resistance 10 for all energy types. In addition, whenever he is struck by an energy source, he heals 5 points of damage per attack as though a *cure* spell has been cast.

Failure: User becomes extremely susceptible to energy attacks and suffers an additional 2d6 points of damage per attack.

Youthmaker (DC 27)

Ingredients: *potion of polymorph and temporal stasis.*

Duration: Permanent.

User regresses in physical age by 2d6 years.

Failure: User becomes physically and mentally an infant.

ABOMINATION POTIONS

The following recipes are an offense to all that is right. These potions must never be used, under any circumstance. They are mentioned merely to help scholars understand how to undo their effects. Tread lightly into the dark magic that follows.

Blood of the Forest (DC 30)

Ingredients: *barkskin, changestaff, goodberry, polymorph.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 21 Hit Dice treant.

Failure: User transforms into a 7 Hit Dice treant.

Chill Breath (DC 24)

Ingredients: *potion of animate dead, chill touch, gaseous form.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 14 Hit Dice spectre.

Failure: User transforms into a 7 Hit Dice spectre.

Clearskin (DC 30)

Ingredients: *potion of blur, greater invisibility, polymorph.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 24 Hit Dice invisible stalker.

Failure: User transforms into an 8 Hit Dice invisible stalker.

Fecundity (DC 30)

Ingredients: *potion of polymorph, shambler.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 24 Hit Dice shambling mound.

THE ORDER OF THE SEVEN HEADED DRAGON

Failure: User transforms into an 8 Hit Dice shambling mound.

Liquid Life (DC 26)

Ingredients: *potion of control water, create water, soul jar.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 24 Hit Dice water elemental.

Failure: User transforms into a 4 Hit Dice water elemental.

Stone Such (DC 22)

Ingredients: *potion of speak with stone, stone to flesh, stone skin.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 12 Hit Dice gargoyle.

Failure: User transforms into a 4 Hit Dice gargoyle.

Unblinking Eye (DC 38)

Ingredients: *potion of arcane eye, confusion, eyebite, maze, ray of enfeeblement, ray of exhaustion, ray of frost, polymorph.*

Duration: Permanent.

The user transforms into a 33 Hit Dice floating eyestalk creature that is not part of the SRD.

Failure: User transforms into a 6 Hit Dice smaller version of above-said monster that is a non-SRD secret.

SENTINEL ORDER OF THE PROTECTORATE

There is but one more secret I have to impart. I have told you of the people who fight with steel and wear it over their clothes. These warriors lack our agility and grace to be sure, but among them are those who match our discipline. These few call themselves paladin. They live by a moral code as rigid and sturdy as the metal armor they don before battle.

Despite their ironbound ways and vicious weapons, I admire these paladin. They do not bow to worldly pleasures and they understand sacrifice as monks do. Most paladin are bound by honor codes which they seek to enforce with brutal justice. Their evangelism grates, but their efficiency astounds. You needn't be fearful of crossing them, provided you keep to the path you learned as a monk.

Among these paladin are a society who call themselves the Protectors. As all paladins are zealous in their missions, there are in fact many orders who call themselves Protectors. You will also encounter Guardians, Sentinals, Keepers, Wardens, and even Custodians, although the latter are mostly groundskeepers of holy sites. Among these various orders of Protectors there is a specific order. They are known only as the Protectors of Alignment, led by Vicyr Steelgleam. Some have heard of them, many have not. You will not encounter a paladin not of their order who knows what it is that they in fact, protect.

There are many legends and explanations to provide cover from their true mission. You will hear that they are merely enforcers who see that all other orders live to their credo. This is partly true, for it is one of their functions. But the Protectors of

alignment are more than mere police or bureaucrats. They have one chief function, the true purpose of their existence.

The Protectors of Alignment guard a secret rite. The rite is powerful, too powerful. Some say it should be forgotten and all mention of it expunged. Others claim the ritual should be performed, and others believe it should be guarded and never employed. This is the doctrine that prevails, and the true purpose of the paladins who guard it. The ritual is meant never to be known by others, save those in the sect, and is never meant to be performed.

This ritual is called the *novo incantato*. The ritual, were it performed, would change the alignment of all within a large radius to be changed to that of the paladin. It could cause an absolute change in society, ushering in an era of cooperation and selfless service on all levels of human existence. The paladin believe such tampering is too dangerous, that the balance of the world would be upset. That is not the most compelling argument for keeping the ritual unpracticed, however.

The *novo incantato* would send a shockwave through the planes, dark forces awakened. Nobody is sure what the consequences would be, and the real fear is this: It is possible to pervert the ritual into *muto incantato* which would cause the alignment off all nearby souls to be changed to that of he who performs the ritual. Now your eyes widen, pupil, for you see the danger in this knowledge. Should this ritual be known by enemies of the good, we would become helpless before its power. The very crusaders against nefarious forces would become minions in their cause.

I believe this ritual has its uses and should be performed as *novo incantato* before it is discovered and perverted. The Protectors of Alignment have kept the secret safe for thousands of years. Still, if a wandering monk such as I know the truth, then others must as well. If you encounter these paladin, learn what you can. Their caution will be the downfall of us all. Tell no one what I have taught you, and use this knowledge will. I pass the burden of these secrets from my shoulders to yours. Hold steady under the weight, and use this power well. Your journey has begun, young monk.

Vicyr Steelgleam – Provost of the Protectors of Order

Vicyr did not achieve his high rank by brute force and good looks. At first glance, this balding, stoop-shouldered man may be unimpressive. Once his warm gaze lands on a visitor, his tremendous kindness and passion for righteousness enchants. The powerful and the weak immediately feel at ease with Vicyr. He always has a kind word for a stranger and a diplomatic solution to nearly any conflict.

His self-deprecating humor and gentle smile are his more benign charms. When diplomacy fails, he is equipped with the elaborately decorated and highly polished Plate of the Protector (+2 plate mail), and matching Blade of the Protector (+2 longsword). His armor and weapon are recognizable to any paladin as the ceremonial accoutrements of his office. Despite his equipment, Vicyr would much rather find a peaceful resolution to any dis-

pute, and as the chief guardian of the *novo incantato*, he bears the ability to perform a much smaller version of the ritual. By casting *convert* at will, he is able to change the alignment of an aggressor who fails a will saving throw to Lawful Good.

Provost Vicyr Steelgleam, Human Pal10: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD10d10+20; hp 80; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24; touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +13 melee (1d8+6/19–20, +2 longsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+6/19–20, +2 longsword); SA Convert, smite evil 3/day, turn undead 10/day; SQ aura of courage, detect evil, divine grace, divine health, empathic link with mount, heavy warhorse mount, lay on hands, remove disease 2/week, share spells with mount; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and feats: Concentration +7, Diplomacy +19, Handle Animal +9, Heal +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +8, Knowledge (religion) +11, Listen +5, Perform (oratory) +5, Profession (provost) +4, Ride +16, Sense Motive +13, Spot +5. *Feats:* Alertness, Extra Turning, Leadership, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Mounted Combat.

Aura of Good (Ex): The power of Vicyr's aura of good (*see the detect good spell*) is strong.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Vicyr can *detect evil*, as the spell.

Smite Evil (Su): Three times per day, Vicyr may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus to his attack roll and deals 10 extra points of damage. If Vicyr accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Divine Grace (Su): Vicyr has a bonus equal to his Charisma bonus on all saving throws.

Lay on Hands (Su): Vicyr can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day he can

heal a total number of 40 hit points of damage. Vicyr may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using lay on hands is a standard action. Alternatively, Vicyr can use any or all of this healing power to deal damage to undead creatures. Using lay on hands in this way requires a successful melee touch attack and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. Vicyr decides how many of his daily allotment of points to use as damage after successfully touching an undead creature.

Aura of Courage (Su): Vicyr is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Each ally within 10 ft. of him gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

This ability functions while the paladin is conscious, but not if she is unconscious or dead.

Divine Health (Ex): Vicyr has immunity to all diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases.

Convert (Su): Vicyr's great dedication and resolve allows him to use a turn undead attempt to alter someone's alignment to Lawful Good. He resolves this as turning attempt as a 10th level cleric. A successful turning attempt changes the target's alignment one step closer to Lawful Good. If the affected creature has less hit



dice/level than half of Vicyr's, it immediately becomes Lawful Good. This effect may be resisted with a Will Save (DC 19), the DC is Charisma based.

Empathic Link (Su): Vicyr can communicate telepathically with his mount at a distance of up to 1 mile. Vicyr has the same connection to an item or a place that the mount does.

Heavy Warhorse Mount: Whenever he desires, Vicyr can call upon the services of a special heavy warhorse mount. The creature's abilities and characteristics are summarized below.

Heavy Warhorse: Large magical beast; HD 8d8+24; hp 63; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +11 melee (1d6+5, hoof); Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves) and +6 melee (1d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft. SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +4; Endurance, Run.

Command (Sp): Usable 5/day against other equines (Will DC 21 negates).

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a mount takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Share Spells: At the paladin's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on herself also affect her mount.

The mount must be within 5 ft. at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the mount if it moves farther than 5 ft. away and will not affect the mount again even if it returns to the paladin before the duration expires. Additionally, the paladin may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her mount (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. A paladin and his mount can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the mount's type (magical beast).

Share Saving Throws: For each of its saving throws, the mount uses its own base save bonus or the paladin's, whichever is higher. The mount applies its own ability modifiers to saves, and it doesn't share any other bonuses on saves that the master might have.

Improved Speed (Ex): The mount's speed increases by 10 ft..

Spell Resistance (Ex): A mount's spell resistance equals its master's paladin level +5. To affect the mount with a spell, a spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the mount's spell resistance.

Paladin Spells Prepared (2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 1st— *divine favor, protection from evil*; 2nd— *resist elements, delay poison*.

Possessions: +2 longsword, +2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, dagger, silver holy symbol, book of the novo incantato. Masterwork chain barding for warhorse.

Chapter 6:

The Testament of Kynvok the Hermit

What follows here are excerpts from the memoirs of the wizard Kynvok, familiarly known as Kynvok the Hermit. This nickname is something of a misnomer, for Kynvok traveled widely throughout the prime of his life. He sailed across the Great Ocean on a voyage of discovery and lived for a time in many major cities, including the great city-state of Etana and Nios, an important port and trade hub during his lifetime. Late in life, however, he retired to the hinterlands and lived by himself, writing an account of his various adventures. It is during this last part of his life that he became known as 'The Hermit,' as word circulated among those who had once known him that he had permanently retired from their company. At last, he died, alone and far removed from the circuits of the busy world he had once known. When some friends journeyed from Etana to search for him, they stumbled across his hovel deep in the forest. This party found his remains, the manuscript of his memoir and some related notes. They brought his writings back to Etana, where they were eventually published under the title, *The Testament of Kynvok the Hermit*.

During his lifetime, Kynvok was known as an intelligent and observant man. He was also a sociable man who made friends (and kept) friends easily. But he also had a habit of making up his mind about a matter quickly and decisively, sometimes based on thinnest evidence. Once he came to hold an opinion, it was nigh impossible to shift him away from it. But he rendered his judgments and conclusions so engagingly that his friends and acquaintances not only learned to overlook it, but to enjoy it for its entertainment value.

THE SECRET CELLAR OF THE WINTER WOLF TAVERN

Ah, Nios! Fair flower that grows on the shore of the Great Ocean. Many years it has been since I last set foot in that wondrous city, yet well do I remember the time that I spent there. And although I have withdrawn from the affairs of men happily and of my own free will to come to his place of lonely contemplation, there are moments when I long for the taste of the fine beverages that one could find in Nios, and I would forgo all to return there and comfort my drinker's palate once more.

Nios, for those of you who are to be pitied for never having seen its glory, is a place where many roads — and sea routes — meet, where traders from many lands far wide engage in commerce. Here, one may find goods to enchant and amaze from all over the known world (and perhaps beyond, I daresay!) — including the finest selection of wines that one will ever find. This I can tell you from experience, having sampled much of it myself!

And yet, one of Nios' wonders escaped me, and that I shall always regret. The collection of wines housed at the tavern known as the Winter Wolf must have been the finest in the city, judging by the extreme care with which its owner treated it. So great was his caution, in fact, that he refused to admit its very existence — from which I could only deduce that its value was great indeed!

The Winter Wolf was located near the docks — a dreadful, lowly section of the city. But the tavern itself stood out from its surroundings for the cleanliness of the place and the obvious care with which it was treated by its management. The owner, whose name was Otis, was a friendly enough fellow and gladly allowed

THE TESTAMENT OF KYNVOK THE HERMIT

me to converse with him on the topic of Nios' fame across the wide world. But when I tried to engage him on the topic of that which lay below his establishment — by which I meant his wine cellar, of course — his face paled and he became quite evasive in his manner.

"Ah! Good sir," said he, "you don't want to be going down into my basement. I don't let anybody go down there, not even my own lads, if they know what's good for them."

"Why not?" I replied. "Surely, I am an honest fellow, not some venomous rogue out to rob you. Come down with me and look over my shoulder, if you wish. I desire only to satisfy a scholar's curiosity — and perhaps make you a suitable offer on whatever I may find."

At this, he became quite curt. "No sir, I'll not allow it. No one goes down into the basement of the White Wolf. There is nothing down there that you will want to see."

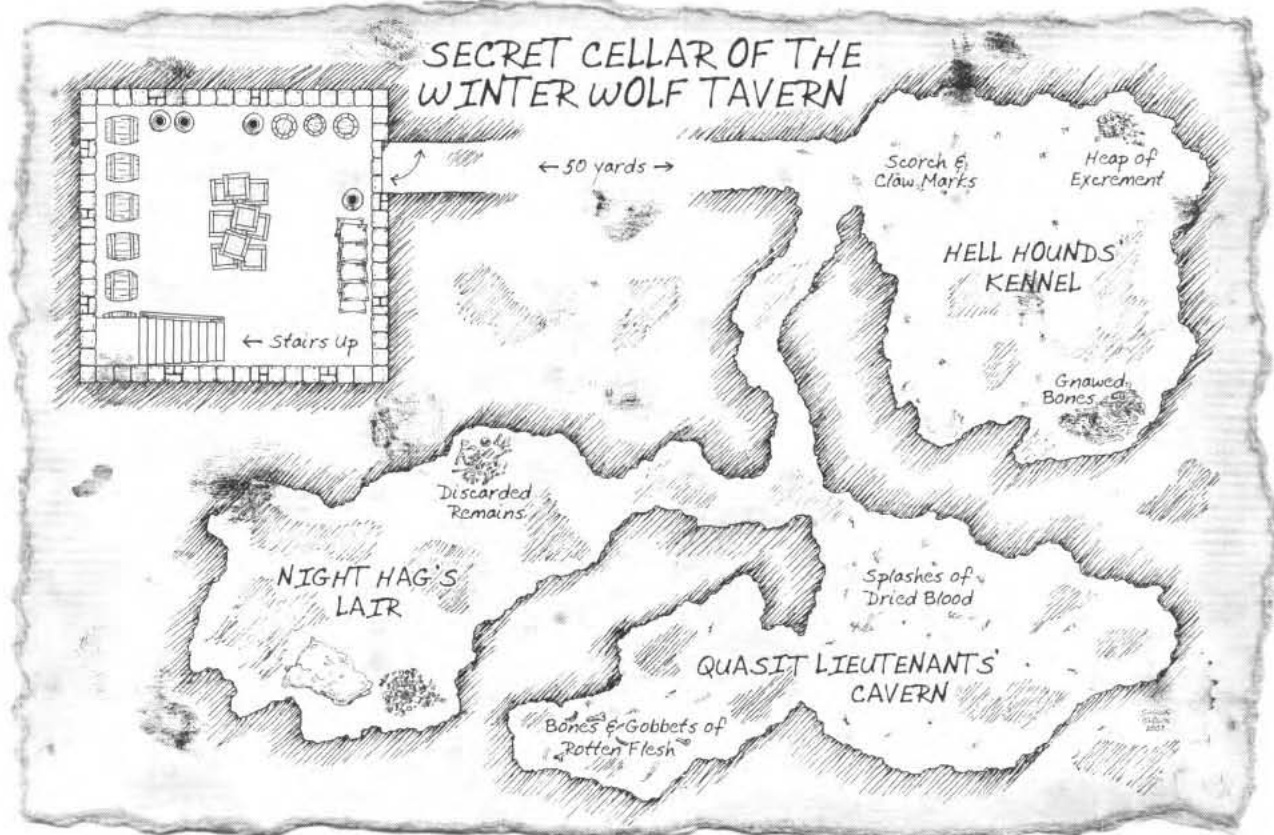
No matter how much I endeavored to comfort and cajole him, he would by no means allow me access to his wine cellar. His pallor (indicative of great concern) and his steadfast insistence that no one, not even as benign a fellow as I, should be allowed in his cellar suggests to me that the value of that which had down there must be great indeed! Alas, that I was never allowed even so much as glimpse of it, much less a taste. No doubt, the secret wine collection of the White Wolf would have made for a rogue's fortune, or a gourmet's delight, depending on what one did with the wines.

THE FINEST WINE NEVER TASTED

The city of Nios is indeed famous as the place to go to find fine wines and ales. It is a major port city and the hub of many important trade routes, and its merchants import beverages from every corner of the known world, reselling the best at a hefty profit or keeping it for themselves.

Contrary to Kynvok's assertion, however, the Winter Wolf tavern has never had a much of a reputation for its wine collection. As far as dingy dockside watering holes go, it's not a bad place to have a drink. But it's no more than that.

Otis' nervousness about the basement of his establishment has nothing to do with preventing unauthorized access to his wine cellar. Instead, he thinks he knows that something dark and malevolent dwells beneath the port of Nios, but he lacks the courage to face up to it. Shortly after he took over the Winter Wolf from its previous owner, one of the hired hands went absent from his duties without permission. The lad had a reputation as a shifty type, so Otis immediately suspected that he was up to some kind of mischief. A cursory search of the premises revealed a secret door of which Otis had not known — easily discovered because someone had left it open. It led down a long, dark passage. About a hundred years along, Otis discovered the burned corpse of the missing lad, his



face frozen in a mask of terror and agony such as he had never seen before and hoped never to see again, the gods be willing. He heard beastly wailing in the distance. He fled back to the tavern basement, closed the door behind him and hid it as best he could.

Such is Otis' fear that he has never reported this incident to the city authorities. He's too afraid of what's actually going on at the other end of that tunnel, and he reasons that if he just closes his eyes to it, it will go away (or at least, it won't bother him).

In truth, that underground passage extends another 50 yards beyond where Otis found his employee's body. It ends in a network of three caverns housing a night hag and its evil servants. This outsider has come here from the planes of evil to feast on souls. At night, after the tavern closes, it uses its *etherealness* spell-like ability to leave the building undetected and prey on unfortunate passers-by — usually drunken sailors lying around the docks. Such victims don't generate much fuss when they die mysteriously or disappear, their fates written off to the misadventures that happen in a busy port city.

Otis prefers not to speak of the evil lurking beneath Nios, but the other hired hands know of the fate that befell their unfortunate colleague. They know also that he'd been planning for a while to rummage around the basement, filch what he could and find out what was behind that secret door down there. They figure he got what was coming to him, but they will speak of him more freely than will Otis. They can also direct anyone who is curious to the location of the secret door. Otherwise, it requires a successful DC 13 Search check to find it.

1. Hell Hounds' Kennel.

The end of the passage opens into a cavern that is also completely dark. Without darkvision or some form of illumination, anyone approaching will see nothing, although if they listen for long enough, they may hear canine growling. The cavern houses a pack of 8 hell hounds.

The hell hounds will use their darkvision to gain an advantage on any intruders, counting on their ability to see without being seen to achieve surprise. Once the surprise round has passed, one hell hound will howl continuously (using its standard action) to raise the alarm.

Hell Hound: CR 3; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 4d8+4 (22 hp); Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1 plus 1d6 fire, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Breath weapon, fiery bite; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, scent, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +13, Jump +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +13, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+8 bonus when tracking by scent), Improved Initiative, Run, Track.

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, damage 2d6 fire, Reflex DC 13 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fiery Bite (Su): A hell hound deals an extra 1d6 points of fire damage every time it bites an opponent, as if its bite were a flaming weapon.

2. Quasit Lieutenants' Cavern

3 quasits reside here. They are part of the cult terrorizing the city above, and they follow the cult leader in Location #3. If they hear the hell hounds in Location #1 raise the alarm, they will either use their alternate form ability to change into bats or their spell-like ability to become invisible. In either case, they will rush to aid the hell hounds and try to attack the intruders by surprise. If they are attacked first, two quasits will try to hold off the attackers while the other changes into a bat and summons the hell hounds, or the night hag in Location #3 if hell hounds have already been defeated.

Quasit: CR 2; Tiny outsider; HD 3d8 (13 hp); Init +7; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp -6; Atk +8 melee (1d3-1 plus poison, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d3-1, plus poison, 2 claws); Space/Reach 2½ ft./0 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to poison, resistance to fire 10; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +0 (+2 acting), Hide +17, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (any one) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +6; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d4 Dex, secondary damage 2d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *detect good*, *detect magic*, and *invisibility* (self only); 1/day — *cause fear* (as the spell, except that its area is a 30-ft. radius from the quasit, save DC 11). Caster level 6th.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Once per week a quasit can use *commune*. The ability works as the spell (caster level 12th).

Alternate Form (Su): A quasit can assume other forms at will as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself (caster level 12th), except that a quasit does not regain hit points for changing form, and any individual quasit can assume only one or two forms no larger than Medium. Common forms include bat, monstrous centipede, toad, and wolf. A quasit in alternate form loses its poison attack.

3. Night Hag's Lair.

The night hag behind all the trouble can be found here at all times during the day, either feeding on its victims or plotting more evil. At night, it generally roams the city above looking for victims. It will fight ferociously if attacked, but if pressed to its limit, it will use its etherealness spell-like ability to try to escape.

Night hag: CR 9; Medium outsider; HD 8d8+32 (68 hp); Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (2d6+6 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+6 plus disease, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, dream haunting; SQ Damage reduction 10/cold iron and magic, immunity to fire, cold, charm, sleep, and fear, spell resistance 25; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +14, Listen +15, Ride +12, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +11, Spot +15; Alertness, Combat Casting, Mounted Combat.

Disease (Ex): Demon fever — bite, Fortitude DC 18, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 Con. Each day after the first, on a failed save, an afflicted creature must immediately succeed on another DC 18 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Constitution drain. The save DC is Constitution based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, magic missile, polymorph (self only), ray of enfeeblement (DC 12), sleep (DC 12). Caster level 8th. A night hag can use *etherealness* at will (caster level 16th) so long as it possesses its heartstone (see below). The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Dream Haunting (Su): Night hags can visit the dreams of chaotic or evil individuals by using a special periapt known as a *heartstone* to become ethereal, then hovering over the creature. Once a hag invades someone's dreams, it rides on the victim's back until dawn. The sleeper suffers from tormenting dreams and takes 1 point of Constitution drain upon awakening. Only another ethereal being can stop these nocturnal intrusions, by confronting and defeating the night hag.

Heartstone: All night hags carry a periapt known as a *heartstone*, which instantly cures any disease contracted by the holder. In addition, a *heartstone* provides a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws (this bonus is included in the statistics block). A night hag that loses this charm can no longer use *etherealness* until it can manufacture another (which takes one month). Creatures other than the hag can benefit from the *heartstone's* powers, but the periapt shatters after ten uses (any disease cured or saving throw affected counts as a use) and it does not bestow *etherealness* to a bearer that is not a night hag. If sold, an intact *heartstone* brings 1,800 gp.

The night hag's treasure lies in a heap against one wall of the cavern. It consists of 1,100 gp and 7 assorted gems worth 100 gp each. Personal belongings from the night hag's various victims are mixed in with the valuable items.

SLAVERS IN THE CULT OF DECCAN

The god known as Deccan — he who watches over merchants and travelers, so his adherents call him. But I have always thought of him as a god of cruelty and injustice.

When I lived in Nios, the priests of Deccan sought to establish themselves in the city and lure worshippers away from the native gods who had always looked over its people. The cult of Deccan made a spectacular entrance into the city when it came to set up its temple — three priests dressed in almost regal finery, at the head of a caravan filled with treasures and trade goods. But the caravan goods were not borne by beasts of burden. No! Much to my horror, the beasts in this case were humans, elves and dwarves! They carried boxes in their arms or sacks slung over the shoulder, or dragged behind them sleds packed with goods. Most were men, though some women were pressed into this service, too. They all were filthy and ragged, but from what remained of their tattered clothes, one could still tell that they reflected a motley of manners of dress — meaning that they came from lands far and wide. The caravan guards treated them cruelly, swearing at them and abusing them for no apparent reason, other than malice. I quickly concluded that they must be slaves, captured from different corners of the world and forced to serve this cruel god.

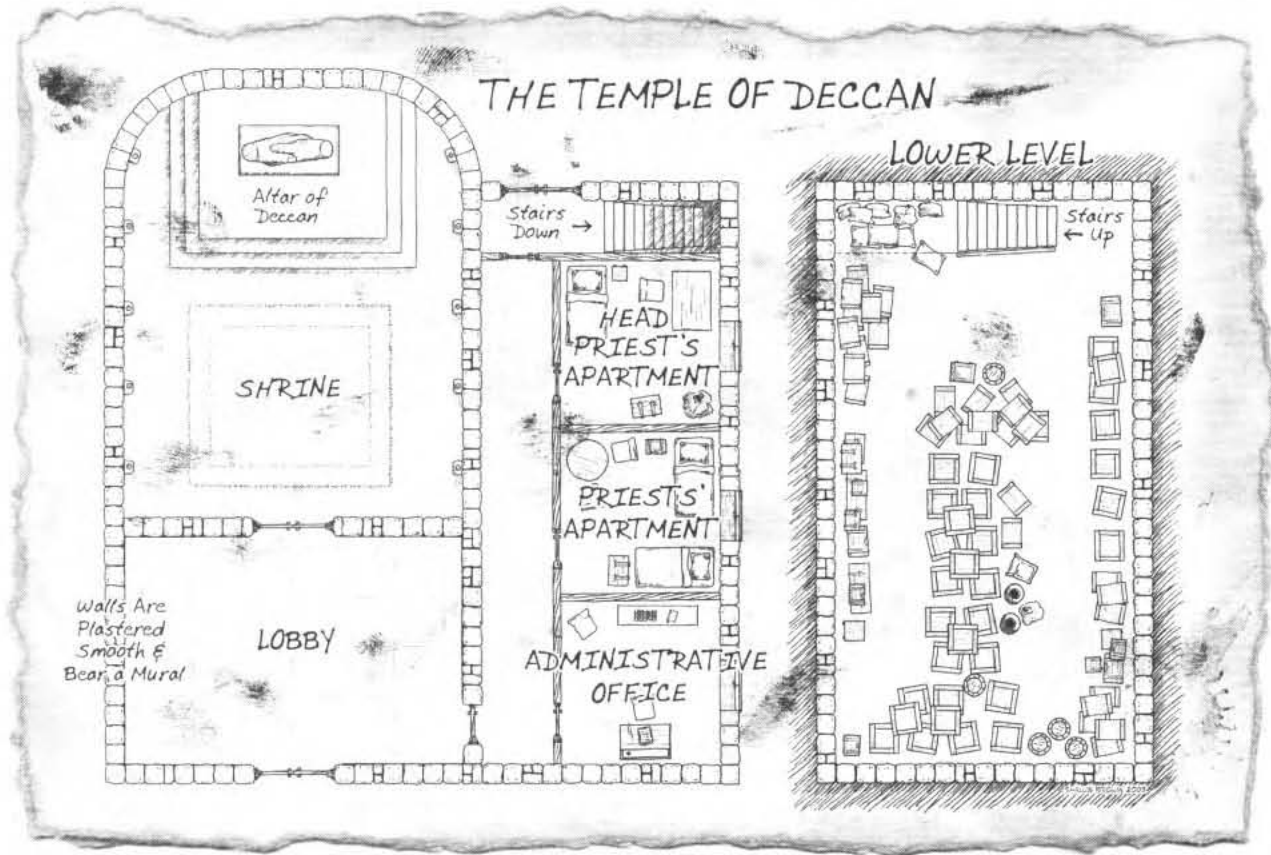
Once the priests of Deccan took up their new quarters in Nios, I saw no more of these slave bearers, nor of their guards. The temple itself seemed too small for a cult that obviously possessed great wealth and wished to make a deep impression on the people of Nios. What happened to them, then? When I visited the temple, I noticed stairs leading down to a basement of some kind, but the priests forbade me from going there.

I could only conclude, therefore, that these cruel priests of Deccan kept a slave pit beneath their temple. A slave pit where captives were kept and cruelly treated by the guards (also kept out of sight) and new slaves were broken upon the wheel of torments unspeakable! The city fathers would not listen to my complaints; they claimed that I gave them no proof that the priests were breaking any laws. They would do nothing. Ah, that I lacked the courage to infiltrate that temple myself and free those unfortunates!

THE TEMPLE OF DECCAN AND ITS SLAVE PIT

Oddly enough, the cult of Deccan, the god of trade and travel, did not have a proper temple in Nios until well after the city became a major center of commerce. As Kynvok describes, the priests of Deccan rectified this situation during his residence there. But the Niosians

THE TESTAMENT OF KYNVOK THE HERMIT



regarded Deccan as a foreign deity and viewed his cult with some suspicion. Most of the city's merchants worshipped the goddess of luck and saw no reason to alter their relationship with her priestesses (those heavily engaged in overseas trade were particularly comfortable with the idea that blind luck played a crucial part in their success). When the priests of Deccan made their grand entrance into the city, Kynvok was inclined to think the worst of them.

Kynvok simply assumed that the caravan bearers who accompanied the priests were slaves, based on their posture and appearance. And while it is true that using beasts of burden instead of humanoids to haul cargo would have made more sense, it is also a fact that these 'slaves' were, in fact, devotees of Deccan who had volunteered for this journey. The cult of Deccan urges its followers to serve their local temple as a bearer once in their lives as an act of devotion. They accompany priests when they travel on official business, or haul trade goods in caravans that the temples organize for their own profit. These folk were not slaves, but pilgrims of a sort. Their bedraggled appearance can be attributed to the fact that they had been marching for two weeks over rugged country without much of a respite — as well as Kynvok's habit of seeing only that which he expected to see. The same goes for the ill temper of the caravan guards.

The following describes the temple of Deccan in Nios as it was during Kynvok's residence in the city. Considering the vast wealth at the disposal of the cult of Deccan, the temple was modest in size. Only three priests resided there at any given time. And while the public areas of the temple were done up in the sort of splendor one found in temples to Deccan in other cities, the private rooms and offices were drab and spare in their furnishings. But this was a new branch of the cult, just taking root. Considering the resources that he had immediately at hand, High Priest Ta'leel had no choice but to start small, and to give first priority to dressing up the parts of the temple to which the public had access.

Certainly, there was no slave pit of horrors underneath the temple. If Kynvok never saw any of the caravan bearers ever again, it is most likely because they left Nios individually and in small groups once their journey of devotion was done. Not all of them left at the same time; some dawdled in the great city to do some sightseeing. And all of them spruced themselves up shortly after they reached town, so that many of them might be hard to recognize afterward. To Kynvok's eyes, they might well have 'disappeared.' Likewise, the caravan guards returned from whence they had come, as they were not ordered to stay with the temple in Nios.

UPPER LEVEL

1. Lobby.

An enormous mural depicting a single scene wraps around all four walls of the lobby. It shows a caravan of traders arriving in a village, as grateful residents rush out to meet them and buy the goods that they obviously covet. Obviously, it is an homage to Deccan — and the merchants who worship and support his cult.

2. Shrine.

A marble statue depicting Deccan's holy symbol — a pair of hands gripping each other in a handshake — forms the centerpiece of the altar in the center of the room. The statue is inlaid with gold filigree highlighting the creases in the hands and fingers, and the fingernails are made of platinum. The altar is too heavy to remove from the temple, but the gold and silver are worth 100 gp if you can get them out. It takes an hour of effort and a successful Disable Device check (DC 20) to remove all of the precious metal from the statue.

3. Administrative Office.

There's not much here besides a desk, a chair to go with it, and a half-full bookshelf holding some basic tomes on the history and theology on the worship of Deccan.

4. Priests' Apartment.

Ulush and Granook, two younger priests of the cult who assist High Priest Ta'leel in running the temple, keep their quarters here. During the day, however, they are most likely found elsewhere in the temple, attending to their duties.

Ulush; Human Clr 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+10; hp 36; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +2 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +6; Ref +1; Will +7; Str 13; Dex 9; Con 14; Int 11; Wis 16 Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +3, Spellcraft +4, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, read magic; 1st — bless, cure light wounds (2), comprehend languages, entropic shield*; 2nd — aid*, cure moderate wounds, hold person, zone of truth; 3rd — cure serious wounds, dispel magic, protection from energy*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Luck (You gain the power of good fortune, which is usable once per day. This extraordinary ability allows you to reroll one roll that you have

just made before the DM declares whether the roll results in success or failure. You must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll.), Travel (For a total time per day of 1 round per cleric level you possess, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement as if you were affected by the spell *freedom of movement*. This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day [up to the total daily limit of rounds]. This granted power is a supernatural ability.)

Possessions: full plate armor, blinding heavy steel shield +1, masterwork morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, ivory holy symbol, scroll of cure moderate wounds, scroll of hold person, scroll of summon monster II.

Granook; Human Clr 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 23; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +0 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +0 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5; Ref +1; Will +5; Str 13; Dex 9; Con 14; Int 11; Wis 15; Cha 12.
Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Heal +3, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +2, Spellcraft +4, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, read magic; 1st — cure light wounds, comprehend languages, entropic shield*, summon monster I; 2nd — aid*, cure moderate wounds, hold person.

*Domain spell. Domains: Luck (You gain the power of good fortune, which is usable once per day. This extraordinary ability allows you to reroll one roll that you have just made before the DM declares whether the roll results in success or failure. You must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll.), Travel (For a total time per day of 1 round per cleric level you possess, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement as if you were affected by the spell *freedom of movement*. This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day [up to the total daily limit of rounds]. This granted power is a supernatural ability. Add Survival to your list of cleric class skills.)

Possessions: half-plate armor, heavy steel shield, masterwork morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure light wounds, scroll of hold person.

5. Head Priest's Apartment.

This sparsely furnished room does not much look like the apartment of the Head Priest of a temple of a prosperous cult, but this is where Ta'leel rests his head at night. During the day, however, it is much more likely that he

will be found elsewhere in the temple, probably in the administrative office (Location #3), attending to his duties.

Ta'leel; Human Clr 10: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d8+20; hp 68; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+1, morningstar +1) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+1, morningstar +1) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +9; Ref +4; Will +11; Str 13; Dex 9; Con 14; Int 12; Wis 19; Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +15, Diplomacy +6, Heal +9, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (religion) +14, Listen +5, Spellcraft +6, Search +2, Spot +5; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6/6/5/5/3; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic (2), guidance, light, read magic; 1st — command, cure light wounds (2), comprehend languages, entropic shield*, shield of faith; 2nd — aid*, cure moderate wounds, hold person (2), lesser restoration, summon monster II; 3rd — cure serious wounds, dispel magic, invisibility purge, protection from energy*, prayer; 4th — cure critical wound, dimension door*, discern lies, neutralize poison, restoration; 5th — flame strike, spell resistance, teleport*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Luck (You gain the power of good fortune, which is usable once per day. This extraordinary ability allows you to reroll one roll that you have just made before the DM declares whether the roll results in success or failure. You must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll.), Travel (For a total time per day of 1 round per cleric level you possess, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement as if you were affected by the spell *freedom of movement*. This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day [up to the total daily limit of rounds]. This granted power is a supernatural ability. Add Survival to your list of cleric class skills.)

Possessions: full plate armor +1, heavy steel shield +2, morningstar +1, light crossbow, 20 bolts, silver holy symbol, scroll of cure critical wounds, scroll of hold person, scroll of flame strike (10th level).

LOWER LEVEL

6. Basement.

Anyone bursting into the lower level of the temple expecting to liberate cruelly misused slaves will find... a basement. The priests of Deccan store supplies and trade goods here, nothing more and nothing less. Crates, boxes and chests stand in stacks against the walls, although not all of the stacks are tidy. The temple keeps nothing of great value here, although all manner of mundane goods may be found at the DM's discretion.

However, any search that involves disturbing the containers lying around in the basement will stir up the pests



and vermin that make their home among the empty and forgotten boxes. Feeling threatened, 5 small monstrous centipedes and 9 small monstrous spiders will swarm the intruders and attack. 20 disease-carrying rats will also scatter; they will not attack the intruders unless attacked first. Determine the location of all of these creatures randomly.

Small Monstrous Centipede: CR 1/4; small vermin; HD 1/2d8 (2 hp); Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -7; Atk +3 melee (1d4-3 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-3 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 5, Dex 15, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Hide +14, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): A monstrous centipede has a poisonous bite. Anyone bitten must make a DC 10 Fortitude save. If he fails, he suffers -1d2 Dexterity in both initial and secondary damage.

Skills: Monstrous centipedes have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Hide checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher.

Small Monstrous Spider: CR 1/4; small vermin; HD 1d8 (4 hp); Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp -6; Atk +4 melee (1d4-2 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4-2 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11*, Jump -2*, Spot +4*, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite. Anyone bitten must make a DC 10 Fortitude save. If he fails, he suffers -1d3 Strength in both initial and secondary damage.

Web (Ex): Small monstrous spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Web-spinners can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 ft., with a range increment of 10 ft., and is effective against targets up to medium size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful DC 10 Escape Artist check or burst it with a DC 14 Strength check. The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus.

Web-spinners often create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 ft. square, depending on the size of the spider. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-ft. section has 6 hit points, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—.

A monstrous spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Tremorsense (Ex): A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 ft. in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

Skills: Monstrous spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A monstrous spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Monstrous spiders use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher. *Hunting spiders have a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks. Web-spinning spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

Rat: CR 1/4; tiny animal; HD 1/2d8 (1 hp); Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk +4 melee (1d3-4 plus disease, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3-4 plus disease, bite); Space/Reach 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse.

Disease (Ex): The bite of these rats transmits a potentially debilitating fever, similar to the filth fever spread by dire rats. Filth fever — bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Rats have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Balance, Climb, and Swim checks. A rat can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. A rat uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb and Swim checks. A rat 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.

THE SENATOR'S DOUBLE LIFE

When I think of Etana as I knew it, I recall a city of civic virtue such as the world has never seen. The glittering gem of the East it was, a city of alabaster and gold! Its finest sons became victors but not conquerors, leaders and statesmen, not tyrants and despots. And yet, and yet... was the virtue of Etana all that it seemed?

I recall the strange case of Geron Gerontus, a Senator of the Etana and by definition a prominent man. He was also widely admired by his countrymen, having served with much distinction in their army before entering politics. But I had it on good authority — an excellent friend of mine, a priestess of the goddess of law who often walked past the Senator's villa — that on some nights, an evil emanation could be detected coming from the Gerontus residence. She thought nothing of it, for she had no reasonable explanation for it. But at the same time, I collected intelligence while frequenting Etana's public houses that a cult devoted to the propagation of evil had established itself in the city, and that their ultimate goal was to gate in demonic beings from other planes and sow chaos and destruction. I could scarcely credit the notion that a popular and respected Senator of Etana would involve himself with demon worship and the destruction of his beloved city! And yet I could derive no other explanation for these two facts existing in such close conjunction.

SENATOR GERONTUS' VILLA

As Kynvok states, Senator Geron Gerontus is one of Etana's most respected citizens. He served with distinction in the city-state's army for 25 years and was elected to its governing body immediately after his retirement. He has a strong public reputation for integrity and loyalty to the government of Etana. This is why it amazed Kynvok to think that Gerontus could be a senior member of a subversive demon-worshipping cult in the middle of the greatest, most orderly city-state of the age.

But the truth is both stranger and less sinister than Kynvok imagined. There is indeed an evil artifact in the Gerontus villa — a *statuette of succubus summoning* that stands amidst a pile of odds and ends in the closet of the Senator's study. But Gerontus has absolutely no knowledge of its function or its evil nature. To him, it is simply a souvenir of his last campaign as a soldier. Because he is not a divine spellcaster, he never bothered to try to detect evil on it. No one in his household can cast divine magic except his wife, a former priestess, but not even she ever saw any reason to suspect that it has a baleful nature.

So how, then to explain the evil presence around the Gerontus residence that Kynvok describes? In this, Kynvok at least has his facts reasonably straight. But once again, the whole story is stranger than he imagines. The evil statue is defective; it sometimes activates sponta-

neously, on its own. The succubus who gates in from the planes of evil appears in the closet, where it may appear and stand upright without causing too much disruption, and where no one sees it. It then uses its *greater teleport* spell-like ability to leave the building without drawing attention to itself, after which it is free to cause mischief as it pleases for the duration of its summoning.

FIRST FLOOR

1. Foyer

The front door has a small, but effective spyhole (successful DC 15 Spot or Search check to notice it from the outside) that allows someone inside the house to see outside, though not the other way around. Other than that, the front hall to the villa contains nothing unusual or valuable.

2. Living Room

Elegant couches and chairs centered around a large coffee table dominate this room. This is where the Gerontus family entertains and spends its leisure time. There is a fireplace set into the far wall. A fine silk tapestry commemorating Etana's successful war against the Tarratans—in which Captain Geron Gerontus played a particularly distinguished role—hangs on another wall.

Valeria may be found here at most hours of the day, unless she is out playing the role of aristocratic matron.

Valeria was an initiate in the temple of the goddess of war when she met Gerontus (she left the cult to marry him), hence her ability to cast divine spells. She remembers her old training well enough and carries a holy symbol of her goddess with her at all times, but has no other possessions at hand. She knows how to handle a weapon well enough, but does not go about armed.

Valeria Gerontus; Human Aristocrat 6/Clr 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 7d8+14; hp 50; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +4; Grp 41; Atk +4 melee (1d3, unarmed); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3, unarmed); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +6; Ref +4; Will +9; Str 11; Dex 10; Con 14; Int 10; Wis 14; Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Knowledge (religion) +2, Knowledge (royalty and nobility) +4, Listen +3, Spellcraft +2, Spot +6; Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Cleric Spells Prepared (3/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, read magic*; 1st — *cure light wounds, comprehend languages, sanctuary*.*

*Domain spell. Domains: Protection (You can generate a *protective ward* as a supernatural ability. Grant someone you touch a resistance bonus equal to your cleric level on his or her next saving throw. Activating this power is a

standard action. The *protective ward* is an abjuration effect with a duration of 1 hour that is usable once per day.), War (Free Martial Weapon Proficiency with deity's favored weapon [if necessary] and Weapon Focus with the deity's favored weapon.).

Possessions: steel holy symbol.

The only items of value in this room are the tapestry, which is worth 100 gp for the value of its materials and workmanship alone, and a silver fruit bowl on the coffee table, worth 20 gp. However, bear in mind that Gerontus commissioned the tapestry to celebrate his own deeds, and as such, it is a unique item closely identified with a famous person. On the one hand, this means that unscrupulous collectors might pay considerably more than 100 gp for it, but on the other it also means that it is easily identified as stolen property.

3. Dining Room

This room contains a long dining table and chairs. It is occupied only at meal times and contains nothing of value.

4. Kitchen

This spacious room has a wood-burning oven and a fire pit at the far end (both of which vent smoke out of the building), and a large table for preparing food in the middle. Aurelia and her daughter Oona — the cook and scullery maid, respectively — will be found here at all hours of the day, except if Oona has gone out to market. Neither of them goes about their duties armed, but there are plenty of sharp objects handy in the kitchen. If either is attacked here, she will go for a cleaver (treat as a throwing axe for weapon type and damage) or a bread knife (treat as a dagger) and defend herself.

Aurelia; Human Expert 5: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+5; hp 25; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, hand axe); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, hand axe); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +2; Ref +2; Will +7; Str 12; Dex 13; Con 13; Int 12; Wis 12; Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Craft (cooking) +11, Diplomacy +1, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +7, Profession (cook) +4, Search +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (craft: cooking).

Possessions: None.

Oona; Human Commoner 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d4+1; hp 4; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atk -1 melee (1d4-1, dagger); Full Atk -1 melee (1d4-1, dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +1; Ref +1; Will +0; Str 8; Dex 12; Con 12; Int 10; Wis 11; Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft (cooking) +2, Listen +4, Search +1, Spot +4; Alertness, Dodge.

Possessions: None.

In one corner, there is a china cabinet that contains a silver place setting worth 100 gp in total; this is an heirloom of the Gerontus family and each piece bears a 'G' as an identifying mark. There is also a set of fine crystal glassware worth 25 gp in total.

Aurelia keeps her and Oona's treasure in their room, Location #6. They carry nothing of value on them.

5. Valet and Maid's Room

The house servants, a married couple named Flavin and Marshu, reside here. They will be found here most any evening (during the day, they may be most anywhere else in the house, attending to their duties). Like his master, Flavin is an army veteran. In fact, he served as Gerontus' orderly for 10 years and has always been intensely loyal to him. He will fight to the death in defense of the Senator, his family and house, and cannot be persuaded to betray him. In fact, Flavin is more devoted to Gerontus than he is to his own wife, so Marshu cannot be used effectively as leverage against him — a fact that will surprise her if it comes down to that.

Flavin does not go about armed, but he keeps a masterwork longsword — a present from Gerontus, with words of gratitude to Flavin inscribed in the hilt — wrapped in an oilcloth in one corner. He will go for it at the first sign of trouble, and he knows how to use it. If he feels he has time, Flavin will open the trunk where the couple keeps their treasure (see below) and don his old armor.

Flavin; Human Ftr 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d10+15; hp 47; Init+6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 (1d8+6/19–20, masterwork longsword); Full Atk +10 (1d8+6/19–20, masterwork longsword); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +7; Ref +3; Will +2; Str 16; Dex 15; Con 16; Int 10; Wis 12; Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Handle Animal +3, Jump +5, Ride +6, Spot +3; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

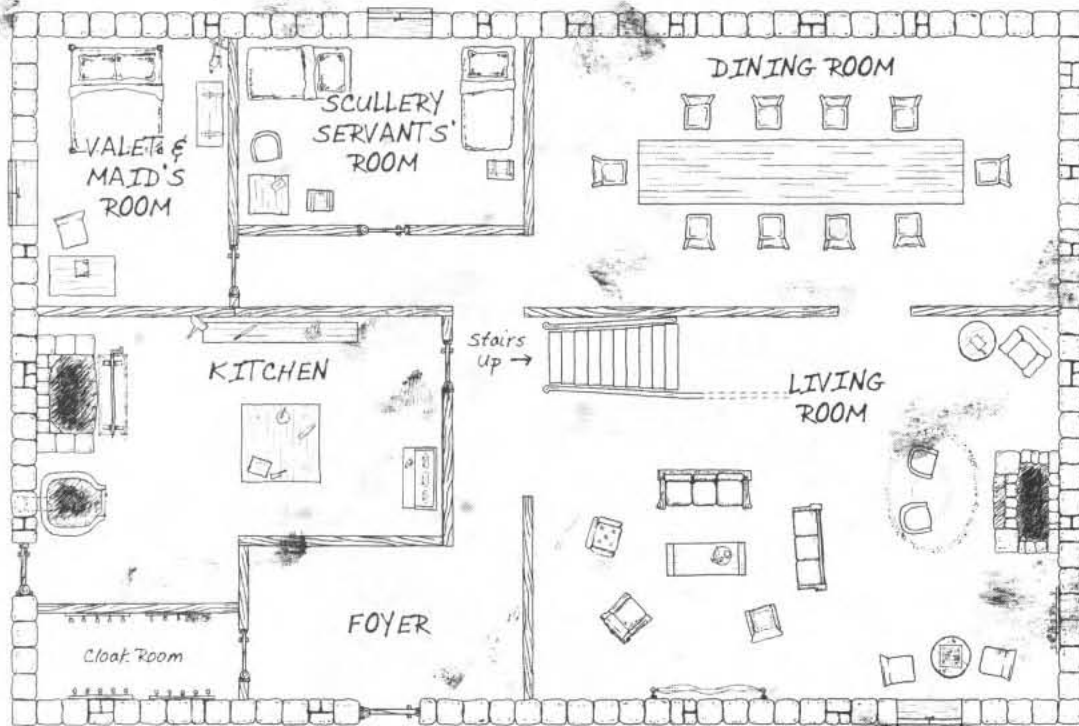
Possessions: Ring of force shield.

Marshu; Human Commoner 4: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 4d4+4; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3, unarmed); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3, unarmed); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +2; Ref +1; Will +1; Str 10; Dex 13; Con 12; Int 10; Wis 11; Cha 11.

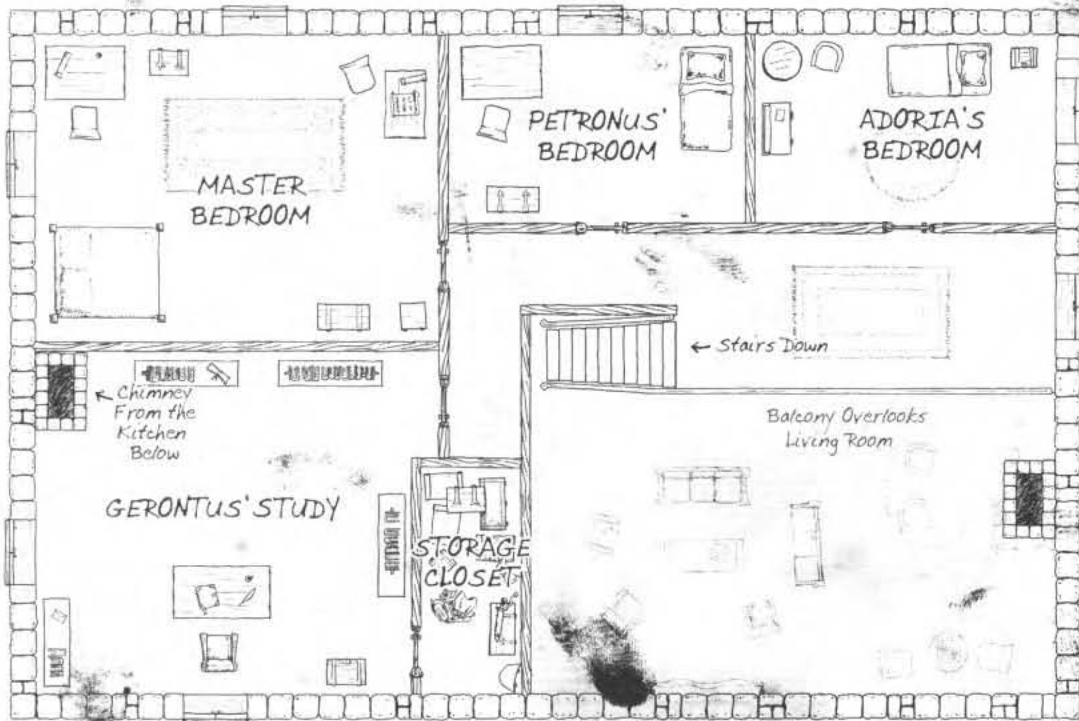
Skills and Feats: Craft (sewing) +10, Diplomacy +2, Listen +5, Profession (seamstress) +2, Search +3, Sense

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SENATOR GERONTUS' VILLA



SECOND FLOOR



Motive +2, Spot +5; Alertness, Negotiator, Skill Focus (Craft (sewing)).

Possessions: None.

Flavin and Marshu have a little wealth of their own—1,000 sp in a trunk under in the corner next to Flavin's longsword. The trunk also contains Flavin's armor from his soldiering days: a suit of masterwork half-plate armor and a masterwork large steel shield. It is locked. They keep the key under their mattress (successful DC 15 Search check to find it without any prompting). Otherwise, picking the lock requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check.

6. Scullery Servants' Room

Aurelia and Oona keep their quarters in this modest room. They can be found here at night, after dinner service is over. They keep 250 sp in a strongbox under the bed.

SECOND FLOOR

7. Master Bedroom

Neither Geron or Valeria Gerontus will be found here, unless they are asleep. The master bedroom is noteworthy only in that a chest containing the household funds lies hidden under the bed (the vast majority of the Gerontus family assets are stored in safe deposit in the vault beneath the Senate). The chest is locked, and it requires either the key (both Geron and Valeria keep a copy around their necks at all times) or a successful DC 20 Disable Device check to open it. The chest contains 1,000 gp and 350 sp.

8. Petronus' Bedroom

Gerontus and Valeria's son Petronus has grown up and does not live here anymore. But he left behind some of his belongings, including one of value. Any reasonably thorough search of the room turns up a masterwork longsword, kept under the bed, but not concealed.

9. Adoria's Bedroom

Likewise, Adoria Genrontus has grown and moved out of her parents' home but left some of her possessions behind. On the dresser is a silver coffer worth 20 gp. It holds a +1 ring of protection.

10. Gerontus' Study

The walls of this room are lined with bookshelves. Other than that, its most prominent feature is a large oak desk and the ornate leather chair that goes with it. When he is not sleeping or out attending to his official duties, Senator Gerontus may usually be found here, either attending to his work or reading from his library.

Gerontus does not go about his house armed, but he does keep his old army weapons and armor handy in the storage closet, Location #11. If threatened, he will make for the closet and at least grab his *axiomatic, giants bane longsword* +2 and *lion's shield*. If he believes he has time, he will also don his *bracers of armor* +3. But he will most likely leave his *half-plate armor* +2, as it would take too long to put on.

Geron Gerontus; Human Ftr 10: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+20; hp 79; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (1d8+7/19–20 plus *axiomatic, plus giants bane, giants bane longsword* +2); Full Atk+16/+11 melee (1d8+7/19–20 plus *axiomatic, plus giants bane, giants bane longsword* +2); SA—; SQ—; AL LG; SV Fort +9; Ref +5; Will +6; Str 16; Dex 14; Con 15; Int 10; Wis 12; Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +3, Jump +5, Ride +6, Spot +3, Swim +6; Cleave, Great Cleave, Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: *lion's shield, axiomatic giants bane longsword* +2, *bracers of armor* +3, *half-plate armor* +2.

There is very little in the way of treasure in Gerontus' study, anything of value taken from here is easily spotted as stolen property. He keeps a gold medallion given to him by the army upon his retirement in a box in a desk drawer. It is worth 25 gp based on the value of the gold, but the inscription with his name in it makes it a unique item and therefore somewhat valuable. Likewise, there are 12 tomes on the history of Etana scattered amongst the bookshelves that are worth 100 gp each for their rarity, but each is stamped on the inside cover to identify them as his personal property.

Also, confidential papers regarding the governance of Etana may be found on his desk at any given time. The value of these is difficult to assess, but depending on their subject matter, enemies of Etana, opponents of the current government or even prominent citizens whose affairs would benefit from advance knowledge of the Senate's actions might be willing to pay handsomely for them.

11. Storage Closet

Gerontus' study has a large closet, in which he keeps odds and ends from his two careers. He stores his old military arms and armor here: *keen, giants bane longsword* +2, *flaming greataxe* +1, *half-plate armor* +2, *lion's shield*, *bracers of armor* +3. Trunks stacked one upon the other take up most of the space, however. Each is filled with souvenirs from his various military campaigns and papers on old Senatorial business.

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But anyone who bothers to *detect evil* on the closet will find a strong evil presence radiating from one of the chests. This chest contains a marble statuette of a fanged female humanoid with emeralds in the eye sockets. Each emerald is worth 25 gp, and the statuette as a whole is worth 150 gp. But this item's true value lies in what it does, not what it is. Touching both eyes at the same time summons a succubus from the deepest and darkest plane of evil (see below). Gerontus plundered this statue while on his last military campaign never realizing that this wondrous item was magical, much less an evil thing that summoned demons.

Statuette of Summoning Succubi: Activating this item summons a succubus, up to once per day. In all ways using the statuette functions as a *summon monster* spell, except that the duration of the spell is 1 minute/user level. Also, note that this particular example of the item has an unfortunate quirk. Because of rough handling that it received both before and after Gerontus took possession of it, it no longer functions reliably. When activated, there is a 20% chance that no succubus (or any other being, for that matter) will obey the summons. There is also a 10% chance that the summoned succubus will attack the summoner. At the DM's discretion, this particular statuette may also activate spontaneously. In this case,

a succubus will appear in Gerontus' closet by itself, then use its greater teleport spell-like ability to leave the villa and hunt prey until it must return to its native plane.

Strong conjuration; CL 14th; Craft Wondrous Item, *lesser planar binding*, *summon monster VII*, creator must have the extend spell feat; Price 50,000 gp; Weight 5 lb.

MISHJ TABALA, THE FOUNTAIN OF ETERNAL LIFE

So many years since last I sought it, and yet it haunts me still. Last night I dreamt of it again — Mishj Tabala, the legendary fountain of eternal life, blessed by Olos, the sun goddess herself! So many tales that come down to us from the Ancients tell of it; how can it not be real? That no record exists of anyone ever finding it means nothing to me. The Ancients did not lie, and their knowledge of Olos was so much greater than that which we possess in this degraded age.

But why do I speak as if it is lost to me? Of course, I found it! Long ago, in the days of my youth, my friend, the great explorer Coronos and I decided that together we would seek Mishj Tabala. At the time, I had taken quite an interest in the venerable old legend, and had read everything I could find about it. I ransacked the archives of the Great Library at Nios and the scripto-



rium of the temple of Olos, looking for both primary sources and relevant commentaries. I do not mind telling you that the subject possessed me. And why would it not? The secret of eternal life, lost to the ages—yet might it be found once again? Who would not think endlessly of rediscovering it?

My research rendered up various important clues that all pointed to Mishj Tabala being located not in our own part of the world, but on the continent of Pangas, on the other side of the Great Ocean. And how, you ask, would the Ancients know of it if it lay on a continent whose existence was only recently revealed to us? Bah! Do not dare to question how the Ancients knew what they knew, or what the goddess Olos chose to reveal to them! The Ancients' knowledge was so much greater than ours. One has only to look at the vast body of tales that they left behind — tales that, they assure us, were all true, and yet no trace of their subjects exists today.

I shared my findings with Coronos, himself a worshipper of Olos. He was also the man who knew more about Pangas than anyone alive, having sailed there himself on several expeditions that had made him famous in Nios. Coronos suggested that the land of Zetha, sparsely populated by humans of a primitive sort, was the best place to search. And so we gathered a small expedition about us, including two priests of Olos and several temple guards, and set sail from Nios, bound across the Great Ocean. We arrived at the coastal village of Zetha, which served after a fashion as the capital of the people of that land. The folk of that place, barbaric as they were, treated us as mighty lords and eagerly provided us with the information that we sought. They directed us inland, to a place called Majita. There, they told us, we could learn more about Mishj Tabala.

So we journeyed inland. It took us several weeks traversing difficult country before we reached Majita, an obscure village on an arid plateau where the natives lived in an even more primitive state than those we had found in Zetha. But they directed us to the northeast, where, they said we would find a spring hidden in a ring of hills that would greatly affect anyone who drank from it. This matched all that I had learned from reading the ancient texts; we knew at last where to find Mishj Tabala.

After three days travel through rough and hilly country, we found the place of which they told us. There, at the pass through which we would enter the ring of hills surrounding the sacred spring, we found a being much like a great bird in form, but obviously not of this plane. This, too, was as the legends told, for they all speak of a celestial being that guards Mishj Tabala and grants access only to the worthy! We made what I believed to be the proper obeisance, bowing low and asking that humble worshippers of Olos be allowed access to her blessed spring (I was not a worshipper of Olos myself, but hoped that it would let that pass). The guardian looked at us for a moment, then turned its head and waved us aside. We had passed the test!

The pass opened onto a vast marsh, the smell of which assaulted our nostrils. But we knew that this was simply another test that the goddess put forth to separate out the unworthy. We plunged onward, down the path that cut through the marsh. It

curled around and led to a place at the center of the swamp, where water bubbled to the surface uncluttered by mud or plant matter. The water had the color of the disk of the sun at sunset, and an unusual smell to it that we couldn't quite place. But this was supposed to be no ordinary water, after all. We had found it! My companions offered their thanks to their goddess and commenced to drink. I declined; as one who did not worship the sun goddess, I did not feel that I was worthy. I took my satisfaction instead in the discovery of hidden knowledge.

Alas, the water of Mishj Tabala had not the desired effect. Almost immediately, their bodies began to convulse. Within minutes, they were dead.

I had much time on the long, lonely journey back to Zetha to consider what had happened. Had my deductions been wrong? No, I concluded. My research had been so arduous; it could not have led me astray. I could only conclude, with much sadness, that my companions' faith in Olos had been insufficient — even that of my dear friend Coronos, as pious a man as ever lived — for her to reward them with eternal life. How fortunate I was, then, to know my place, and to have refrained from drinking at all!

KYNVOK'S POISONED SPRING

Needless to say, the 'spring' that Kynvok and his companions 'discovered' was not the Mishj Tabala of legend and lore. What they found was a bog high up in the hills outside the town of Majita badly tainted by the operations of a nearby dwarven mining colony. These dwarves had mined these hills and operated a large forge for many generations by the time Kynvok's expedition arrived, and with little care for any toxic byproducts from their activities that might leech into the ground water. The stream that flowed down the opposite slope of the hills into the bog was therefore quite poisonous, and the water that accumulated in the spring was the deadliest of all. Kynvok could not have seen the mine from the path that he took into the ring of hills and so did not know about it, but it is unlikely in any event that he would have connected their presence with the lethality of the spring.

In truth, Kynvok's party made the natives of Zetha nervous. They had never met foreigners before, and these intense, oddly dressed men from across the Great Ocean alarmed them. Wanting to hustle them along without angering them, the Zethans told them that they knew of Mishj Tabala, but that it lay far inland. They hoped, no doubt that the hinterland of the continent would eventually swallow them up — perhaps the dwarves would deal with them as intruders, or wild beasts would get them, or the orcs and goblinoids that warred with the dwarves would kill them for sport. As far as they were concerned, Mishj Tabala was always 'over there' — far enough to discourage the foreigners from moving on, but definitely not here.

I. The Keeper of the Pass

The 'guardian spirit' of which Kynvok writes was and still is an Avoral Guardinal that answers to the name Keronus. Keronus chooses to spend all of his time in the Material Plane, and makes his home in this particular spot. However, he has no inherent connection to this place other than the fact that he long ago took a whimsical interest in the miners who work nearby. He keeps a solicitous eye on them from a discreet distance and considers himself their celestial protector. However, he has no real connection with Olos, and no formal affiliation with the spring. If anyone wants to get past him to visit the spring, he simply shrugs and lets them pass, not caring one way or another. This is essentially what he did with Kynvok's party. Anyone who is Evil in alignment gets a hostile reception, however.

Like all Avorals, Keronus' alignment is Neutral Good. This fact caused Kynvok to assume that he was affiliated with Olos, who is also Neutral Good.

Avoral: CR 9; Medium outsider; HD 7d8+35 (66 hp); Init +6; Spd 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good); AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk +13 melee (2d6+12, claw or 2d8+2, wing); Full Atk +13 melee (2d6+12, 2 claws or 2d8+2, 2 wings); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura; SQ Damage reduction 10/evil or silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and petrification, lay on hands, low-light vision, resistance to cold 10 and sonic 10, speak with animals, spell resistance 25, true seeing; AL NG; SV Fort +10 (+14 against poison), Ref +11, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 23, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Handle Animal +13, Hide +16, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (any one) +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +16, Ride +8, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12, Spot +21; Empower Spell-Like Ability (magic missile), Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *aid*, *blur* (self only), *command* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *gust of wind* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 16), *light*, *magic circle against evil* (self only), *magic missile*, *see invisibility*; 3/day — *lightning bolt* (DC 16). Caster level 8th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.



Fear Aura (Su): Once per day an avoral can create an aura of fear in a 20-ft. radius. It is otherwise identical with *fear* from an 8th-level caster (save DC 17). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Lay on Hands (Su): As the paladin class feature, except that each day, an avoral can heal an amount of damage equal to its full normal hit points.

Speak with Animals (Su): This ability works like *speak with animals* (caster level 8th) but is a free action and does not require sound.

True Seeing (Su): This ability is identical with *true seeing* (caster level 14th), except that it has personal range and the avoral must concentrate for 1 full round before it takes effect. Thereafter the ability remains in effect as long as the avoral concentrates on it.



Keronus' treasure consists of 12 fire opals worth 100 gp each and a +1 chain shirt hidden behind a rock (successful DC 15 Search test to find the hiding place).

2. The Narrow Path

In order to reach the spring, you must use a narrow path that cuts through impassable swamplands. At one point, the path is so narrow that all creatures of medium size or larger that attempt to pass through this chokepoint must make a successful DC 8 Balance check or else fall into the muck. The DC increases by 4 per size level above medium (so that a large-size creature must make a DC 12 Balance check, and so on). Unfortunately for anyone who fails this check, the swamp immediately around this point in the path has the consistency of quicksand, and once you're in it's very difficult to get out. Anyone who falls into the swamp at this point must make a successful DC 8 Swim check or else he begins to drown. And even if you escape death by drowning, the muck here is somewhat toxic and exposure to it could make you sick. Anyone who falls into the swamp but does not die from drowning must make a

successful DC 15 Fortitude save or else suffer 1d4 Con damage in secondary damage. There is no initial damage.

3. The Spring

Here, water from the stream that runs by the offending mine collects in a bubbling pool surrounded by marsh and muck. The water has an unnatural reddish-yellow color to it and a slightly metallic smell.

Anyone who drinks from it, as did the members of Kynvok's ill-fated expedition, must make a Fortitude save against poison (DC 20). Anyone who fails suffers 2d6 Con damage in initial damage. The secondary damage is death.

Kynvok and the devotees of the sun god with whom he traveled would never have thought of doing so, but the highly toxic water from this spring may be used as a poison. When applied to drink or food (it must be ingested) it dilutes, but is still quite harmful. Anyone exposed to it in this form must make a DC 15 Fortitude save against poison or suffer its effects: 1d6 Con damage in initial damage, and 3d6 Con damage in secondary damage.

REBELLION IN THE TEMPLE OF AKOLON

Cursed be the name of usurpation, and a curse upon traitors everywhere and in every age! And let no one say that I, Kynvok, do not know treachery in the making when I see it. It matters not whether it is a kingdom or a small shopkeeper and his shopboys, those who give orders and those who receive them must all know their places and behave accordingly!

When I lived in the great city of Etana, I frequented the temple of Akolon, the god of magic — not because I worshipped him, but because the priests there were helpful to me in my own pursuit of the arcane arts. I became so familiar with them that one day, while we were engaged in casual conversation out of earshot of others, some younger priests confessed to me that they were deeply unhappy with their senior clerics. If they were in charge, they would do things much differently, they declared! Such talk alarmed me — all the more so because I saw such deep anger blazing in their eyes. Immediately, I denounced their treachery and pleaded with them in the strongest terms to leave all threats of violent usurpation as a crime against their god and the laws of the city. The young priests seemed hurt and confused by my words. I do not know if my urgings had any effect on them, for I came to the temple of Akolon no longer.

Ah! Treachery! Usurpation! I cannot tolerate the thought of it even now.

TEMPLE OF AKOLON

Kynvok's information is partially correct — there is unrest within the ranks of the priesthood of the god of magic, and the main temple in Etana is split more or less down the line between the senior and junior clerics. This present crop of Apprentice-Initiates do not know their place, and they think they should have greater say in managing the temple's affairs. The officials of the temple keep secret from them all matters under consideration and notify them only after a final decision has been reached. It has ever been thus in the cult of Akolon, in Etana and elsewhere. But none of the Apprentice-Initiates are pleased with this state of affairs, and neither are the Junior Prefects. With Prefect Grant acting as their informal leader and spokesman, the younger priests have grumbled about gaining a more prominent role in temple governance. They also want the cult to open up its criteria for ordaining priests, allowing non-humans and females of all races to become clerics of Akolon, provided they swear appropriate loyalty to the will of Akolon.

Most of the senior officers of the temple are troubled by these murmurs. The notion that younger priests would challenge the wisdom of their elders shocks them, as does the prospect of any strong challenge to the cult's traditional ways. They oppose any change to the practices of their sect because one simply does not abandon the way things have always been done. The Senior Prefects, who see themselves as halfway to becoming senior officials, tend to enforce the party line as an expression of their ambition to rise in the temple hierarchy. In short, they are used to sucking up to the senior priests. But if they saw the senior priests losing in a power struggle to their juniors, they would change sides without any qualms.

But the junior priests have a secret ally in Lestus, the Deacon of the temple and as such, its second-ranking official. Lestus long ago concluded that the cult of Akolon needed to change its ways or else it would stagnate and lose its popularity. Also, he has never been comfortable with the strictures against ordaining non-humans. His great-grandfather was an elf, and although he is, for all functional purposes, a human, he keeps this detail of his ancestry secret from his colleagues because he is unsure how they would react to it. Lestus therefore has a very personal interest in seeing the cult shed at least some of its restrictive practices. Grant senses that Lestus is sympathetic to the junior clerics, but is unsure of how he would react if it came to a showdown.

Such a showdown, however, will be purely political in nature. Contrary to Kynvok's assumption, the junior clerics have no intention of launching a violent confrontation with the senior priests. At best, they are desperately trying to summon the courage to make a formal presentation of their views. Any hostility in their private grumbling about temple business (something that they shouldn't be dis-

cussing with outsiders anyway) is simply blowing off steam, venting frustration over their feeling of powerlessness within the temple hierarchy. Most of the Apprentice-Initiates do not like the thought of causing trouble in the temple. Their devotion to the worship of Akolon is pure and sincere. They believe just as sincerely, however, that the current practices of the senior priests — both in the Etana temple and elsewhere — does not serve the best interests of the cult.

The following description lists the priests of the temple as they were during Kynvok's residence in Etana. Note that the priests do not carry weapons or wear armor around the temple unless they are expecting trouble. Under normal circumstances, they keep such possessions in their apartments. The temple is under the effect of a *hallow* spell, this also provides the effect of a *bless* spell on all of the priests and worshippers while inside the temple.

FIRST FLOOR

1. Grand Lobby

A spacious foyer painted in gold and silver with highlights in garish colors, the grand lobby of the temple is meant to dazzle visitors with the glory of Akolon. 8-ft. tall stone statues of the god's mythical avatars, Calesh and Vurhend, flank the entrance to the shrine. They are also painted in garish colors (in accordance with ancient legends that describe their appearance) and clusters of opals and sapphires worth 2,000 gp each fill the eye sockets.

Off to the left stands a five-sided obelisk carved from black volcanic rock. Each side is inscribed from top to bottom with mysterious runes. For the most part, this writing is mere gibberish, meant to impress the credulous with meaningless scribbles in an obscure language. But some of the runes on one side spell out a brief message in Draconic, to the effect that all who visit the temple should revere the deep knowledge of Akolon lest their ignorance destroy them. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (arcane) or Knowledge (religion) check reveals that this is a conventional, formulaic greeting from the cult of Akolon and does not bear any particular significance.

2. Shrine

This room has an oval shape, and the center of the floor is tiled to form two concentric circles, the outer one tiled gray and the inner one tiled black. In other words, the entire floor represents an enormous eye, the symbol of Akolon. All rituals of the temple take place here. At all other times, however, the shrine is purposefully left unfurnished, for there can be no mote in the Eye of Akolon.

3. Vestry

The priests of the temple keep their lustrous purple and gold ceremonial robes here. They also store their great altar to Akolon here, pulling it into the shrine on a sled when needed. The shrine measures 5 ft. tall and 10 ft. wide. It consists of a statue of an enormous open eye carved from pure white marble set against a mahogany backdrop inlaid with gold beams of light highlighted with platinum. Its market value based on its materials is 8,000 gp, but removing it from the temple would prove a cumbersome task because of its size and weight.

4. Scriptorium

As the name indicates, this antechamber houses the temple's library. Bookshelves filled with tomes and scroll cases line the walls. The vast majority of the writings housed here are records of the temple (including personal journals of deceased members), as well as general treatises on the history of arcane and divine magical practice. However, a glass case in the corner houses a hoard of divine spell scrolls. Determine the composition of each scroll by rolling on Table 7-21 and Table 7-22 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*.™ There are 10 minor scrolls, 4 medium scrolls and 1 major scroll. The case is not locked, but it is warded by an 11th level *glyph of warding* (blast *glyph*, sonic). If it is set off, the *glyph* shatters the glass, but leaves the scrolls undamaged. The password for the ward is "Calesh Vurhend." The names may be spoken in either order, but both names must be spoken in succession, as if they were part of the same sentence, to pass the ward. Speaking only one name will produce no result.

If the *glyph* on the case is set off, everyone in the temple will hear it. All priests present will respond as if an intruder has entered their sanctuary.

5. Reading Room

This room contains several comfortable chairs arranged haphazardly. In theory, the Reading Room is open to all temple members regardless of rank. But because of its proximity to the High Priest's private chamber, it is treated in practice as an extension of his apartment. It is not unusual to find High Priest Salastus lounging there, and no one enters without at least his tacit approval. Salastus keeps a *wand of magic missile* (5th level) with 40 charges left in it concealed in a battered scroll case standing in the corner nearest the door to his chamber.

6. Meeting Room

This room contains chairs set around a circular table. The top of the table is inlaid with a 1 inch diameter disk of semi-precious stone, so that it resembles the iris and pupil of the eye on the floor of the shrine. Anyone with ranks in Disable Device and some kind of wedge (like a dagger or a crowbar) may remove it by spending 10 minutes at the

task. Anyone doing so, however, must make a Disable Device test (DC 20). If the test is unsuccessful, the disk has been damaged and is worth only 50 gp. If the test is successful, the disk has been removed intact and is worth 200 gp.

7. Head Priest's Chamber

The leader of the temple, Salastus, keep his private chambers in this luxuriously appointed room adorned with tapestries depicting Akolon and his avatars Calesh and Vurhend.

Salastus; Human Clr 11/Wiz 5: CR 15; Medium humanoid; HD 11d8+22, 5d4+10; hp 97; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +11; +13 melee (1d8+3, *morningstar* +2) or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+3, *morningstar* +2) or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +10; Ref +4; Will +15; Str 13; Dex 11; Con 14; Int 14 Wis 19; Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Decipher Script +6, Diplomacy +4, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +6, Spellcraft +6, Search +4, Spot +6; Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (*morningstar*).

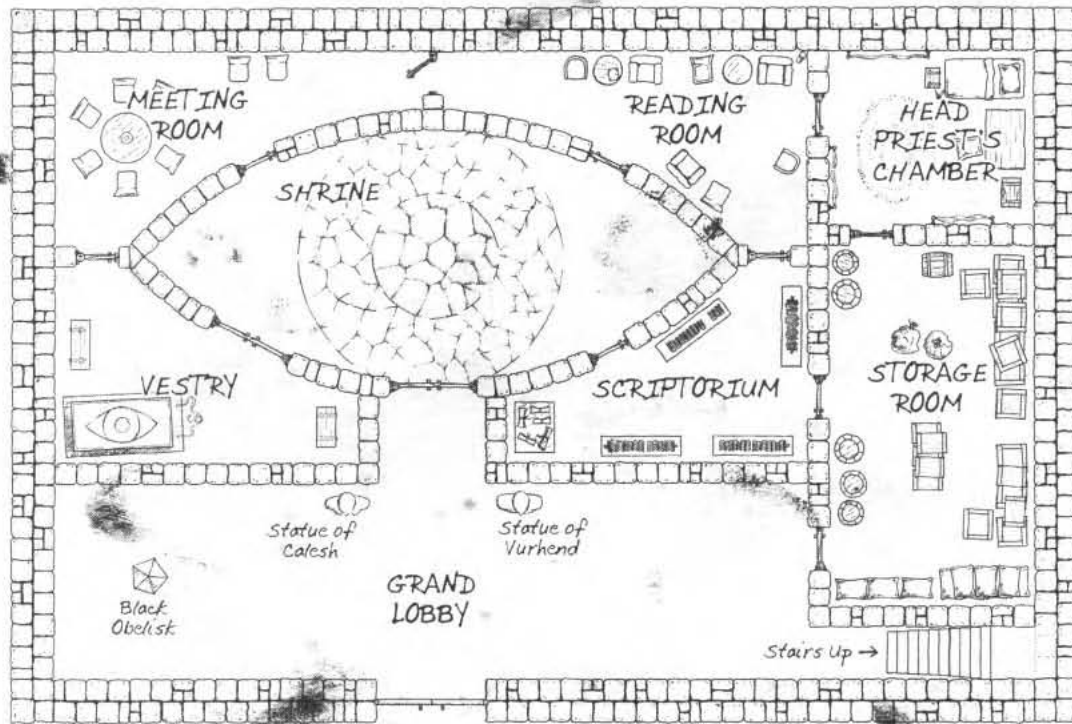
Cleric Spells Prepared (6/7/6/6/5/3/2; *save* DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic* (2), *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*; 1st — *command*, *cure light wounds* (2), *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*, *Nystul's magic aura**, *obscuring mist*; 2nd — *cure moderate wounds*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts**, *hold person* (2), *lesser restoration*; 3rd — *blindness/deafness*, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic** (2), *invisibility purge*, *prayer*; 4th — *cure critical wound*, *imbue with spell ability**, *lesser planar ally*, *neutralize poison*, *restoration*; 5th — *flame strike*, *righteous might*, *spell resistance**; 6th — *antimagic field**, *blade barrier*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. You cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.)

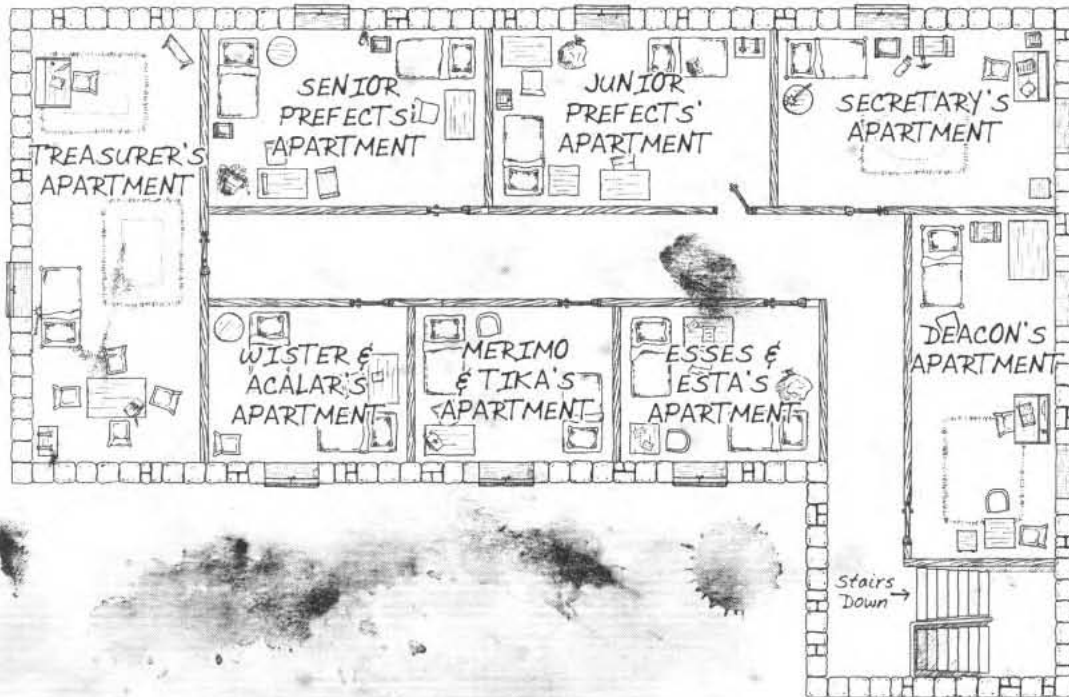
Wizard Spells Prepared (4/4/3/1 *save* DC 12 + spell level): 0 — *daze*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *ray of frost*; 1st — *color spray*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd — *arcane lock*, *summon monster II*, *web*; 3rd — *fireball*.

Spellbook: 0 — *daze*, *detect magic*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *ray of frost*; 1st — *color spray*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *sleep*; 2nd — *arcane lock*, *darkvision*, *mirror image*, *summon monster II*, *web*; 3rd — *fireball*, *gaseous form*, *Leomund's tiny hut*.

THE TEMPLE OF AKOLON



SECOND FLOOR



Possessions: robe of the archmagi, morningstar +2, periapt of proof against poison, ring of protection +3, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure critical wounds, scroll of hold person, scroll of flame strike (10th level), scroll of gaseous form.

There are three tapestries in the room, each of which is worth 250 gp. A chest next to the desk holds his personal horde, 2,000 gp and 100 pp. The chest is warded with an 11th level *symbol of persuasion* spell inscribed on the lid where one would expect to find the lock. Everyone affected by the spell must refrain from opening the chest, and they believe in all sincerity that it will bring calamity to whoever does so. They must make an opposed Charisma check against Salustus (even if he is not present), and if they fail, they must immediately cry out in alarm (in effect, acting as a burglar alarm). The password for circumventing the spell is "Calesh." The desk is not locked or warded.

8. Storage Room

This is the general storage area for the temple. It contains boxes and crates and a lot of dust gathered in the corners. Many of the containers are empty, and most of the rest contain sundries and dry goods — nothing of value. The only items of note here are a box filled with 500 sheets of parchment and another box containing 100 gp worth of fine incense. Finding them among the clutter requires a successful Search test (DC 10) for each.

SECOND FLOOR

9. Deacon's Apartment

Lestus, the temple Deacon and as such, Salustus' second-in-command, resides here.

Lestus; Human Clr 10: CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d8+20; hp 68; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+1, morningstar +1) or +8 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+1, morningstar +1) or +8 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL CN; SV Fort +9; Ref +4; Will +11; Str 13; Dex 11; Con 14; Int 15; Wis 19; Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Diplomacy +4, Heal +8, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +6, Spellcraft +7, Search +4, Spot +6; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6/6/5/5/3; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic (2), guidance, light, read magic; 1st — command, cure light wounds (2), comprehend languages, Nystul's magic aura*, obscuring mist; 2nd — cure moderate wounds, darkness, detect thoughts*, hold person (2),

lesser restoration; 3rd — blindness/deafness, cure serious wounds, dispel magic* (2), invisibility purge; 4th — cure critical wound, imbue with spell ability*, lesser planar ally, neutralize poison, restoration; 5th — flame strike, righteous might, spell resistance*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. You cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.)

Possessions: full plate armor +1, heavy steel shield +2, morningstar +1, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure critical wounds, scroll of hold person, scroll of flame strike (10th level).

Lestus keeps 600 gp in a locked chest next to his bed. Picking the lock requires a successful DC 15 Disable Device check.

10. Secretary's Apartment

Atrion, the temple Secretary and its third ranking official, resides here.

Atrion; Human Clr 6: CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d8+12; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +5 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +7; Ref +2; Will +8; Str 11; Dex 11; Con 14; Int 12; Wis 16 Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +3, Spellcraft +6, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, read magic; 1st — cure light wounds (2), comprehend languages, Nystul's magic aura*, obscuring mist; 2nd — cure moderate wounds, darkness, detect thoughts*, hold person (2); 3rd — blindness/deafness, cure serious wounds, dispel magic*, invisibility purge.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. You cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.)

Possessions: full plate armor +1, heavy steel shield +2, masterwork morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure moderate wounds, scroll of hold person, scroll of summon monster II.

Atrion keeps 250 gp in a locked strongbox next to his bed. Picking the lock requires a successful DC 15 Disable Device check.

11. Treasurer's Apartment

Rufin, the temple Treasurer and its fourth ranking official, resides here.

Rufin, Human Clr 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+10; hp 36; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +0 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +0 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +6; Ref +1; Will +7; Str 13; Dex 9; Con 14; Int 11; Wis 16 Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +3, Spellcraft +4, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light, read magic; 1st — cure light wounds (2), comprehend languages, n's magic aura*, obscuring mist; 2nd — cure moderate wounds, darkness, detect thoughts*, hold person; 3rd — cure serious wounds, dispel magic*, glyph of warding.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. Rufin cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.)

Possessions: full plate armor, blinding heavy steel shield +1, masterwork morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure moderate wounds, scroll of hold person, scroll of summon monster II.

Rufin keeps the contents of the Temple's treasury in his apartment, in a locked and trapped strongbox hidden under a loose floorboard behind his desk. A rug covers that section of the floor (a successful DC 25 Search test is required to detect the ruse). The box is not concealed or trapped by magical means, as that would make it possible to detect by a spell as simple as *detect magic*. The box is guarded by 10th level *Blast Glyph* (Sonic). Setting off the *glyph* also acts as a burglar alarm that can easily be heard throughout the building. It contains 1,000 pp, 286 gp, 120 sp and 5 precious gems worth 2,000 gp each.

Rufin has no treasure of his own. One of the perks of his office is that his personal assets are banked with the temple treasury, and he draws his money out of the treasury whenever he needs it.

12. Senior Prefects' Apartment

Quercis and Nabar are the two Senior Prefects of the Temple. Their job is to supervise the day-to-day activities of the low-ranking members of the temple.

Senior Prefect, Human Clr 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 23; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +0 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +0 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5; Ref +1; Will +5; Str 13; Dex 9; Con 14; Int 11; Wis 15; Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Heal +3, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +2, Spellcraft +4, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic; guidance, read magic; 1st — cure light wounds, comprehend languages, n's magic aura*, summon monster I; 2nd — cure moderate wounds, detect thoughts*, hold person.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. Prefect cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.)

Possessions: half-plate armor, heavy steel shield, masterwork morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure light wounds, scroll of hold person.

Each senior prefect keeps 100 gp in a locked strongbox next to his bed. Picking the lock requires a successful DC 15 Disable Device check.

13. Junior Prefects' Apartment

Dascus and Grant are the two Junior Prefects of the Temple. Their job is to assist the Senior Prefects, and assume their duties if they are incapacitated.

Junior Prefect, Human Clr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+4; hp 16; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, morningstar) or –1 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, morningstar) or –1 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ

—; AL N; SV Fort +5; Ref -1; Will +5; Str 13; Dex 8; Con 14; Int 11; Wis 15; Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +3, Spellcraft +3, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, read magic; 1st — cure light wounds, comprehend languages, n's magic aura*, summon monster I.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. Prefect cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.).

Possessions: Splint mail, heavy steel shield, morningstar, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure light wounds.

Each junior prefect keeps 800 sp in a locked chest next to his bed. Picking the lock requires a successful DC 10 Disable Device check.

14. Wister and Acalar's Apartment

Wister and Acalar are Apprentice-Initiates of the Temple, lowest in the temple hierarchy. They reside in this sparsely furnished room.

Initiate of Akolon, Human Clr 1: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or -1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace) or -1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA turn undead 4/day; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +4; Ref -1; Will +4; Str 13; Dex 8; Con 14; Int 10; Wis 15; Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +3, Spellcraft +2, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (3/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, read magic; 1st — cure light wounds, comprehend languages, n's magic aura*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (Add all Knowledge skills to your list of cleric class skills. Initiates cast divination spells at +1 caster level.), Magic (Use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a wizard of one-half your cleric level [at least 1st level]. For the purpose of using a scroll or other magic device, if you are also a wizard, actual wizard levels and these effective wizard levels stack.).

Possessions: Scale mail, light steel shield, heavy mace, light crossbow, 20 bolts, steel holy symbol, scroll of cure light wounds.

Wister and Acalar have few possessions. Their hoards consist of 40 gp each, kept in sacks under their beds.

15. Merimo and Tika's Apartment

Merimo and Tika are Apprentice-Initiates of the Temple. Their statistics and treasure are the same as for Wister and Acalar.

16. Esses and Esta's Apartment

Esses and Esta are Apprentice-Initiates of the Temple, and also twin brothers. Their statistics and treasure are the same as for Wister and Acalar, except that they also have mementos of family life — personal letters, and other minor items.

Chapter 8:

The Mad Ravings of Gilibran the Old

[Overheard at the Winged Stallion Inn]

There ain't no god. There ain't no heaven and hell. There ain't no after life. Clerics got us fearing twenty-two hundred different kinds of hell and perverting our lives with their tales of suffering and piety.

Bullocks.

Ain't none of it true.

Are you calling me a liar?

Oh sure, they spread the word, missionaries making sure that religion gets to all the corners of the earth. But you and I know better. You and I know—

Wh—?

Did you hear something?

I know I heard something.

Anyway. Where was I?

Oh. Yeah. The clerics. They got themselves a good racket too. They invent the evils and then miraculously cure the ills. Isn't that easy? I tell you. Fancy bit of chicanery if you ask me. And you did.

But, that's not all there is to these guys. Right. They all know about one another. They have some secret cabal thing going on. Each of 'em knows that if they get exposed, the whole thing crumbles... right? So what better way to perpetuate 'unharmony' than by brainwashing a few guys, make 'em evil priests, and conveniently have a hero or two come along and stop their evil ritual. Ever notice they never catch the guy behind the guy?

Think about it.

And what the heck are these rituals about anyway? Its always some demon they want to bring to this world, but they never need evidence that he exists because someone 'stops' them before

they can complete their magic. All in the name of the god of justice of whoever drew the short straw that month.

I'm telling ya, I'm not making this up.

And when was the last time one of these do-gooders actually did some good? Half of them show up in your town and build a church and demand a tithe. The other half go off into the wild and bring religion to the orcs. Tell me how that makes any sense. What we need is some guy that can cure a back ache, kill off the goblins next door, and leave me alone to my beer on Sundays if I want to drink.

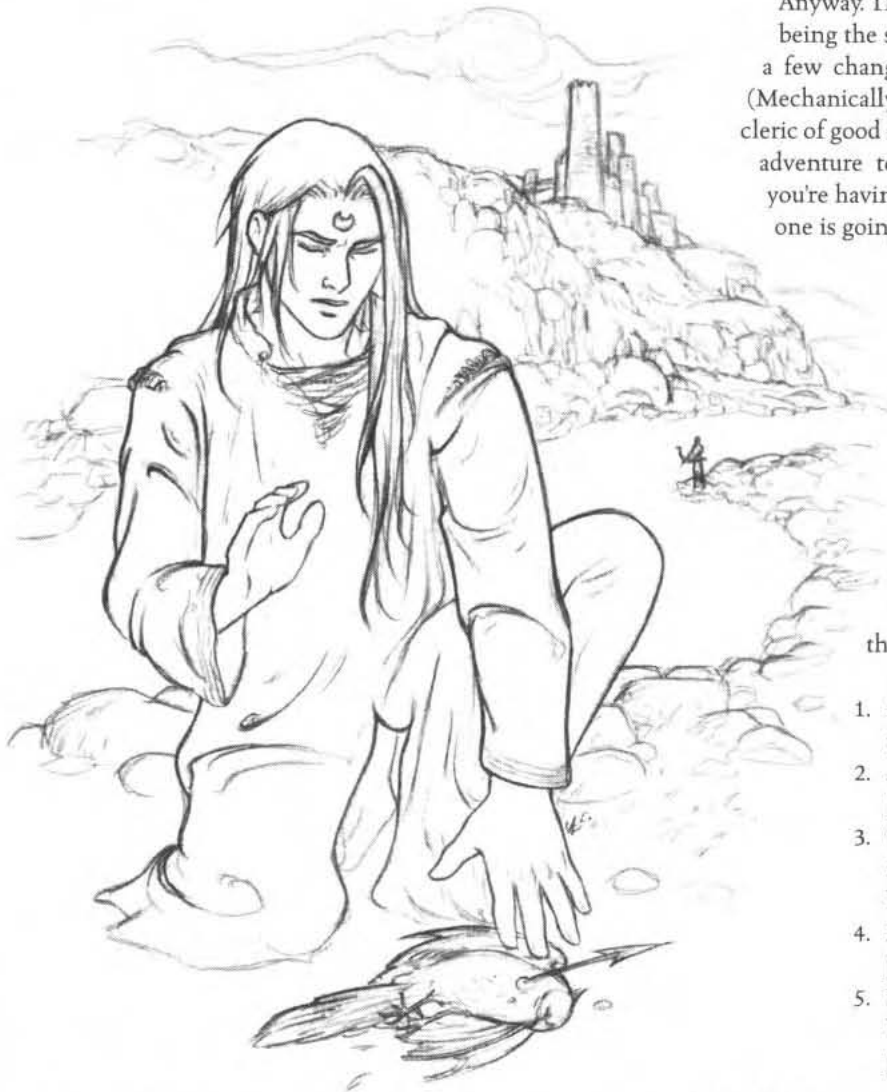
But, you think these power hungry religious nuts are going to let some small time apothecary or herbalist into this place? Bah. They just want what they want and to hell with the rest of us. I tell you, if the bishop of St. Mercy came walking in here right now, I'd punch him square in his nose.

Are you calling me a liar?

No? Good. Then, buy me another of these and I'll tell you about paladins.

THE POINT OF ALL THIS

Religions have played such an important part of fantasy gaming for so long, it's hard to conceive of a game world without them. Entire pantheons have been developed and as gaming advances and matures, these pantheons become more and more complex. Keeping track of the gods is almost a full time job. So, why can't we play in a world without gods? Or, as Gilibran is so eloquently trying to say — what if the clerics are a fraud?



Now. Take a deep breath and think about what that does your campaign world. The gods don't really exist, their 'powers' are just another kind of sorcery, and all those healing spells you've received over the years are just necromantic powers turned to good. Or worse yet — illusions.

Now, for the most part, clerics play a vital role in campaigns. People get hurt, they go to the cleric and say "heal me" and the game goes on. No lost time, waiting to heal those lost hit points at 1.5 per day. But, if a cleric was truly serving his god, he'd be out there spreading the word, building churches, and converting people to his order; none of which happens in the typical dungeon-delving economy of scales known as 'adventuring.' So, in order to get my wizard healed back up to 5 hit points, I need a cleric. But, the god equation gets a little messy. Campaign after campaign after campaign the same 5 gods see play — god of the sun, god of war, god of justice, god storms, and god of war. Wait. That's 4.

Anyway. The cliché gets old, fast. And with clerics being the same from religion to religion, with just a few changes in granted powers here and there (Mechanically, what really is the difference between a cleric of good and a cleric of evil?), the repetition from adventure to adventure reduces the level of fun you're having. Drastic measures are in order and no one is going to like what's coming next.

Get rid of clerics.

I can hear the cries already, and this hasn't even been printed yet. "But without clerics, there's no way to get healed after the fighter/barbarian 'hit point battery' takes a dive. How do I survive the rigors of my DM's PC-killing dungeons without a cleric? How do I heal the sorcerer and rogue when they get basted by *horrid wilting*? How do I turn undead and convince the peasants that I'm cool?"

1. Play smarter. Don't let the monsters take your hit point total to 1. [*Yeah, right.*]
2. Ask the DM to make combat less deadly. [*Almost as likely as #1.*]
3. Clerics and paladins really do have magical powers and everything goes back to the way it was. [*Boring.*]
4. Make druids the new divine substitute. [*Perfect for dungeon crawls.*]
5. Introduce a new class that can heal, but that doesn't have a religious bent? [*Where do I sign up?*]

CHAPLAIN I

The obvious religious overtones are there with a class like chaplain, but in fantasy games this is generally a less pious field medic. And since the name has some currency, we're removing the religious overtones and focusing on the "fighting healer" theme that is so much a part of fantasy gaming.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The chaplain's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

THE MAD RAVINGS OF GILIBRAN THE OLD

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the chaplain.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A chaplain is proficient with all simple weapons, with light and medium armor, and all shields. In addition, they gain proficiency with any two martial weapons or one exotic weapon. Every time a chaplain would be allowed to choose a feat (i.e. 3rd level, 6th level, etc.), but not a bonus feat, he also gains proficiency with an additional martial weapon of his choice.

Combat Medic (Ex): At 1st level, a chaplain is a wounded soldier's best friend. He can administer *first aid* to a dying character as a move-equivalent action. If he spends a full-round action administering *first aid*, he gains a competence bonus to the check equal to his level.

At 7th level, the chaplain can now administer long term care with greater effect. PCs that rest for a full day under the care of a chaplain gain hit points back at twice the normal rate instead of at 1.5. In addition, the chaplain's combat medicine is so refined, he gains a +4 competence bonus to all Heal checks.

Healing Touch (Ex): At 1st level, the chaplain has a healing touch that allows him to heal damage like any of the *cure* spells. However, unlike the cure spells, this is not a magical effect. The chaplain must spend a full-round action applying bandages, herbs, and medicinal knowledge to heal this damage. He can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his chaplain level (maximum 10).

The amount healed is equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ his chaplain level, plus the roll of a die. At 1st level, he rolls a 1d8. At 4th level, he rolls a 2d8. At 8th level, he rolls a 3d8. At 12th level, he rolls a 4d8 and at 15th level and beyond, he rolls a 5d8. Unlike a cleric, however, he cannot harm undead with this power.

Brew Restoratives (Ex): At 3rd level, the chaplain can now create restorative healing herbs. While they mimic spells, they are non-magical in nature. Any attempt to detect magic or dispel the restoratives is negated.

The chaplain uses the Brew Potion feat to make any of the following potions — *aid*, *cure light wounds*, *cure minor wounds*, *delay poison*, *lesser restoration*, *remove paralysis*, or *resistance*. He must follow all the rules for Brew Potion, paying the gp and XP cost as normal. In addition, a Craft (alchemy) check is required. The DC for the check is 10 + the spell's level that is being replicated.

At 8th level, the chaplain can now make the following additional potions — *cure moderate wounds*, *cure serious wounds*, *remove blindness/deafness*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, or *restoration**.

At 12th level, the chaplain can now make the following additional potions — *cure critical wounds**, *death ward*, *neutralize poison**, or *poison**.

* Normally spells beyond 3rd level cannot be brewed into a potion. However, because of the non-magical nature of the restoratives, the chaplain merely knows the correct alchemical combinations to imbue the proper effect.

Bonus Feat (Ex): At 4th level, the chaplain's martial prowess begins to take shape. He gains a defensive combat-oriented feat in addition to the feats he receives at 1st, 3rd, and every 3 levels thereafter. The chaplain gains an additional bonus feat at 8th level, and every 4 levels thereafter (12th, 16th, and 20th).

The chaplain can choose any feat from the following list so long as the prerequisites are met — Agile, Alertness, Combat Expertise, Deft Hands, Die Hard, Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Mobility, Negotiator, Persuasive, Quick Draw, Run, Self-Sufficient, or Toughness.

TABLE 8-1: THE CHAPLAIN I

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Combat medic, healing touch +1d8
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Brew restoratives
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat, healing touch +2d8
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Restoration 1d3
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Superior health I
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Combat medic (superior long-term care)
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Bonus feat, healing touch +3d8
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Restoration 1d4+1
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Last rites
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Superior health II, healing touch +4d8
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Bonus feat, restoration (magical)
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Restoration 1d6+2
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Last rites
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Healing touch +5d8
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Bonus feat, superior health III, <i>heal</i>
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Restoration 1d8+3
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	<i>heal</i> (2/day)
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat, last rites

Restoration (Ex): At 5th level, the chaplain gains the ability to undo the ravages of nature. Poison and the like can be cured quickly, should the chaplain administer aid in time. So long as the chaplain touches the victim within a number of rounds equal to his chaplain level (from the time that the effect was suffered), he can, as a standard action, make a Heal check (DC 15) to negate one negative effect on an ally. He can cure non-magical temporary ability score damage (1d3+1 points worth), *neutralize poison*, eliminate fatigue, or turn an exhausted condition to a fatigued condition. However, he can only negate one effect at a time. If there is no time left, he cannot neutralize snake bite poison and then restore the lost ability score points. Otherwise, so long as he is touching the ally, he can attempt one effect per round.

At 9th level, and every 4 levels thereafter (13th and 17th), the chaplain's ability to restore temporary ability score damage increases by one die type and a +1. At 9th level this increase to 1d4+1, at 13th level he restores 1d6+2 points of ability damage, and at 17th he cures 1d8+3.

At 12th level, the chaplain's restoration ability extends to magical effects as well as permanent ability score damage. In addition, he can cure *fear* effects with a Diplomacy check (DC equal to the original saving throw DC) on an ally as a standard action.

Superior Health (Ex): At 6th level, the chaplain gains immunity to all mundane diseases. At 11th level, he gains immunity to all supernatural and magical diseases. At 16th level, his understanding of disease is so advanced, he can help an ally who suffers from a supernatural or magical disease. So long as the ally was struck within the last 24 hours, the chaplain can administer aid, allowing the victim a second saving throw if the first one failed.

Last Rites (Ex): At 10th level, a chaplain can administer last rites to a dying or dead creature. The person cannot have been dead more than 1 hour per chaplain level. With a successful Concentration check (DC 10 + target's character level or HD), the chaplain may, as a full round action (which draws an attack of opportunity), lead the soul to the land of the dead. This rite is devoid of religious overtones and helps to guide all creatures, no matter of religion. Following last rites, the body cannot be raised by any magical means, nor can it be raised as an undead creature.

At 14th level, the chaplain can now use his last rites power to turn undead, as a cleric. However, the chaplain must make a touch attack to use this ability. Therefore, only one undead creature can be affected per round, but the chaplain may use this ability up to 5 times per day, plus his Charisma bonus (if any). Chaplains with a Charisma score below 10, cannot use this ability. In all other ways, he follows the rules for turning undead, replacing his chaplain level for every instance where it reads cleric level.

At 20th level, the chaplain can now banish outsiders. Once per day, as a standard action, he may make a touch attack to banish outsiders, per the spell *banishment*. The chaplain is considered a 13th level cleric for the purposes of casting this spell. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Heal (Ex): Starting at 16th level, the chaplain can now administer aid at such an effect that it duplicates the effect of the spell *heal* once per day. At 19th level he can do this twice per day. Unlike a cleric, however, he cannot harm undead with this power. Use of this ability is a full-round action and works in all ways like his healing touch.

CHAPLAIN II

This is a variation on the theme presented above. Instead of healing points immediately like a cleric, the chaplain administers excellent long-term care..

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The chaplain's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following class features supplant those from the previous version of the chaplain. Refer to the advancement table for actual abilities.

Emergency Aid (Ex): As a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, the chaplain can make a successful Heal check (DC 15) to heal damage from a fallen comrade. The chaplain must be able to touch the target and the target must remain flat-footed the entire time. The chaplain heals 1 point of damage, 1d3 if he has a healer's kits, and 1d4 if he has a masterwork healer's kit. At 5th level and every five levels thereafter, he increases the emergency aid by +1.

This can done once per day per character and only if the character treated has suffered damage during that day.

Healing Touch (Ex): At 1st level, the chaplain has a unique healing ability. By spending 10 minutes with a fallen comrade, he regains lost hit points back equal to twice the chaplain's level. The subject must remain immobile during this time and must be above 0 hit points or stabilized in order receive this care. Every 10 minutes spent with an ally in this manner regains the same number of points. A character may be effected by this ability multiples time per day but can never receive more HP back in any 24-hour period than his total HP + his Constitution bonus from this ability.

For example, a 3rd level chaplain spends 30 minutes with a wounded ally. After 10 minutes, he regains 6 hit points, after another 10 minutes, he regains another 6 hit points, and finally after the 30 minutes is over, he regains another 6 hit points.

There is no limit to the number of times per day, a chaplain can do this, but he cannot help more than two allies at a time, plus an additional ally for each five levels (3 at 5th, 4 at 10th, up to 6 at 20th level), all of who must be within 15 ft. of one another.

DOMAINS

But, just in case Gilibran is wrong, here's some new domains for your clerics.

The most common ability bestowed by the gods to their clerics relate to their capacity to cast divine magic. Most clergymen have access to special or unique spells, which always relate to their deity's sphere of influence. In addition, most priests are granted unique powers by their deities. These exclusive abilities, called granted powers, are also related to a god's area of expertise.

Charm Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the Negotiator feat. Sense Motive is considered a class skill.

Charm Domain Spells

- 1 charm person
- 2 enthrall
- 3 suggestion
- 4 charm monster
- 5 dominate person
- 6 gease/quest
- 7 mass suggestion
- 8 mass charm monster
- 9 dominate monster

Cold Domain

Granted Powers: You can exist comfortably in any cold environment. This granted power is always in effect and functions as per the spell *endure elements* but is limited to cold climates (you do not gain the benefit of an *endure elements* spells in hot environments). In addition, you gain a +1 sacred bonus on all saving throws against cold.

Cold Domain Spells

- 1 chilling hands*
- 2 chill metal
- 3 sleet storm
- 4 wall of ice
- 5 ice storm
- 6 cone of cold
- 7 control weather
- 8 freezing cloud**
- 9 polar rays

* Chilling hands is identical to *burning hands* with the exception that it is a cone of extreme cold bursting out of the caster's hand. This spell deals cold damage rather than fire damage to everyone caught it is path.

** Freezing cloud functions as the *incendiary cloud* spell but deals cold damage. Instead of a cloud filled with red hot amber, an intense cold of a bluish hue can be seen through the smoke created by the spell.

Despair Domain

Granted Powers: You gain a +4 morale bonus on Will saves to resist fear. Furthermore, you cast spells from the Despair Domain at +1 caster level.

TABLE 8-2: THE CHAPLAIN II

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Combat medic, emergency aid, healing touch
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Brew restoratives
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Emergency aid, restoration 1d3
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Superior health I
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Bonus feat, healing touch +3d8
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Restoration 1d4+1
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Emergency aid, last rites
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Superior health II
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Bonus feat, restoration (magical)
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Restoration 1d6+2
14th	+10/+9/+5	+9	+4	+9	Last rites
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Emergency aid
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Bonus feat, superior health III, heal
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Restoration 1d8+3
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	heal (2/day)
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat, emergency aid, last rites

Despair Domain Spells

- 1 *cause fear*
- 2 *scare*
- 3 *fear*
- 4 *crushing despair*
- 5 *nightmare*
- 6 *symbol of fear*
- 7 *eyebite*
- 8 *maze*
- 9 *trap the soul*

FATIGUE DOMAIN

Granted Powers: You have the ability to make living creatures close to you drowsy. In effect, you gain the spell-like ability to cast *lullaby*, as a divine spell using your cleric level. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once each day).

Fatigue Domain Spells

- 1 *sleep*
- 2 *ray of enfeeblement*
- 3 *deeper slumber*
- 4 *ray of exhaustion*
- 5 *symbol of sleep*
- 6 *waves of fatigues*
- 7 *waves of exhaustion*
- 8 *symbol of weakness*
- 9 *energy drain*

Foresight Domain

Granted Powers: You gain a +4 insight bonus to any check to avoid being surprised as well as a +1 insight bonus to your Initiative checks and Spot checks.

Foresight Domain Spells

- 1 *true strike*
- 2 *augury*
- 3 *arcane sight*
- 4 *divine power*
- 5 *commune*
- 6 *contingency*
- 7 *vision*
- 8 *moment of prescience*
- 9 *foresight*

Ghost Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the spell-like ability to fatigue people you touch. This granted power functions as the *touch of fatigue* spell. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to one for every two cleric levels you have.

Ghost Domain Spells

- 1 *cause fear*
- 2 *spectral hand*
- 3 *blur*
- 4 *gaseous form*
- 5 *enervation*
- 6 *passwall*
- 7 *ethereal jaunt*
- 8 *etherealness*
- 9 *wail of the banshee*

Hate Domain

Granted Powers: You have the ability to trigger rage in others. This ability is similar to a barbarian's rage, but its powers are much less powerful. Once per day, you may choose any creature within 30 ft. of you and instill him with rage as a standard action. The recipient gains a +2 bonus to both Strength and Constitution, but suffers a -2 morale penalty to AC and a -4 penalty to Wisdom. It lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one round) and does not fatigue the recipient. If used on a character that is already raging, such as a barbarian, the rage effects do not stack; instead, the greater of the two abilities is used, however the Wisdom penalty does apply. If used on an unwilling target, he is allowed a Willpower save (DC 10 + ½ cleric level) to resist.

Hate Domain Spells

- 1 *bane*
- 2 *death knell*
- 3 *bestow curse*
- 4 *rage*
- 5 *symbol of pain*
- 6 *harm*
- 7 *destruction*
- 8 *symbol of pain*
- 9 *implosion*

HOPE DOMAIN

Granted Powers: You constantly radiate an aura of hope. Each ally within 30 ft. of you gains a morale bonus on all Willpower saving throws equal to the highest level divine spell you can cast.

Hope Domain Spells

- 1 *bless*
- 2 *aid*
- 3 *remove curse*
- 4 *good hope*
- 5 *break enchantment*
- 6 *heal*
- 7 *refuse*
- 8 *holy aura*
- 9 *miracle*

Hypnotism Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the spell-like ability to *daze* creatures, as per the spell. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once every day), as a divine spell, cast at your cleric level.

Hypnotism Domain Spells

- 1 *hypnotism*
- 2 *hypnotic pattern*
- 3 *s's snake sigil*
- 4 *suggestion*
- 5 *rainbow pattern*
- 6 *mass suggestion*
- 7 *symbol of stunning*
- 8 *scintillating pattern*
- 9 *power word stun*

Insanity Domain

Granted Powers: Once per day, you can attempt to temporarily reduce the Wisdom score of a living creature. To do this, you must succeed at a melee touch attack. If you fail, your attempt is lost for the day. If the attack succeeds, your target takes 1d3 points of temporary Wisdom damage.

Insanity Domain Spells

- 1 *lesser confusion*
- 2 *touch of idiocy*
- 3 *hideous laughter*
- 4 *song of discord*
- 5 *modify memory*
- 6 *feeblemind*
- 7 *insanity*
- 8 *symbol of insanity*
- 9 *antipathy*

Light Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the spell-like ability to bring light to the darkness. This granted power functions as the *dancing lights*, *flare*, or *light spell*. This granted power is usable a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once per day), as a divine spell cast at your cleric level.

Light Domain Spells

- 1 *faerie fire*
- 2 *daylight*
- 3 *searing light*
- 4 *lightning bolt*
- 5 *true seeing*
- 6 *undeath to death*
- 7 *sunbeam*
- 8 *sunburst*
- 9 *miracle*

Peace Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the ability to cast *sanctuary*, as a divine spell, at your cleric level, once per day. In addition, you gain a +2 sacred bonus to all Diplomacy checks.

Peace Domain Spells

- 1 *shield*
- 2 *owl's wisdom*
- 3 *dispel magic*
- 4 *spell immunity*
- 5 *atonement*
- 6 *force cage*
- 7 *repulsion*
- 8 *antimagic field*
- 9 *freedom*

Recklessness Domain

Granted Powers: When engaged in melee combat, you can adopt a reckless fighting stance. If you do, you take a -2 penalty to your AC and gain a +2 circumstance bonus on your attack rolls. You cannot fight defensively while using this reckless stance. In addition, you gain a +2 sacred bonus to Initiative checks while in this stance.

Recklessness Domain Spells

- 1 *entropic shield*
- 2 *bear's endurance*
- 3 *false life*
- 4 *rage*
- 5 *freedom of movement*
- 6 *mass bear's endurance*
- 7 *spell turning*
- 8 *protection from spells*
- 9 *iron body*

Retribution Domain

Granted Powers: You have the ability to focus your vengeance upon a single target. When damaged by an opponent, you gain a +1 insight bonus to your melee attacks and damage rolls against this target. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once every day). When triggered, this ability lasts for a number of minutes equal to your cleric level.

Retribution Domain Spells

- 1 *doom*
- 2 *bull's strength*
- 3 *prayer*
- 4 *divine power*
- 5 *righteous might*
- 6 *harm*
- 7 *circle of death*
- 8 *imprisonment*
- 9 *storm of vengeance*

Shadow Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the ability to see well in the dark. This power grants you permanent low-light vision, as the racial ability of the same name. If you already have low-light vision, your visual range in low-light conditions is doubled. Additionally, you treat magical darkness you create (when casting *darkness* or *deeper darkness*) as if it were natural, so if you have darkvision you can see perfectly well under such conditions.

Shadow Domain Spells

- 1 *darkvision*
- 2 *darkness*
- 3 *deeper darkness*
- 4 *shadow conjuration*
- 5 *shadow evocation*
- 6 *shadow walk*
- 7 *greater shadow conjuration*
- 8 *greater shadow evocation*
- 9 *shades*

Sound Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the spell-like ability to whisper conversation at a distance. This granted power functions as *message*. This granted power is usable a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once per day), cast as a divine spell at your cleric level.

Sound Domain Spells

- 1 *ventriloquism*
- 2 *sound burst*
- 3 *sculpt sound*
- 4 *shout*
- 5 *song of discord*
- 6 *zone of silence*
- 7 *greater shout*
- 8 *power word, stun*
- 9 *wail of the banshee*

Valor Domain

Granted Powers: You gain a +2 divine bonus on all Will saving throws as well as a +2 bonus to resist all mind-influencing magic effects.

Valor Domain Spells

- 1 *remove fear*
- 2 *shield other*
- 3 *heroism*
- 4 *keen edge*
- 5 *lesser globe of invulnerability*
- 6 *greater heroism*
- 7 *globe of invulnerability*
- 8 *holy aura*
- 9 *mass heal*

NEW GRANTED POWERS FOR EXISTING DOMAINS

Chaos Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the supernatural ability to smite lawful creatures. Once per day, you may attempt to smite law with one normal melee attack. You add a +4 insight bonus to your attack roll and deal 1 extra point of damage per cleric level. If you accidentally smite a creature that is not lawful, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Evil Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the supernatural ability to smite good creatures. Once per day, you may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. You add a +4 insight bonus to your attack roll and deal 1 extra point of damage per cleric level. If you accidentally smite a creature that is not good, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Good Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the supernatural ability to smite evil creatures. Once per day, you may attempt to smite evil with one normal melee attack. You add a +4 insight bonus to your attack roll and deal 1 extra point of damage per cleric level. If you accidentally smite a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Law Domain

Granted Powers: You gain the supernatural ability to smite chaotic creatures. Once per day, you may attempt to smite chaos with one normal melee attack. You add a +4 insight bonus to your attack roll and deal 1 extra point of damage per cleric level. If you accidentally smite a creature that is not chaotic, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

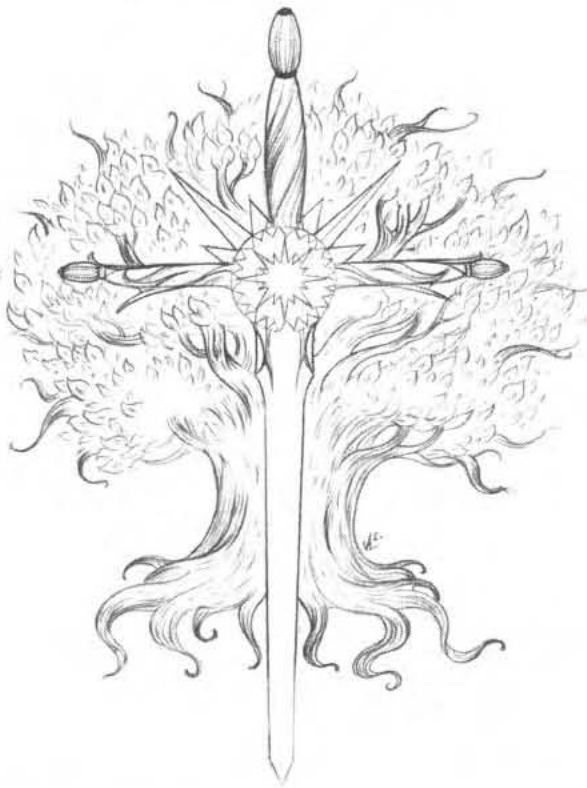
Appendix:
More Secrets

SECRETS...

The secrets revealed here can be used to jump-start an adventure, provide a inspiration for a night of gaming which has gone off track, or were simply overheard in a tavern, used for color, never meant to actually find their way into an actual game. Are they true or false? Is someone planting the secret or is it real uncovered lore we just haven't seen before? Some secrets are small and simple in nature while others are epic quests. Some of the secrets are better left so...

1. Access to the hidden level of Arnsel's tomb is granted by pressing the release on the crown of Arnsel's statue.
2. The ancient hero Tharos was actually a villain.
3. Ancient rune stones left by surface drow allow one to pass through time.
4. An ancient statue of a naga near the Thatmos Grove hides an entrance to a lost shrine.
5. Answer a riddle in the Kingdom of Fentaugh and the hand of the princess is yours in marriage, if that suits you.
6. Anyone who survives being struck by lightning becomes immune to dragon breath.
7. Ariana the ranger's mother was an elemental sorcerer and her father a necromancer.
8. At the bottom of Dark Lake is a gateway to the underworld.
9. Bethrene of Karamek is being eyed by the god of freedom as his replacement.
10. The blackguard Intrepis is raising an army of orcs, trolls, and gnolls.
11. The blacksmith's mute son in the town of Norus reports visions of doom.
12. Breaking the sword of the tyrant Zsengaal releases the trapped celestial Celron.
13. The canals of the city of Bendarin are in the shape of a fell rune.
14. Casting power word kill on a vampire returns it to life.
15. Certain guests suffer terrible nightmares after a stay at the Emirikol's Inn and tavern.
16. The chaotic cult of Rengahl has the scrolls to release a dead god.
17. A child in the city of Hellgate has the rare gift of healing any wound by touch.
18. All children born on the coast are half-fiends.
19. Children blessed by a bard at birth are destined to have songs written about them.
20. Children who perish near the Vadder Sea are reincarnated as fish.
21. The church of the god of rogues is fighting a subtle war with the church of the assassin gods.
22. The city of Barnacus is overrun by the planetouched.
23. The city of Grendon rests atop a titan.
24. The dark god of murderers, Kelzon, is bound under the northern mountains.
25. Diamond dust mixed with mirthral produces weapons that ignore most damage reduction.
26. Dire animals haunt Crestvale, where a meteor recently fell.

27. Drinking from the King's garden well gives the drinker visions.
28. Drinking poison while staring at your reflection in a pool of slaad blood reverses the effects.
29. Elven bards who displease the god of song become harpies.
30. The elven diviner Athanae Moondown has been bestowed gifts of knowledge by an imp.
31. Elven druids of Mirthwood all have Giant Eagle animal companions.
32. The elven oracle of Danivar is now in league with devils.
33. Elven wine is made from distilled moonlight.
34. The elves of Narfell craft bows as strong as any sword for melee.
35. The empire of Acarra once used trapped elementals as slaves.
36. Emperor Stephan is a lich.
37. Every member of the adventuring group "7 Sinners" is a shape changer.



38. Everyone with blood ties to the former kingdom on Drachus is being assassinated.
39. Everyone's nightmares come true in the land of the forsaken.
40. Evoke the name "Bahk-shuul" upon your death to be considered for a second chance at life.
41. The eye tyrant Kazbuul knows everyone's true name.

42. Falling stars of the remnants of a nearby planet that exploded long ago.
43. The Far Coast has fields where entire civilizations of fey dwell.
44. Favored druids can interpret omens by reading the patterns of moonlight on the forest floor under trees.
45. The fighter Dara has a bounty on her head from a far away land.
46. Finding four parts of an ancient riddle can discover a lost treasure resting under a volcano.
47. The fountain in the city of Dougal is said to grant a wish every 100 years.
48. The goddess of nature personally visits the grove of the Tenakus druids every full moon.
49. A gnoll army gathers under the leadership of the werewolf king Talabek.
50. The Great Wall of Kathandalis is made of the bones of their fallen soldiers... many still animated.
51. The head of the thief's guild in the city of Grasnor is a mind flayer.
52. The hero Pendukas is addicted to alcohol.
53. If you stare too long at a flame or fire you attract the interest of evil entities.
54. In an ancient elf-orc war, giant stone arches were gates that could teleport armies.
55. In making parchment from trees of the Darkwood forest craftsmen sometimes discover runes or spells already on them.
56. In the town of Westcrag everyone worships a different deity.
57. The infamous lover Awltolikus was actually a dragon assuming human form.
58. The innkeeper Cemet is haunted by the wife he murdered.
59. Ioun stones are actually dragoneyes treated with sorcery.
60. Kobolds are all spawned from a great multi-headed dragon god.
61. The land of Kalaria is so cold everyone who dies there finds their spirit trapped in crystals of ice.
62. The land of Turnbel is training a special force of Eldritch Knights to one day fight the armies of the apocalypse.
63. Loremasters of Kryton possess the knowledge to speak the true language of arcana.
64. Making an arrow tip from the rib bone of a dragon creates a dragonslaying arrow.
65. The mayor of Loftwick is the only man to ever escape from the prison of Abreinth.
66. The mayor of Serdoon 'honored' the woman who spurned him by petrifying her and placing her in his garden.
67. Mirrors crafted with silver frames are gateways for devils.

68. Mixing holy water and wine heals wounds from fiends as a potion of cure moderate wounds.
69. Moskos the wizard has perfected a potion to cure lycanthropy.
70. The mysterious assassin "The Cloaker" is actually the illusionist Atlorn, casting phantasmal killer.
71. The noble family Khyyrst hires bards to tell false tales of their greatness.
72. On the scalp of the pirate Tharus Belgrun is a treasure map leading to Diamond Isle.
73. Rangers of the Vormus Craggs can meld into stone.
74. The dark red fog over the plains of Karlainth corrupts all who touch, turning them to beasts of chaos.
75. Rengarth Abbey teaches monks a mystical style of sorcery and martial arts.
76. The Ruins of Gnar were once a great fortress commanded by a mortal who ascended to godhood.
77. Ruland the druid has a pair of dire leopards as animal companions.
78. Satyrs brew an alcohol that can mimic any alchemical elixir.
79. Scribing arcane spells with the feather of a phoenix produces empowered versions.
80. Seven elder air elementals await to dispense wisdom to those who ascend Mount Hollai.
81. Singing in the caves of chaos produces a never-ending echo.
82. The skull of a dead hag enhances divinatory spells.
83. The small dragon statue in Rorish Valley is actually a reduced, petrified great wyrm.
84. Some orc shamans know a ritual to allow them to see through their scout's eyes . . . alive or dead.
85. A special dwarven mineral lost to time is rumored to still have a small deposit in the mountains surrounding the Dyrk Valley.
86. Stirges of Thestle Forest have become so numerous they are developing a hive mind.
87. Tables and chairs in the library of Thanyritis are animated objects that act as guardians.
88. There is a land of animals who have elves, dwarves and humans as their familiars.
89. Three hags from Kalaria wield the spine scepter of Acarra.
90. Tides are controlled from a kuo-toa city.
91. The town of Bellinger is cursed but none remember how or why or who did it.
92. Two major priesthoods are preparing to wage a holy war on one another.
93. Using a demon's hand as a spell focus causes the spell to become unholy.
94. Viridian soldiers use drugs to control their emotions in battle.

95. Visiting every brothel in the city of Collisaire endears you to the succubus queen Melicious who watches over you.
96. The warlord encampment of Thredon is built on an ancient temple to good powers.
97. Wearing a minotaur's horn as jewelry allows you to pass safely through their lands.
98. Whistling in the town of Nayt attracts the spirits of the dead.
99. The wind in the Valley of Tennebris carries on it whispers of the dead.
100. A wizard, known only as Zolutar, was buried under his hometown of Lidcott in an unmarked tomb.

...AND THEIR KEEPERS

And of course, the people who know these secrets are certain to keep them hidden from nosey PCs.

1. Ahlir Kesh. An elven innkeeper from Bethis who has been living in exile/seclusion for 300 years.
2. Alokofolys the imp. Possessor of the secret scrolls of true divination.
3. Alusair the Naïve. Knows intelligent desert eagles, and their price for transport.
4. Alyth of Blackspine Gap. Keeper of the keys to Tralia manor.
5. Ameer Subhi. Master of the winds, knows the secrets to elemental teleportation.
6. Annis Gor, the Brave. A paladin from Atwind who slew a dragon and opened its belly with his +3 holy avenger.
7. Armorer Baldwick. One of 10 brothers who are master craftsmen in different lands.
8. Arnora. Was separated from her twin sister, the princess, at birth to live life as a commoner.
9. Atissi Bensley. Knows where an ancient altar rests behind a waterfall.
10. Azaria of the elves. Secretly learns all her arcana from a human necromancer.
11. Barrakul of Darton. He owns a sword that speaks a lost language.
12. Barrintek Greyfang. Dwarven keeper of the runestones of Belan.
13. Benny the fence. Was once able to sell off a lich's phylactery.
14. Benwyk Thag. A half-orc mercenary who once traversed the seelie court.
15. Borin Elkharr. Knows of the resting place of the all-powerful tarrasque.
16. Botolf the Pig. Knows the secret entrance to the thief's guild.

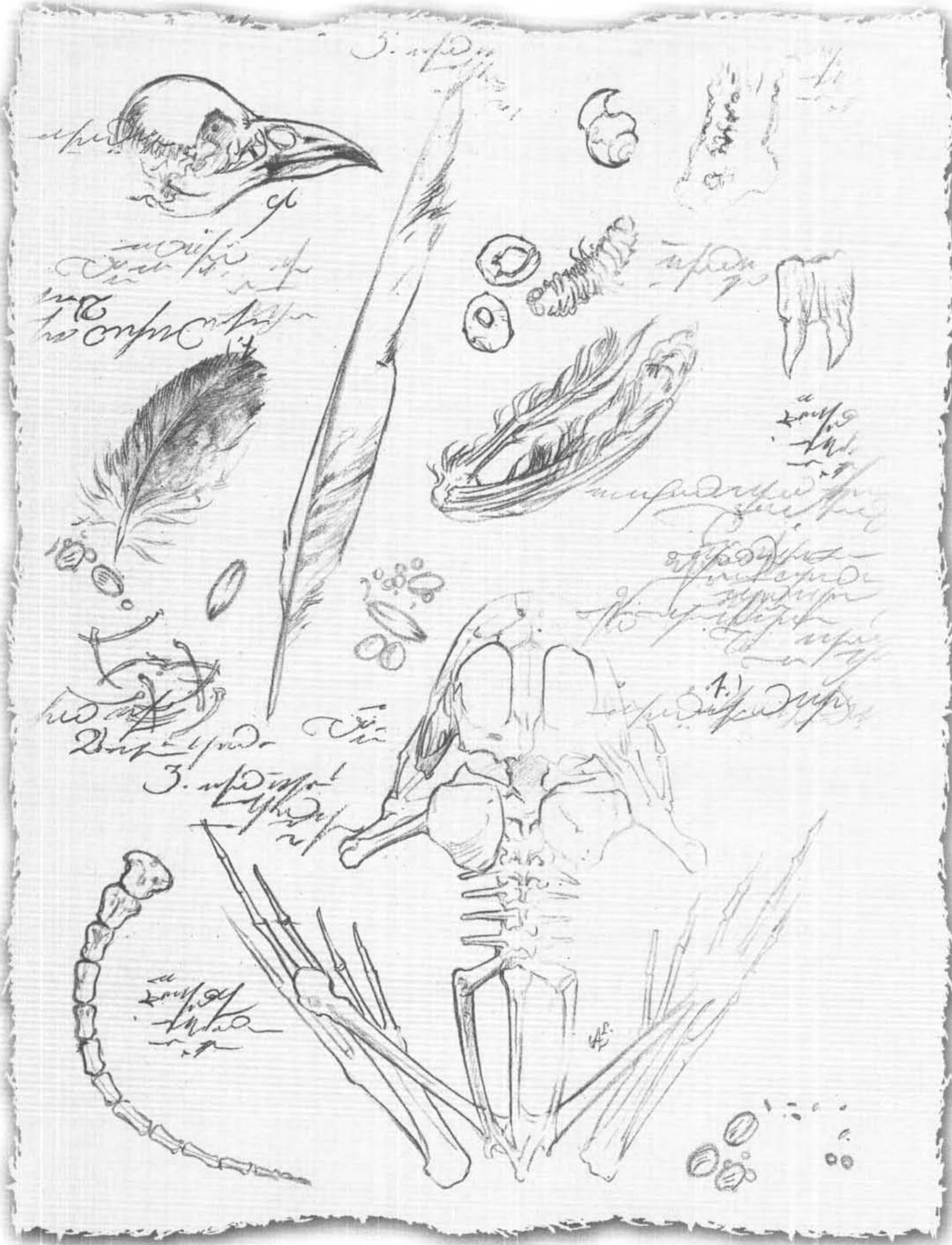
17. Brand the Mace. Know the passwords to over 7 different thief's guilds in the kingdom of Nalshena.
18. Bulvora of Norwood. Writing a book collecting various famous bowmen's hunting lore.
19. Cerdic Staffthraasher. Teaches forbidden martial arts at the Kelmid Academy.
20. Cryace the devout. Oversees and helps settle disputes between churches and clerics of opposing faiths.
21. Damiana of the Dead. Holds the secrets of true resurrection.
22. Dar Ruben. Knows the best ports of call to sell off booty from the ancient empire.
23. Demon Wregansson. Giant of the Tor Mountains, knows the location of the lost, crashed airship Dentarius.
24. Durso Preis. Master merchant who is said to be able to procure anything one could want.
25. Elendaria Denicim. An elf brewer who has mastered the art of elven winemaking.
26. Elroana Sordia Half-Elven. Says her elven mother was celestial and her human father fiendish.
27. Eneko the Elementalist. Knows of an underwater cave leading to the plane of water.
28. Equalina the cleric. Said to have set foot in every kingdom in the realms.
29. Eria the cleric. A devout worshipper of "death" who knows in advance those who will pass on.
30. Erian Stillthorn. Knows the signal for Borden Cragmantle's troops to attack.
31. Ethilmar Loruen. Knows who has a ring of wishing with 1 charge remaining.
32. Fazul Ibn Khardun. Keeper of the lore on drawing arcane energy from the constellations.
33. Felthara Silverbolt. Knows the secrets to unveiling lycanthropes with a glance.
34. Gaia the anatomist. Studies humanoid bodies to optimize her sneak attacks.
35. Galdor Bravearm. Knows of eight dopplegangers operating in Farvus city.
36. Gar Twinblades. A ranger who knows the location of a fountain of immortality.
37. Glardring of Westwood Ravine. Has a collection of white dragon body parts.
38. Gred the sailor. Knows where Captain Iludun buried his treasure, but fears the shadowy guardian.
39. Gudrid Peacewalker. Has been an ambassador in most of the free kingdom's courts.
40. Hallfred Leok. Farmer, knows how to communicate with the goddess of nature through omens and sacrifice.
41. Hassan the poor. A beggar from Neth who knows the identity of the grandmaster of the assassin's guild.
42. Havard Strongglance. Knows of a wooded glade where he gains battle prowess by praying to his honored, fallen brethren.
43. Hedra Benal. Knows the secrets of stealing knowledge and skills from the dead.
44. Heshrok the barbarian. Knows the unique tracks of over a hundred fell beasts.
45. Hunis Arkon. A traveler from the world's past.
46. Jalie Roundfoot. Knows the location at sea to an entrance to hell.
47. Jargeth Rommel. Knows the magical properties attributed to gemstones.
48. Jean-Paul of Cassentia. A noble paladin who sings uplifting battle hymns which bring orcs to tears.
49. Jesharin Fell. Studied the possessive abilities of incorporeal undead.
50. Jhiraagh Zayid. Master of transmutation, can turn lead into gold.
51. Jubil. A dead necromancer whose spirit is bound to a tome on anatomy hidden in an ancient shrine.
52. Kaiser Wishnik. Secret owner of a plethora of businesses along Darkmantle Street.
53. Kari Hogfoot. Knows the location of an entrance to a drow city.
54. Kedrith Wynn of Areron. Secret contact for the infamous Red Dragon Archers mercenary band.
55. Korag Shane. Warlord of Dentara, knows the secret language of the thulls.
56. Korian of the Eight Colors. Knows where Tarid the usurper is keeping Princess Dellandra.
57. Linlith Aslan. A mistress in the city of Shadow who studied under a succubus.
58. Lutharian Belandra. Knows a place to craft magic items on the astral plane.



59. Lyon Elzad. Knows all magic comes from a single god.
60. Maore of Telgat Keep. Knows the secrets of the bloated, undead lord of Kaloora.
61. Melbalorne the archer. Knows of a grove where the trees make the best arrows and bows.
62. Melkot Rangarus. Prince of Dukas, has blackmail information on all the lords of Tenbul.
63. Mikhail Egoran. Knows how the prince of Tredara knows his brother isn't going to claim the crown.
64. Na'ila of the desert. Has mind powers and is said to be a descendant of the caliph's queen.
65. Naldsul Blackheart. Knows the location of the Crown of Acarra.
66. Nerian Cedartree. Master of ciphers has invented a code invulnerable to deciphering magic.
67. Nordrath Kayne. Leader of a band of performers who travel from town to town who also work as assassins.
68. Obberon Remik. The last surviving member of a group who battled a pit fiend.
69. Olezka the Crafty. Studies the lineages of noble families in the city of Kellswith, and knows who is truly not an heir.
70. Ormaskar the magi. Has learned secrets to deflecting and turning back arcane spells.
71. Otiluk Tereth. Knows the best trade routes through the Kalafar Mountains.
72. Owen the paladin of justice. He evokes a work shared with him by his god to shield him from scrying fiends.
73. Qadir Mansur. Traveled the Banshee Jungle and knows of the war between Yaun-ti and Orcs and how to play both sides.
74. Rath Mok'Dhul. Quests for the secret to unite the orc tribes of Thessia.
75. Rayab Blume. Warchief of Kelgar, knows the battle tactics for fighting celestials.
76. Rhalimon of Ilimis. Has explored a cave said to have passages leading to a dark elf city.
77. Rheged Copperblade. Master artisan, can manufacture weapons made of unearthly strength and balance.
78. Romoch the Wanderer. Speaks the formian tongue and knows the location of their city.
79. Sevaleyr the free. Once broke the northern slaver's ring and is today hunted by its remains.
80. Sir Khrysandahl the defender. Paladin who believes of a secret wererat cult infiltrating a city; no one believes him.
81. Snorri the Hare. Knows of a river where a sisterhood of river nymphs dwell.
82. Starkad the Pike. Militarist of Rendia, Knows the weaknesses of the seven lords of Kayne.
83. Starkad Tralloc. Knows the properties of the moonstone of Aharr.
84. Stefan the Poisoner. Has lorebooks detailing the weaknesses of over 100 different extradimensional creatures.
85. Summer the elf. Knows of the hidden minotaur pyramid.
86. Tallia Markavian. A city rogue said to know how to gain favor of the goddess of luck.
87. Talratha Harkim. Knows the black dragon Venarus personally; she's his consort when he's in human guise.
88. Tatyta of the eastern desert. She is able to guide anyone across its treacherous dunes for a price.
89. Teth Semal. Former advisor to King Dorn, knows the secret catacombs to the castle.
90. Thelvan the ranger. Knows the location of the hidden fortress city of the northern slavers.
91. Thendas Mirian. An inkeeper from Brolyn who once defeated a devil with his bare hands.
92. Thord Saberwielder. Knows the sailing lanes of the merchant clan ships from Vargus.
93. Thormod Diamondmark. Knows the dwarf secret of forging mithral.
94. Thovir Runeshadow. Master craftsman of Durendar Halls how can tunnel to hell.
95. Tok Megem. Fought at the Hellgate River battle and knows where the survivors hold up to this day.
96. Torren Abolean. A bard who knows the bounties posted on over 500 men's heads.
97. Torrisair Magehand. Knows where the troll kings of Durak worship their dark god.
98. Valerik Lazhan. Master of lightning, is said to know how to control storms and clouds.
99. Yaov Shao. Knows a martial fighting technique to bypass silver invulnerability in creatures.
100. Yeagle Modigson. Knows the location of a pool which can wash away curses.

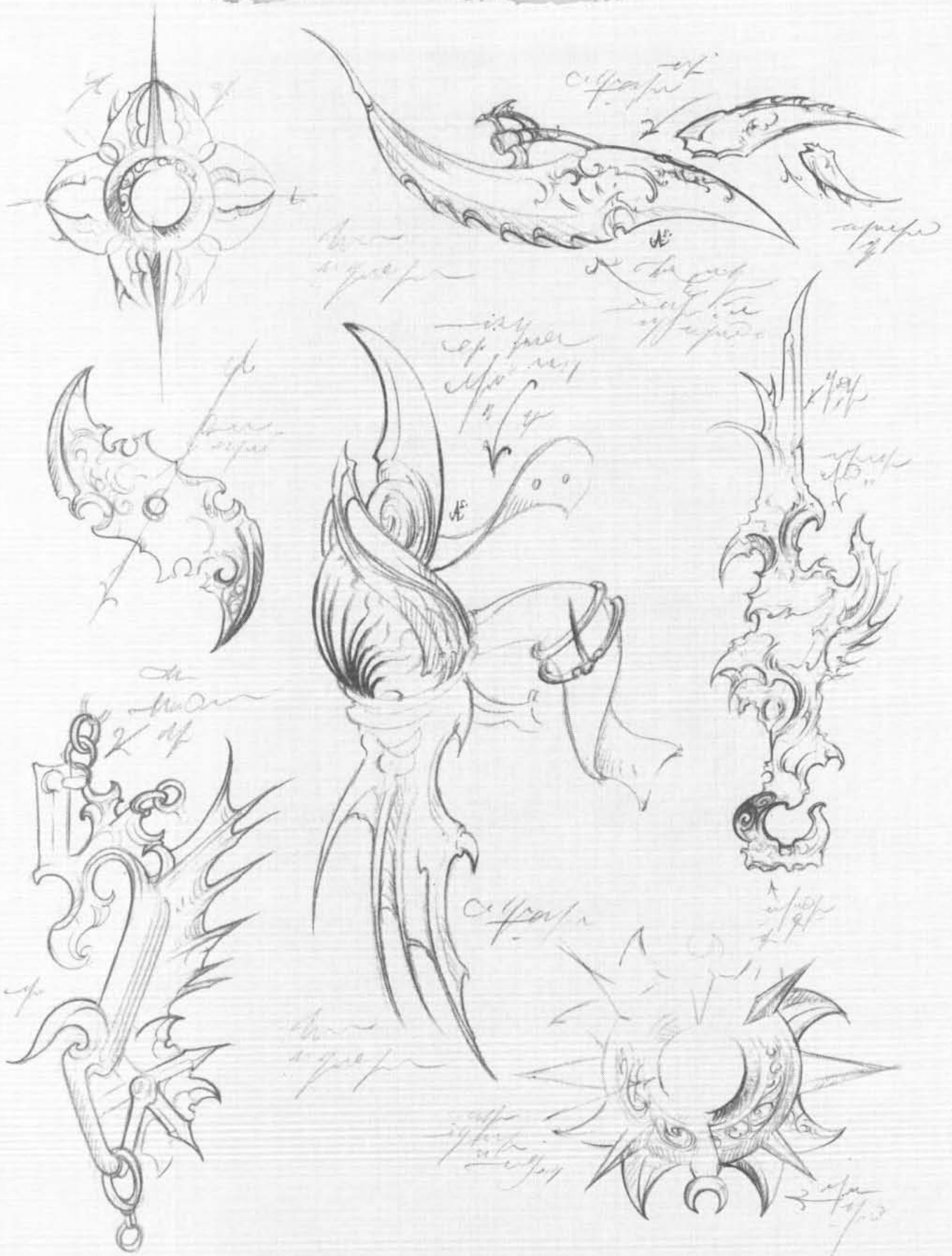
PLAYER HAND-OUTS

The handouts on the following pages are intended to be photocopied and handed to players as plot hooks or mysteries for them to explore. You can slip them into your campaign in many ways. Maybe one of the pages is part of the latest treasure trove your players have discovered, or perhaps an alluring stranger nonchalantly drops one on their table as they are dining in a crowded inn. Why not add your own "scrawl" to further enhance and customize the handouts to fit your campaign world? Whatever you decide to do with the handouts, our hope is that they will add an extra level of depth to your campaign world as your players uncover secrets hidden for untold years.



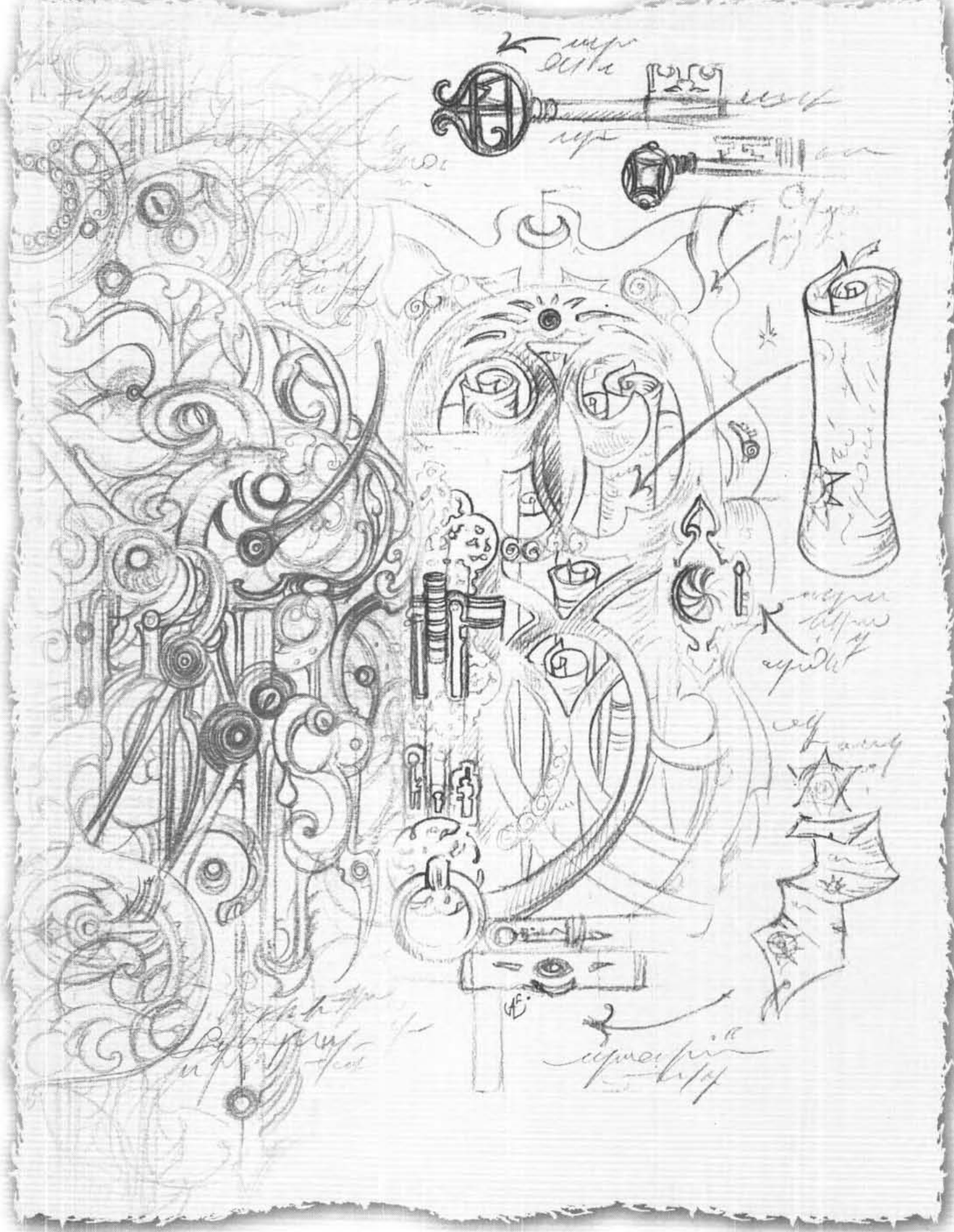
HANDOUT 1: MAGICAL LORE MYSTERY

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HANDOUT 2: FORBIDDEN LORE MYSTERY

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HANDOUT 3: MYSTERIOUS DEVICE

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It shall come to pass in the end of days that the Sun shall grow dark at midday, and the Moon shall rise red in the night. Stars will fall from the sky, and the beasts of the wild will be sore afraid. By these signs and portents the Children of Darkness shall know that their time has come, and they will come forth from their hiding places throughout all of the lands of men, and shall gather in the North, and in the South, and in the East, and in the West, each in their own land.

In the North the Children of Darkness shall raise up the Lord of the Waters, and placate Him with many gifts and drownings. And He will do their bidding, and bring forth a Great Wave, likened unto a great wall, that shall tower over the Cities of the North and crash down upon them. And the Cities of the North shall be overwhelmed and consumed by the waters, and the creatures of the sea shall swim where once walked the Children of Men.

In the South the Children of Darkness shall raise up the Lady of Fire, and placate Her with many gifts and burnings. And She will do their bidding, and bring forth a Great Fire from the earth. And it shall rage across the Lands of the South, consuming all in its path. And the Lands of the South will be a desolate wasteland, with none remaining to mourn their passing.

In the East the Children of Darkness shall raise up the Lady of the Air, and placate her with many gifts and defenestrations. And She will do their bidding, and bring forth a Great Wind. And it shall blow through the Great Cities of the East, casting down their homes and temples and palaces, leaving not one stone upon another. And the sand will blow across the ruins, erasing all the works of men.

In the West the Children of Darkness shall raise up the Lord of the Earth, and placate him with many gifts and burials. And He will do their bidding, and cause the Lands of the West to rumble and shake. Mountains will rise where none lay before. Cities will fall and water will burst forth from dams, overwhelming the Children of the West. And the City of Seven Hills and the City of the Angels will lie in ruins

And the Children of Darkness shall come to the fields of Hargarath. There will they raise up a great Temple, and one among them will rise up, saying to the peoples "Come to Hargarath, that you may see what the Goddess hath wrought." And many peoples shall come unto the Temple, saying "Let us worship here, for surely the Goddess has created this as a place holy unto herself, that we may find safety from the cataclysms around us." And they will worship there, and their prayers will be heard, and their prayers will be answered. From the North will come Maladur, Lord of the Night and Bringer of Darkness, and He will sit on His throne in the Temple. From the South will come Heneshet, Lord of Skulls, called The Deathbringer, and He will sit on His throne in the Temple. From the East will come Sasharaa, Begetter of Serpents and Mother of Lies, and She will sit on Her throne in the Temple. And lastly from the West will come Lenara, the Queen of Light and the Opener of Ways, and She will sit on Her Throne in the Temple. And at their coming the people will cry out and attempt to flee, for they will know that this is not the place of the Goddess, and that it is not She who has heard their prayers. And the screams of the innocent and the laughter of The Four will be heard in the High Places, and all will be much afear'd.

Great deeds of darkness will The Four do from the Temple in Hargarath, and the Children of Darkness will exult, for evil will be upon the land. And the Children of Light will gather in the name of the Goddess, and march forth against the Children of Darkness with the sound of trumpets and the clash of arms. And the Children of Light and Dark will meet in the fields before the Temple at Hargarath. Brave will be the Children of Light, and mighty of arm, and yet the Lightbringer will be betrayed to Sasharaa by Himself, and he will be destroyed by The Deathbringer, and the Darkness will consume the Light. And once again the laughter of The Four will be heard in the High Places.

Maladur will then cause a great pillar of darkness to spring forth over the Temple at Hargarath, so mighty that it can be seen in all the Lands of Men. And by this sign the people may know that the end is nigh.

The Children of Darkness will come from the North, bearing Water unto Maladur. And they will come from the South, bearing Fire unto Heneshet. And they will come from the East, bearing Air unto Sasharaa. And they will come from the West, bearing Earth unto Lenara. And The Four will come forth from Hargarath, carrying with them the gifts of Darkness. They will go unto the Mountain of Sayr, and the Children of Darkness shall go before Them, and behind them, clearing the way with sword and fire, that none may see what they do on the Mountain of Sayr.

For there will Lenara take the gifts of Darkness and by her craft forge them into a Gate. And The Four will stand before the Gate and chant the ancient words "Mia Kallah. Mia Kallah. Freh Genesh Tua Hellah Neh Kallah! Freh Genesh Tua Hella Zekaron! Freh Genesh Tua Hella AL AZRAD!"

Then the Gate will be opened, and forth from it shall come Al Azrad, the Great Devourer, the Eternal Hunger. And he will consume every living thing, those who are great and those who are small, those who are near and those who are far off, and those who are of the Light and those who are of the Dark. And the earth shall be scoured, and not one creature shall escape.

HANDOUT 4: DIRE PROPHECY

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HANDOUT 5: MYSTERIOUS MAP

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HANDOUT 6: BLANK SCROLL FOR YOUR OWN SECRETS

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