

*the*  
**Burning Wheel**

*the*  
**Paths  
of  
Spite**

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Art by Erica Henderson and Rebecca Spyder Bennington.

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# Valandil's Story

by Richard Douek

*A bitter wind lashed the trees mercilessly, and the creaking of their bare boughs were the only sounds in Valandil's ears, save for the soft crunch of the frosted ground beneath the horses' hooves. All the color had gone out of forest and sky, and it seemed to Valandil that the entire world was as the forest was now—all the color and beauty of his homeland was painted on by fanciful children who thought the trappings of beauty and happiness were tantamount to the real thing.*

*"This place is cursed." whispered Miellin. His comment drew murmurs of assent from the Elves. Valandil motioned for quiet. The hair on his neck bristled, and his ears strained to hear what was carried on the wind.*

*It began as a whisper, a high, reedy rasp that seemed to rustle with the trees, half syllables and shadow words, but soon the voice rang high and clear from all around him. He set his teeth, and ran a reassuring hand through Skeros' mane. The horse swayed uneasily.*

*The voice filled his ears, singing of ages gone by, of battles lost, and battles won, hatred and sorrowful war, and bitter, lonely peace. Valandil's mind wandered back, back through the ages of his life. Despite his resolve, he saw scores of brutish men cut down by his hand, blind to the consequences their actions brought, throwing their lives away in a futile grab for what they thought power was. He saw his father donning his armor, smiling as he rode to battle. He saw his face as dusk fell that same day, cold and lifeless, the cursed dagger still lodged in his breast.*

*The host grew uneasy, as remembrance swept across them all like rain. Even the horses shuddered with emotion, growing more stubborn with each step, until at last they refused to take another.*

*The Elves dismounted and continued on foot, up and up the rock strewn path, to the high hill where a great, twisted oak towered like a gallows. The song grew louder as they approached, and the bitter smell of ash reached their nostrils.*

*As they reached the crest, arrows were nocked, yet none dared loose them; swords were bared, but hung listlessly in the slackened grips of their bearers.*

*The crone was there... bent low over a sputtering fire that rose and fell with her voice.*

She looked up, and spoke Valandil's name with a black-toothed grin. It took Valandil a moment to realize the song had not ended. His name was but a lyric, a part of the song since the beginning of time. He saw his father again. Cold and lifeless. He saw the dagger. An ugly thing, heavy and black. An orc's blade. Or was it? Did it not gleam in the sunlight? Was it not fine and slender, gleaming silver, with an emerald set in the hilt?

As if reading his thoughts, the crone sang of it now. She knew it's name, she knew the hand that held it. Valandil realized that he knew it, too. He turned to face Miellin.

"Show me your knife, old friend." Valandil said, his words choked with bile.

"My prince," Miellin began, "This is no time for..."

"You serve me, Miellin!" Valandil thundered, "As you served my father before me! You were with him that black day! Alone with him! Now show me the blade!"

"I served your father, yes." Miellin retorted, "And he would weep to have such a fool for a son! A son that has let the entire kingdom come to ruin! Even now our enemies surround us, and you are here, in the middle of nowhere, chasing a ghost story!"

"Enemies without, enemies within!" Valandil growled, "The story is real... she stands before us."

"With you too much of a coward to strike her down." Miellin spat.

For a long while, the song was drowned out by shouts of rage and the clash of steel. It took but a moment for Valandil and Miellin's clash to spread to the rest of the host, some taking the part of their prince, others stood with his lieutenant. The base of the hill was drenched in blood, the forest resounded with screams, until at last Valandil stood alone, Miellin's ravaged body at his feet. He sent his servant's head rolling down the hill with a swift kick, and bent to examine the dagger. It was not the blade he was expecting to find.

His eyes burned with tears of rage at the sound of the Crone's laughter. He whirled about and advanced on her, fully intent on silencing her.

"Hold, my prince." the crone hissed. "Of all the creatures in this pathetic world, would you now slay the only one who will not condemn you for your deeds?"

Valandil's sword inched lower, and his pace slowed.

"You cannot now return to your kingdom," the crone continued, "Nor can you flee beyond it, for your enemies now surround your lands."

Valandil glanced quickly into her eyes, and the crone shook with peals of laughter.

"Pass into the west?" she cackled, "They would turn you away, kinslayer."

Kinslayer. The very word hit Valandil like a hammer. His sword clattered to the earth, and he sank to his knees shaking with sobs.

"It is not so bad as that." the crone said, "You did only what was natural."

"I... betrayed them." Valandil croaked.

"They betrayed you!" the crone shouted, "Fools and cowards to the last. To take up arms against their prince... despicable. Should they not give their heads willingly if you so asked?"

"They..." Valandil gasped.

"And your father, did they not betray him by allowing him to fall?" the crone said, her voice falling to a whisper.

"I...yes." Valandil sighed, "They should have protected him with their lives. That was their pledge."

"Then did they not receive a just reward for such base betrayal?" hissed the crone, her black lips curling in a sharp grin.

"Yes." Valandil nodded, his tears drying in the heat of the fire, "But there are others who deserve as much. Even I deserve as much."

"In time, my prince, in time." the crone said sweetly. "You shall pay them all back in kind, even the accursed gods that gave you life. For now, warm yourself by my fire, and listen to the true nature of the world..."

Valandil sheathed his sword and took his place by the fire. The crone's voice droned on, and as the last rays of sunlight faded beyond the horizon, so too did the last vestiges of grief, remorse and nobility fade from Valandil's heart, until his chest was filled not with warmth, but with a cold burning knot. And on this pain he swore to make pay every soul who drove him to this abyss, everyone who ever grieved with him shall now learn the folly of their pathetic lives!

*Valandil, the Lost Prince*

Lifepaths: *Born Etharch, Attendant, Second, Sword Singer, Prince, Griever*

Age: 278

Stats: *Pe: B6 Wi: B6 Ag: B6 Sp: B5 Po: B5 Fo: B5*

Attributes: *Ref B5, Ste B7, Hea, B5, MW B10, Hesitation 4, Spite: B6*

Circles: B4 Resources: B1

Skills: *Elven script B4, Etiquette B6, Ride B6, Sword B6, Song of Bonding B3, Bow B6, Mounted Combat Training, Song of the Sword B6, Song of Lordship B5, Voice of Ages B5, Lament of Mourning B4, Lay of the Horse B4, Song of Songs B5, Mending B4, Lullaby to Sorrow B4, Dark Elf-wise B4*

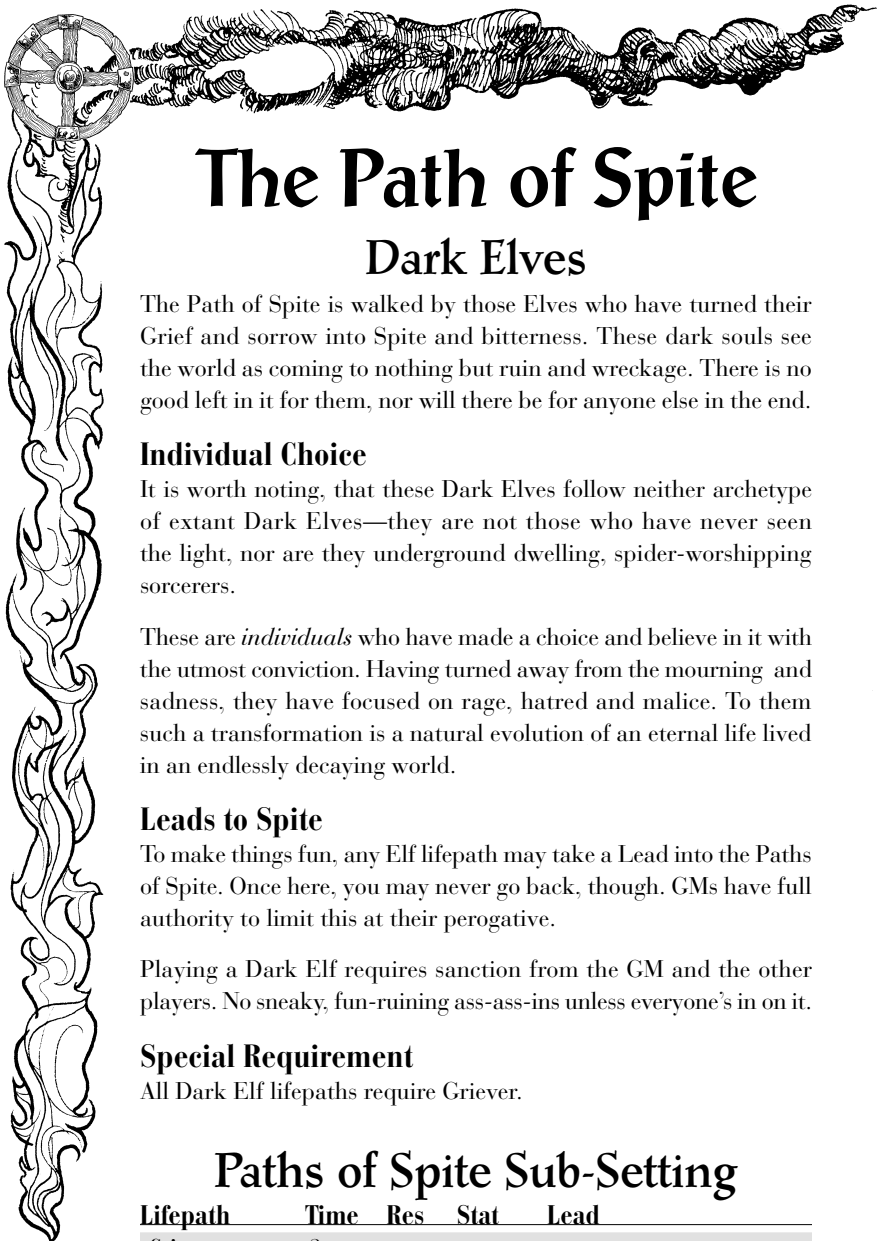
Gear: *Remote refuge, Elven Arms (sword and knife), traveling clothes, Elven Chainmail, cloak of darkness*

Traits: *Etharchal, Fêa, Calm Demeanor, Prince of the Blood, World Weary, Cool-Headed, Spite*

Beliefs: *All who betrayed me, I will betray in turn. Vengeance is an end unto itself. There is nothing in this world that is worth compassion.*

Instincts: *Toy with them before moving in for the kill. When cornered, go aggressive. When walking among my people, conceal my spite (so that I may accomplish my ends!)*





# The Path of Spite

## Dark Elves

The Path of Spite is walked by those Elves who have turned their Grief and sorrow into Spite and bitterness. These dark souls see the world as coming to nothing but ruin and wreckage. There is no good left in it for them, nor will there be for anyone else in the end.

### Individual Choice

It is worth noting, that these Dark Elves follow neither archetype of extant Dark Elves—they are not those who have never seen the light, nor are they underground dwelling, spider-worshipping sorcerers.

These are *individuals* who have made a choice and believe in it with the utmost conviction. Having turned away from the mourning and sadness, they have focused on rage, hatred and malice. To them such a transformation is a natural evolution of an eternal life lived in an endlessly decaying world.

### Leads to Spite

To make things fun, any Elf lifepath may take a Lead into the Paths of Spite. Once here, you may never go back, though. GMs have full authority to limit this at their prerogative.

Playing a Dark Elf requires sanction from the GM and the other players. No sneaky, fun-ruining ass-ass-ins unless everyone's in on it.

### Special Requirement

All Dark Elf lifepaths require Griever.

## Paths of Spite Sub-Setting

Lifepath	Time	Res	Stat	Lead
Griever	3 yrs	—	—	—
<i>Skills:</i> 3 pts: Lullaby to Sorrow <sup>§</sup> , Dark Elf-wise				
<i>Traits:</i> 1 pt: Spite				
Wastrel	25 yrs	3	—	—
<i>Skills:</i> 6 pts: Scavenging, Brawling, Forest-wise, Wasteland-wise, Animal-wise				
<i>Traits:</i> 2 pts: Filthy, Feral				



**Thief**                    18 yrs    6    +1 M/P    —

*Skills:* 6 pts: Lock Pick, Stealthy, Climbing, Escape Artist (page 223, Monbu), Dirge of Night<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 1 pt: Thief

**Murderer**            15 yrs    6    +1 P    —

*Skills:* 7 pts: Intimidation, Poisons, Knives, Bow, Garrote, Dirge of Terror<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 1 pt: Murderous, Callous, Cold-Blooded

**Stalker**                20 yrs    8    —    —

*Skills:* 8 pts: Hunting, Tracking, Trapper, Observation, Stealthy, Throwing, Javelin, Supplication to Shadows<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 1 pt: Saturnine

**Deceiver**            35 yrs    10    +1 M    —

*Skills:* 7 pts: Sleight of Hand, Disguise, Inconspicuous, Rhyme of the Unraveller<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 1 pt: Deceptive

**Twister**                25 yrs    8    +1 M    —

*Skills:* 6 pts: Falsehood, Soothing Platitudes, Persuasion, The Twisted Tongue<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 1 pt: Compulsive Liar

**Siren<sup>1</sup>**                55 yrs    20    +1 M/P    —

*Skills:* 9 pts: Seduction, Etiquette, Persuasion, Soothing Platitudes, Gossip-wise, Sow of Discord<sup>§</sup>, Litany of Fools<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 2 pts: Charismatic, Femme Fatale

**Eremite<sup>2</sup>**            150 yrs    15    +1 M    *Servant to the Dark*

*Skills:* 12 pts: Philosophy, Ugly Truth, Obscure History, Symbology, Strategy, Elf-wise, Orc-wise, Dwarf-wise, Man-wise, Paean of the Dark Fire Within<sup>§</sup>

*Traits:* 2 pts: Remote, Cold

**Recluse<sup>3</sup>**            225 yrs    25    +1 P    —

*Skills:* 2 pts; Screed of Folly<sup>§</sup>; 5 pts General

*Traits:* 1 pt: Bitter

## Notes from the Dark

1: Siren requires Griever and one other previous Dark Elf lifepath. 2: Eremite requires Griever and two other previous Dark Elf lifepaths. 3: Recluse requires Griever and three other Dark Elf lifepaths.

§: Indicates an Elven Spell or Skill Song. These special skills cost 2 pts to open and are advanced as normal.



## Dark Elf Traits

### Dark Elf Common Traits

Grief is turned to Spite, of course. Additionally, a player may, if he chooses, change the Fair and Statuesque trait to the Dark and Imposing character trait.

### Dark Elf Character Traits

Filthy, Murderous, Callous, Compulsive Liar, Remote

### Dark Elf Lifepath Traits

#### Bitter

*Dt*

This trait is two-fold, first it acts much like Flights of Murderous Fancy (page 203, Character Burner). If the Dark Elf character is defeated in a Duel of Wits or a Fight! and lives to tell the tale, he may FoRK his Spite into all rolls bent on avenging himself against his enemy. Humiliating or murdering the enemy—getting revenge upon them—immediately earns the player a bonus Persona point. (So that'd be two points, one for Personal Goal and one for Bitter.)

Second, this trait *requires* that the Dark Elf have a close relationship with a non-spiteful Elf or a mortal human. It can be familial, romantic or fraternal in nature—but it must be close. It must rankle the Dark Elf that *they* still live *that way*.

#### Cold

*Dt*

In a Duel of Wits where kindness, compassion, Grief, or passion are involved, the Eremite may double his Will for the purposes of the Body of Argument.

#### Deceptive

*C-O/Dt*

The Deceptive trait acts as a call-on for Sleight of Hand and Falsehood. However, this trait so infuses the liar, he has a hard time telling the truth. Deceptive also incurs a +1 Ob penalty to all Oratory, Command test and +2 Ob to Ugly Truth or Litany of Fools.

#### Femme Fatale

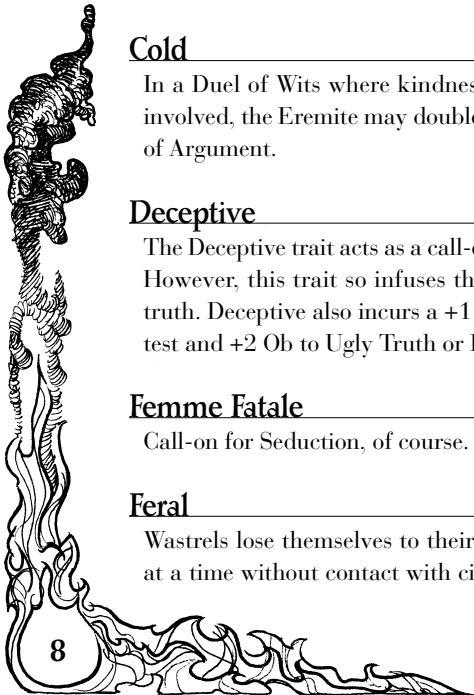
*C-O*

Call-on for Seduction, of course.

#### Feral

*Dt*

Wastrels lose themselves to their animal instincts. Living for decades at a time without contact with civilization—living as animals do. The







Feral trait reduces over all hesitation by two, but adds +1 Ob to all social skill tests. Also, Feral negates the bonus to Circles from any Elven lifepath trait—Etharchal, Lord of Ages, etc.

**Saturnine**

*Dt*

If any other player attempts to influence a character with the Saturnine trait with passion, motivation, joy or love, the Saturnine Dark Elf player gets a +1D advantage to all tests for one scene when confronting that character (in a Duel of Wits or Fight!), hunting him or poisoning him.

**Spite**

*Dt*

Dark Elves trade their Grief for a burning and intense Spite. Something has snapped inside the Dark Elf's soul—Grief seems folly to him. And whatever the truth of an immortal life is, Dark Elves know that it does not lay silently grieving with his Elven brothers. See the Spite section for more details on the mechanics.

**Thief**

*Dt*

The Thief trait requires that the player note a mandatory theft-related instinct. “When visiting home, always steal mother’s valuables,” for example.



## Dark Elf Skill Songs

### General Points

Dark Elf characters may only spend general skill points on skill and spell songs in this setting and skills from the General Skill List starting page 226 of the Character Burner. General skill points may not be spent on purchasing new special Elven Skills, Elven Skill Songs or Elven Spell Songs. They may be spent on improving Elven Skills, etc. that exist in the character's lifepaths.

### Litany of Fools

Will

The Litany of Fools is a Dark Elven siren song. It speaks gently of the terrible fate of those who walk the righteous and valorous path. This song counts as Ugly Truth or Intimidation. Choose which before testing the skill. The Dark Elf player must incorporate a barbed rhyme of verse into his roleplay.

FoRKs: Falsehood

Skill Type: Social

Tools: No.

## Dark Elven Spell Songs

### Limitations

When picking Spell Songs, if the player is presented with two similar songs—one Elven, one Dark Elven—the player must pick the Dark Elven song.

*For example, Threne of the Chameleon is similar to Supplication of Shadows. If a player has both songs on his list, he may not choose Threne. Or Twisted Tongue vs Voice of Ages—Twisted Tongue would be the preferred song.*

### Roots

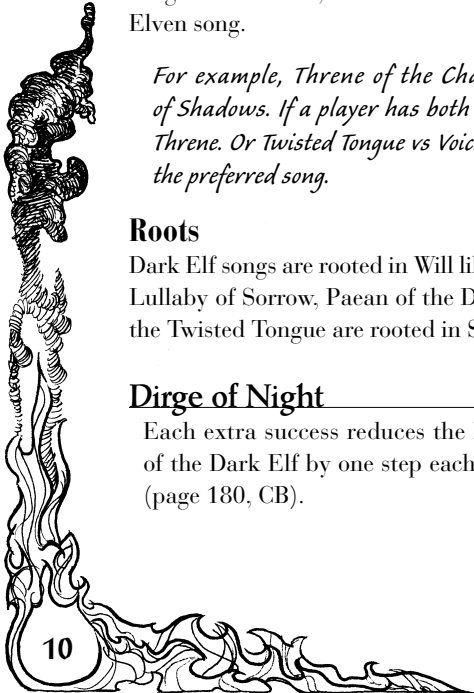
Dark Elf songs are rooted in Will like Elven Songs with a few exceptions. Lullaby of Sorrow, Paean of the Dark Fire Within, Sow of Discord and the Twisted Tongue are rooted in Spite.

### Dirge of Night

Ob 3

8 a

Each extra success reduces the light conditions within the Presence of the Dark Elf by one step each. Use the Mage Light Obstacle range (page 180, CB).





**Dirge of Terror** \_\_\_\_\_ Ob 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 a \_\_\_\_\_

When this Dirge is sung, any character without the Spite or Hatred attribute within the Presence of the caster must test his Steel. Extra song successes increase obstacle for Steel test. The hesitations options as described under Intense Sorrow.

**Lullaby to Sorrow** \_\_\_\_\_ Ob 10 – Grief \_\_\_\_\_ 3000 a \_\_\_\_\_

This mournful song speaks of leaving sorrow behind, putting it to sleep, and waking a new fire within—a flame of hateful spite.

Elves who are confronted with this song (if it is successfully sung), may *choose* to change their Grief to Spite. Their eyes have been opened to this new truth. Once changed, there is no turning back.

**Paeon of the Dark Fire Within** Ob 10 minus Spite \_\_\_\_\_ 3 a \_\_\_\_\_

When sung properly this terrible song shows the singer’s true form—a shifting and distorted visage that none can look upon without growing dizzy or faint. Extra successes over the obstacle add to a character’s obstacle to act directly against the Dark Elf—attacking him, intimidating him, convincing him, etc.

**Rhyme of the Unraveller** \_\_\_\_\_ Ob See Below \_\_\_\_\_ x2 a \_\_\_\_\_

This devilish song causes havoc round the singer. Knots untie, wax cracks, mortar loosens, thread unwinds and seams unravel. The obstacle of the spell is equal to 2+ the Integrity of the material being attacked. (See page 250 of the Burning Wheel for material Integrity.) Successes over obstacle then reduce the Integrity. If the Integrity is reduced to zero, then the material is reduced to its component parts—it falls apart. In general, the target material isn’t damaged or made unusable by this spell, it’s just “unravelled.”

Simple constructs like knots or belts can be unravelled using the base obstacle 2.

The casting time of the spell is equal to the obstacle multiplied by two in actions.

**Screed of Folly** \_\_\_\_\_ Ob 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 50 a \_\_\_\_\_

The Screed of Folly is a Dark Elf history of the Elven peoples. This song acts as a historical retelling and can be used like the History skill. It also causes Intense Sorrow when sung to those without the Spite or Hatred attributes.





**Sow of Discord**

Ob 5

12 a

When sung acts as *Spell Interrupt* to spells and songs being *cast*. It acts as a *Distraction* against any song/spell currently being *sustained*. The area of effect is the Dark Elf's Presence. If a character attempts to sing/cast while a Song of Discord is in effect, they must add the Dark Elf's extra successes from the Song of Discord to their obstacle.

**Supplication to Shadows**

Ob 4

4 a

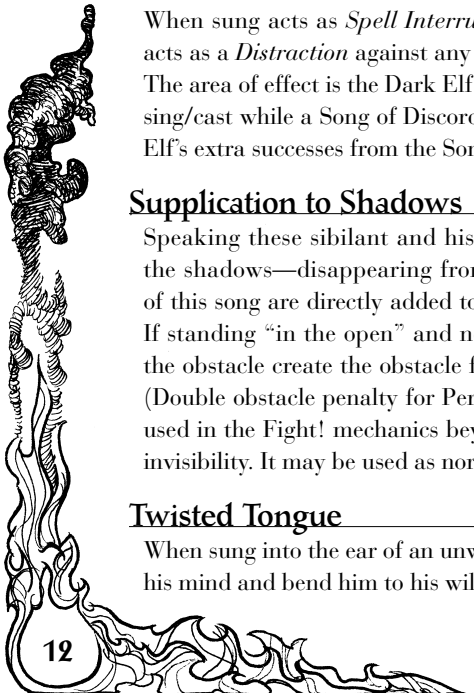
Speaking these sibilant and hissing words, the Dark Elf fades into the shadows—disappearing from sight. Successes over the obstacle of this song are directly added to Stealthy as helping/advantage dice. If standing “in the open” and not being Stealthy, the successes over the obstacle create the obstacle for Observation to spot the Dark Elf. (Double obstacle penalty for Perception.) This spell song may not be used in the Fight! mechanics beyond the initial position test—it's not invisibility. It may be used as normal Range and Cover.

**Twisted Tongue**

Ob See Below

6 a

When sung into the ear of an unwitting victim, the Dark Elf may twist his mind and bend him to his will.





The spell has a three different aspects: First, it may be used to add dice to the Dark Elf's Circles—he warps wills and harries minds to find out what he wants. The obstacle for this aspect is 4. Extra successes count as a reputation or an affiliation of the Dark Elf player's choosing.

Second, the Twisted Tongue may be used to enhance social skills. With a successful Ob 2 Twisted Tongue test at the beginning of a Duel of Wits, the Dark Elf player may use any and all of his social skills as Rhetoric. In other words, if you pass an Ob 2 test, Falsehood could count as Rhetoric and be used to make Points and Dismissals in the Duel.

Lastly, Twisted Tongue can be used to temporarily epiphany any one social skill. The obstacle is 10 minus Spite. The epiphany lasts for one test or series of tests (one Duel of Wits).

## Mechanics of Spite

Lip-curling, snarling, bitter, stomach-churning, vengeful spite. Action is done either for complete necessity or out of pure malice: hopes shattered, dreams murdered and love squelched. Why? For one simple fact: you're wrong and you're in the way.

### Starting Spite

In order to take the Griever LP and earn the Spite trait, the Elf must *first* have at least a B3 Grief attribute. Before taking the lead to the Path of Spite, factor all of the criteria for starting Grief as per the normal rules for Elves. If the character qualifies for a B3 Grief, he may walk the path.

Once the Elf character takes the Griever lifepath, Grief is automatically and irrevocably transmuted to Spite.

Add one to starting Spite for each of the following traits: Slayer, Exile, Feral, Murderous, Saturnine, Femme Fatale, Cold and Bitter.

If the character has taken Bitter Reminders, each 10 rps spent adds +1D to starting Spite.

Also, read and answer the following questions:

- Has the character been betrayed by his friends? If so, add +1 to the starting Spite exponent.
- Is the character lovesick or broken-hearted? If so, add 1.
- Has the character been abandoned by those he held dear? If so, Add 1.
- Has the character been abused or tortured? If so, Add 1.



- Does the character still respect or admire someone on the other side? If so, subtract 1 from the starting exponent.
- Does the character still love someone on the other side? If so, subtract 2 from the starting exponent.

Spite may not start above exponent 9. This emotional attribute obeys all of the limitations described in the Setting Your Game's Power Level on page 36 of the Character Burner.

5 points of Spite may be spent to shade shift from black to gray shade during character burning. This may only be done at the GM's discretion.

### **Limits of Spite**

At exponent 10 Spite, the Dark Elf commits suicide.

### **Sever All Ties**

When a player chooses the Griever lifepath and acquires the Spite lifepath trait, he may choose to sever his ties and obligations with his old life. The player may remove any required lifepath trait in this vein: Fealty to the Fêa, Servant of the Citadel, Sworn to Protect, and Sworn to the Lord Protector.

He may also choose to take any reputation gained via his lifepath traits as an infamous one. Or he can choose to keep these traits and reputations as they are. There are a lot of options for playing Dark Elves who still live among their brethren and are therefore still bound to all their obligations.

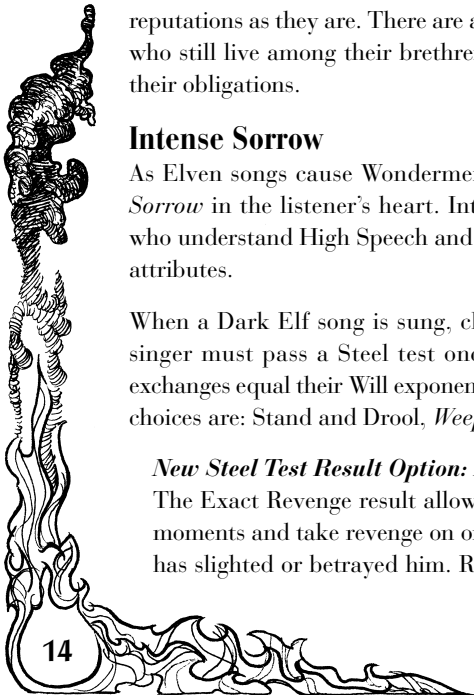
### **Intense Sorrow**

As Elven songs cause Wonderment, Dark Elven dirges cause *Intense Sorrow* in the listener's heart. Intense Sorrow only affects characters who understand High Speech and who do not have the Spite or Hatred attributes.

When a Dark Elf song is sung, characters within the presence of the singer must pass a Steel test once they've listened for a number of exchanges equal their Will exponent. If the Steel test failed, the hesitation choices are: Stand and Drool, *Weep Bitterly*, or *Exact Revenge*.

#### ***New Steel Test Result Option: Exact Revenge***

The Exact Revenge result allows the character to "lose it" for a few moments and take revenge on one of his companions who he believes has slighted or betrayed him. Rather than Hesitating at all, a player





who opts for this choice has his character leap upon his betrayer with a scream and attempt to kill him. The target of the attack must be a friend or an enemy whose death will hasten the character's own death. It cannot be the Dark Elf who induced the test.

***New Steel Test Result Option: Weep Bitterly***

Rather than Fall Prone and Beg for Mercy, a player may have his character fall to his knees and begin to weep and sob—remorseful for all his past actions, because they have all come to naught and will eternally come to nothing.

## In Spite of Grief

Dark Elves may use traditional Elven Spell Songs and Skill Songs that they learned in their previous life. However, *they may never use any song rooted from Grief*. These characters no longer possess that attribute and therefore can no longer use abilities based on it. And, of course, they may no longer sing Lamentations. Those that died received the payment they deserved!

## Deeds of Spite

Like Elves, Dark Elves may use Deeds points to channel their emotion into their actions. A Deeds point can be used to add the Spite exponent dice to a roll. This counts as a difficult test for advancement for Spite.

## Advancement: Spite Obstacles

Like Grief and Hatred, Spite is generally not rolled. However, conditions arise in play that act as tests and advance the attribute.

***Obstacle 1 Spite***

Being lied to. Betraying your Instincts. Being interrupted while at work.

***Obstacle 2 Spite***

Being robbed. Going against a Beliefs. Suffering incompetence.

***Obstacle 3 Spite***

Being *accused* of a crime you did not commit. Being maliciously attacked or wounded (Midi wound or less). Navigating a bureaucracy.

***Obstacle 4 Spite***

Having *your* home destroyed or ruined. Being personally betrayed. Suffering a Severe wound.



**Obstacle 5 Spite**

Fighting in a massive and bloody battle.  
Being captured by your enemies.  
Suffering a Traumatic wound.

**Obstacle 6 Spite**

Being *imprisoned* for a crime you did not commit; *Losing* a massive and bloody battle. Being mortally wounded.

**Obstacle 7 Spite**

Forced to flee your homeland by incursions of interlopers and idiots. Having to kill your friend whose mind has failed to see the truth.

**Obstacle 8 Spite**

Being tortured. Being betrayed by your family. Forced to ally with the enemy in order to get one *god damned* thing done.

**Obstacle 9 Spite**

Realizing that the Path of Spite breeds nothing but hatred and division, and that this divergent path will be the end of Elvendom—*but walking it anyway.*

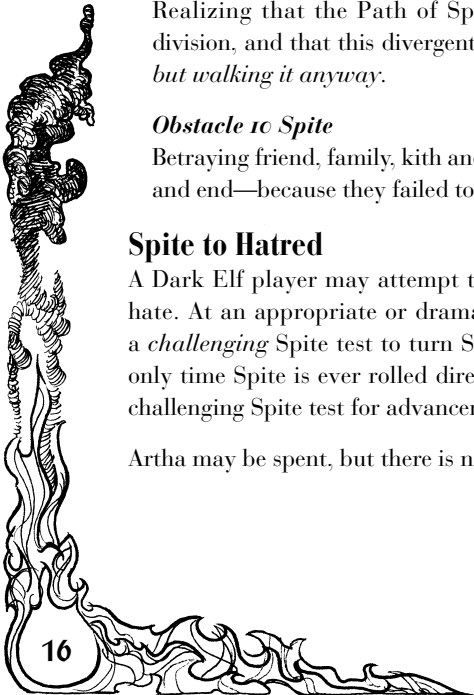
**Obstacle 10 Spite**

Betraying friend, family, kith and kin—precipitating their destruction and end—because they failed to see matters your way.

**Spite to Hatred**

A Dark Elf player may attempt to turn his boiling spite into blazing hate. At an appropriate or dramatic time in the story, he may make a *challenging* Spite test to turn Spite irrevocably to Hate. This is the only time Spite is ever rolled directly. And pass or fail, this counts as challenging Spite test for advancement!

Artha may be spent, but there is no help or FoRKing possible.







If successful, Spite exponent becomes the Hatred exponent. The Fair and Statuesque and/or the Dark and Imposing trait is instantly lost and replaced with Twisted and Loathsome. The player may also choose one additional Orc Common trait to replace one of his Elven Common traits.

Also, any Elven Songs possessed by the character are now forgotten, but Dark Elven Songs may be kept and are now rooted from Hatred or Will (rather than Spite or Will). The Dark Elf may learn Hatred-based skills. He uses the rules for advancing Hatred on page 213 of the Character Burner. If the character knows the Void Embrace or can find an Orc to teach him, he may turn his Hatred to Blasphemous Hatred.

### Spite to Grief

In play, Spite may be turned back to Grief. To do so, the Dark Elf player must learn the Lament of Mourning from another Elf character *whom he has hurt* in course of play. He then must pass a test for the Lament of Mourning at an obstacle equal to his Spite plus one. He may spend artha as per the standard rules, but he also must have at least one helping die given to him from an Elven character whom *he has hurt in the course of play*. If the Lament is successful, the Spite exponent is transformed to Grief. Mark a Challenging test for Grief. If the test is failed, mark a Challenging test for Spite.

## Dark Elf Resources

Dark Elves may purchase one or two heirlooms of their past (as per Bitter Reminders). Everything else has been thrown into the sea or a chasm in spite of its worth.

Resources	Rp Cost
Bitter Reminder.....	see below
Bitter Poison .....	6
Lock Picks .....	10
Grooved Knives .....	5
Barbed Javelins .....	3
Garrotte .....	3
Caltrops .....	3
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## Character Burner Expansion

**Bitter Reminder**— Dark Elf characters may purchase items from the Elven Resources list on page 112 of the Character Burner. Each 10 rps spent on these items adds +1D to starting Spite.

**Bitter Poison**—One dose of this blade poison causes the victim to lose 1D of Health per day for five days. If Health drops to zero, the victim dies. If not, the victim recovers his Health at 1D per week.

**Lock Picks**— These tools are required to use the Lock Pick skill.

**Grooved Knives**— These insidious weapons are designed to cause maximum harm and debilitation to their targets. The grooves in the blades serve a dual purpose, to hold poison and to exacerbate blood loss. On an Incidental hit, poisoned Grooved Knives deliver a half dose of poison on a DoF roll of 4+. On a Superb hit, Grooved Knives which are left in their victim increase the blood loss rate of the wound by one step. A Midi bleeds as a Severe, a Traumatic wound bleeds as a Mortal. Grooved Knives are designed to be both thrown and used as a hand weapon. Power 1, VA -. Add 1 in melee, when thrown: DoF: I 1-2, M 3-4, S 5-6.

**Barbed Javelins**— Barbed Javelins are designed to cause their victims grievous harm even after impact. If a Superb hit is scored, the javelin has embedded itself in the victim. All Medicinal skill rolls to stop bleeding or begin recovery are at +2 Ob due to the javelin's ugly barbs that must be extracted before the victim can heal.

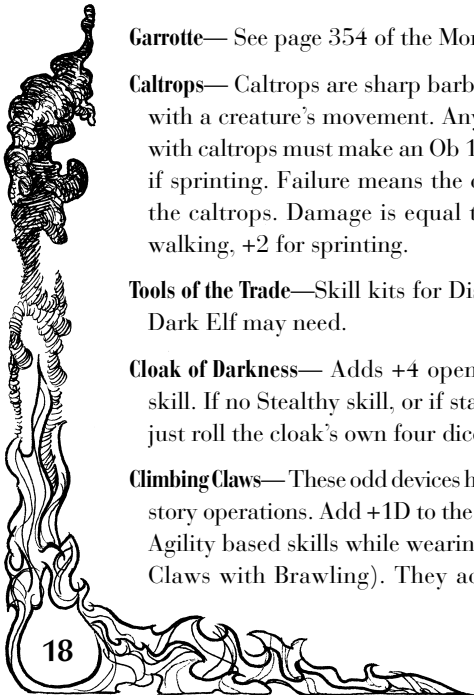
**Garrotte**— See page 354 of the Monster Burner.

**Caltrops**— Caltrops are sharp barbs scattered on the ground to interfere with a creature's movement. Any creature passing over an area cover with caltrops must make an Ob 1 Speed test— +2 Ob if jogging, +4 Ob if sprinting. Failure means the creature or character has stepped on the caltrops. Damage is equal to the character's own Power. -1 for walking, +2 for sprinting.

**Tools of the Trade**—Skill kits for Disguise, Poisons and any other kit the Dark Elf may need.

**Cloak of Darkness**— Adds +4 open-ended helping dice to the Stealthy skill. If no Stealthy skill, or if standing in the open wearing the cloak, just roll the cloak's own four dice to create the Observation obstacle.

**Climbing Claws**— These odd devices help the Dark Elf Thieves in their second story operations. Add +1D to the Climbing Skill, but +1 Ob to all other Agility based skills while wearing them (except when using Climbing Claws with Brawling). They act a Power 1 weapon, but are Slow.





**Remote Refuge**—Dark Elves often find remote refuges where they can live in isolation—deep in ancient woods, lost in wastelands, or even under the earth in vast caves. Use the Elven Land list for prices and translate the actual purchases into something suitably dark and forlorn.

## Dark Elves in Play

Dark Elves are both fun and challenging to play. On one hand, you've got an evil, scheming, bitter "I hate Elves" character. Cool. On the other, you have a potential fun-killer of epic proportions. Uncool.

Based on what I have seen of the Dark Elves in play they work exceedingly well as NPC villains and very well as an element in an Orc or Spider cohort. However, playing a Dark Elf in a group of otherwise innocent player characters can be very risky. As I said above, the super secret mind-twisting assassin can really kill the fun at the table. Therefore, I recommend outing the Dark Elf during character burning and making the adventure about the Dark Elf's role in the group. You can incorporate them into Elven society—having just gone over to Spite, how do they cut their ties? Or make them a disguised element in an adventuring group who is destined to betray his friends—but only so long as everyone is in on and agrees with the joke.

When playing with Spite, try to walk the line between the remorse and Grief of the Elves and the outright Hatred of the Orcs. It's not easy, but the best path that I have seen is a kind of seething, tortured anger. You see, Dark Elves aren't like the Orcs yet. They still care. They still want the world to be right. And it drives them mad to watch the fools ruin it—over and over and over again.

Oh, and it's not just Elves whom they despise, it's everyone. Including you.



