

ISSUE 405 | NOVEMBER 2011

DRAAGON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement



Editorial: Wild Times

By Christopher Perkins

Illustration by Kerem Beyit



During the planning of 4th Edition, we explored many alternatives to the “Great Wheel” cosmology of earlier editions, with the goal of making the planes more accessible to players and more likely to be used as adventure locations. We also had the notion of tying monster origins to the planes: Natural creatures come from the natural world, immortal creatures from the Astral Sea, elemental creatures from the Elemental Chaos, and so on. Then someone asked, “Where do fey come from?”

Well, when a mommy fey and a daddy fey love each very much . . .

Ultimately, we turned to Earth’s faerie myths for the answer. Much has been written in literature about faerie circles, seelie and unseelie courts, and invisible realms where boggles, barghests, and bogeymen take little boys and girls. Out of these myths came the idea of a world parallel to our own, a demesne populated and governed by fey of all types and demeanors, from the ethereal eladrin to the debased fomorians.

My significant contributions to the 4th Edition cosmology are few and far between. It was my idea to make Ioun, previously known for *ioun stones*, the god of knowledge. I will also take credit for coining the word “Feywild.” And that’s about it.

While listening to James Wyatt, Rich Baker, Matt Sernett, and others ponder the story possibilities of a fey “mirror” of the natural world, the one image that immediately sprang to mind was the Palace of Spires in Porpherio’s Garden, illustrated by Timothy

Truman on page 22 of UK1 *Beyond the Crystal Cave*, the classic AD&D® adventure module by Dave J. Browne, Tom Kirby, and Graeme Morris. Ye gods! That was an odd adventure!

“It will quickly become apparent to the DM that this is no ordinary adventure.” These words appear in the Dungeon Master’s notes, presaging an unusual series of encounters that emphasize roleplaying over combat. The adventure mixes old English mythos with a story inspired by William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and as the designers point out, a party of 1st-level characters can survive the adventure using wit and wisdom, while a well-armed party of higher-level characters would be hard-pressed to fight their way through the fey beasts and strange magical guardians of Porpherio’s enchanted realm.

You could say that *Beyond the Crystal Cave* was the first official D&D® adventure set in the Feywild. Granted, in 1983 no one knew the Feywild existed! Nevertheless, Porpherio’s Garden has many traits in common with the plane, and the garden’s mysterious keeper—the Green Man—has qualities comparable to 4th Edition archfey, including a proclivity for magic and a tendency to be secretive.

Although it’s two editions out of date, module UK1 stands the test of time—a particularly ironic statement when you discover the nature of Porpherio’s Garden and realize how slowly time passes there. You could easily run the adventure today using 3rd or 4th

Edition stat blocks and give players a real sense of what the Feywild is like.

Of the four major outer planes in the 4th Edition cosmology, the Feywild is by far the least explored, but that's about to change. A new D&D ENCOUNTERS™ season kicks off this month, and we're trading the political cauldron of Neverwinter for a return visit to Porpherio's Garden. I promise you, this season is very different from the ones that came before—there's combat, but there's also a lot of magic, mystery, puzzle solving, and roleplaying opportunities. To support the season, we're releasing *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild™*, which you can use to create characters for D&D ENCOUNTERS or give the characters in your home campaign a wild edge.

The magazines are also celebrating the Feywild this month by paying homage to some other inspirational products and adventures. One such product is FR2 *Moonshae* (1987) by Douglas Niles, with its stunning cover that practically screams "Feywild!" We're revisiting the Moonshae Isles with a fantastic Backdrop article in *Dungeon*® and new character themes in *Dragon*®. We also have 4th Edition updates of the archfey Baba Yaga and her infamous dancing hut, ushered into D&D's timeless lore by Roger E. Moore in *Dragon* #83 (1984).

If you're a DM, I hope this month's offerings inspire you to lure your players into the Feywild and explore all that the mysterious plane has to offer. If you're a player looking for a wild time, use our [store locator](#) to find a D&D ENCOUNTERS game near you. See what lies beyond the Crystal Cave. I promise, you won't be disappointed!

Christie



History Check: Rary the Traitor

By Sterling Hershey

Illustration by Ben Wootten

Introduction

This is the latest installment in a series that explores the rich history of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® setting. Each “History Check” article will provide new insight into the game’s iconic heroes, villains, organizations, and events, untangling the contradictory threads of D&D® history when possible.

This time around, “History Check” recalls some of the oldest and most famous characters in the game, all of whom play a part in the tale of Rary the Traitor and the Circle of Eight. Throughout the text, sidebars will describe what an adventurer would know about the topic based on a successful skill check.

On with the Show!

“Welcome, travelers, to our modest performance this evening! Alas, I bring distressing news: Our troupe of accomplished dancers has been slightly delayed. No, please, sit down. I am told that after certain unfortunate matters are attended to, they will arrive with all haste.

“In the meantime, I, Marov Zarovan, master storyteller, will entertain you with a tale of powerful wizards undone by base treachery—betrayed by no

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less than one of their own! In fact, our Elder informs me that some of you may find this tale quite helpful in the days to come.

“Still impatient for the dancers? Yes, I hear you muttering back there, mallet -face! Tell me, when your friends decide on marching order, do they put you first to frighten the monsters to death? No matter! I will tell you the tale, and perhaps by the end you will appreciate its significance. You never know where your adventures will lead, and maybe it will help you save us all someday. Now, get settled in your seats and let us begin.”

The Circle of Eight

“On this gloomy night, when the wind howls outside the door like a pack of hungry wolves and dark clouds hide the fair moon’s face, I will tell of the rise and tragic fall of the most powerful group of wizards and sages to hold sway over the lands of Oerth and the mighty City of Greyhawk: The Circle of Eight. What, no stir at their name? Surely at least a few of you have heard of them. Those of you who dabble in the arcane arts—yes, sir, we all admire the length of your staff, no need to wave it around—perhaps you know some of the spells that carry their names. A show of hands for Bigby? No? Hmm. Maybe that joke’s too much for you to grasp.

“As great and powerful as the Circle of Eight was, its roots were in another company of great heroes assembled long ago by the legendary Mordenkainen at his Obsidian Citadel. Although he often openly supported the side of good, Mordenkainen strove to maintain the balance between good and evil, law and chaos. Therefore the great mage secretly worked to undermine any being, group, or nation that he deemed was gaining too much power and influence. Would you call him wise? Or a meddler, an instigator? History will judge, not I; but it was certain that he was aided in his efforts by the hand-picked members of his Citadel of Eight.

THE ZAROVANS

The narrator of this “History Check” is a member of the Zarovan tribe of the Vistani, a mysterious, gypsylike group that can cross into the Shadowfell and other worlds. The Vistani were first introduced in the original *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® RAVENLOFT®* adventure, and were so memorable and full of character that they found their way into other major settings. This article introduces Marov Zarovan, a young, slightly arrogant, yet accomplished Vistani storyteller.

More information about the Vistani can be found in *Player’s Option: Heroes of Shadow™*, the boxed set *The Shadowfell: Gloomwrought and Beyond™*, and the Vistani articles in *Dragon 380*.

“The Citadel of Eight started with Mordenkainen and his apprentice Bigby. Together they recruited the powerful warrior Robilar, and the cleric Riggby along with his fanatical assistant Yrag. The wizard Tenser joined, despite his righteous morality that sometimes conflicted with Mordenkainen’s belief in the sacredness of balance. Tenser then convinced his friend Serten to join, despite the latter’s—how shall I put this delicately?—lack of intellectual acumen. Finally, a woodsman called Otis completed the group.

“The Citadel of Eight’s exploits became known throughout the Flanaess, and its members gained fame, knowledge, and power. Over time they became so absorbed in their personal adventures and explorations that they failed to notice the larger events brewing in Oerth. That is why, when the hordes of Elemental Evil came, seven of the Eight were nowhere to be found. Only brave, dim-witted Serten stood with the forces of good, and he ultimately fell in battle.

The bonds of friendship between the members of the Citadel of Eight were already strained because of differences in personality and approach. Serten’s death shattered them completely, in some cases beyond any chance of reconciliation.

“The members of the Citadel retired to their homes and personal pursuits, but this relative peace would end years later with the return of the evil demigod Iuz. Mordenkainen needed help to fight Iuz, but was determined to avoid the mistakes of the past. He believed that the Citadel of Eight’s weakness came from the divided interests of its members. Therefore, Mordenkainen would seek out like-minded masters of the arcane arts for his new band of allies. There would be no pious clerics or brawny warriors this time, but individuals of great arcane skill and intellect, with a thirst for knowledge. Most important, they would all possess the strength of will to use their abilities and status to keep the world in balance.

“Over the next few months, Mordenkainen worked in secret to form his new Circle of Eight. Members would come and go, and not all of their names are known to this day—not even to me. Bigby returned, ever the faithful apprentice. There was Drawmij, who loved the sea, and Nystul, a master of disguise, tactics, and puns. Also found worthy, if astoundingly overdressed, was the great Otto, formerly a priest of

HISTORY CHECK

A character knows of the existence of the Circle of Eight and its best-known members with a DC 10 History or Arcana check. A DC 20 check reveals the history of the Citadel of Eight and its initial members. A DC 25 check reveals all of the above, and possibly other details about individual members and their underlings.

Boccob and now wholly dedicated to the arcane arts. Rary brought his many years of knowledge, research, and sage advice to the group. Bucknard, a familiar figure in royal courts from Keoland to Nyron, completed the Circle.

“Nine? Why, yes, you are correct. Clearly all that wine you’ve guzzled hasn’t dulled your wits. Among this great shuffling of names, you have accurately noted that the Circle of Eight has nine members. Perhaps wizards, like bakers and the Lord Mayor’s tax collectors, have their own way of counting; but most simply regard the Circle as eight mages led by Mordenkainen.

“The Circle soon proved even more powerful than the Citadel that preceded it, fighting many successful campaigns against growing threats in eastern Oerik. Masters of craft as well as force, the members of the Circle also established a wide network of agents and allies throughout Oerth, and often dispatched their underlings or adventurers to handle problems in their stead.

“Impressed with the Circle’s success, Tenser overcame his bitterness at the death of his friend Serten and sought membership, which Mordenkainen granted when one member left for a life in the planes beyond Oerth. The Circle gained even greater political influence and status with the addition of Otiluke, the President of the Society of Magi, who held a seat on Greyhawk’s Directing Oligarchy. Jallarzi Sallavarian was added as a trial member to replace Bucknard, who had disappeared two years earlier. Jallarzi was the only female member of this band of stiff-necked old wizards, and quite a trial she had, indeed!”

Broken Circle

“The Circle rarely ventured forth in force, so the signs and warnings must have been dire indeed on the day when all except Mordenkainen traveled to the hills south of Verbobonc. There they found the burial mound where Halmandar the Cruel lay. When

Halmandar rose from his grave to confront them, they realized too late that they were overmatched, for Halmandar bore the Hand and the Eye of the evil demigod Vecna. He slew the Eight in the blink of an eye, for Vecna’s Hand and Eye gave him the power to manipulate time itself.

“This tragedy has in it the roots of another story, one of the violence and treachery of the evil Maimed God Vecna and his warrior lieutenant, Kas the Destroyer. It is perhaps better told by the most excellent Menodora Zarovan; I will just say that Vecna’s plans were foiled, and Greyhawk was saved by loyal friends and agents of the Circle, working against almost impossible odds.

“The deaths of the Eight left a power vacuum in Oerth that Mordenkainen did his best to conceal and control. He could have sought new members to replace those lost, but chose instead to magically clone the dead mages. While he labored for months to perform the difficult spells required, he was distracted from terrible events in the northern reaches. By the time the Circle was renewed, the lands of Oerth were embroiled in the Greyhawk Wars.

“Most of the Circle’s members joined the fight, but soon the fractures that shattered the Citadel of Eight

were beginning to appear in the Circle. Rary showed the strain most of all: He argued endlessly with Otiluke and other members, and the effort of keeping the balance began to seem fruitless to him. Finally Rary retreated to his tower in Lopolla and refused to take part in the conflict. He was infrequently seen by the others, appearing only for an occasional meeting of high importance. During those times, a few of the mages noticed that Rary had become brooding and distracted. It was as though his attention were fixed on some other matter.

“Finally, a political solution was found that halted the fighting in the Flanaess. A ceremony called the Great Signing was to take place in Greyhawk, where the most important political figures and leaders would sign a treaty bringing the conflict to a formal end. The event was a prime opportunity for saboteurs and assassins; knowing this, the Circle of Eight and its agents diligently investigated each of the attendees to ensure that there would be no traitors in their midst. They never once thought to look for treachery within the Circle itself.”

The Traitor Strikes

“No one knows when Bigby, Tenser, and Otiluke first realized something was wrong during their surprise last-minute inspection of the Great Hall where the signings were to occur. Nevertheless, we can imagine their shock when they found the venerable Rary there, making preparations of his own. An experienced mage would have quickly recognized the lethal spells Rary was working into the stone, the wood, and the air itself: spells designed to kill everyone at the ceremony.

“Rary tried to escape but found himself blocked at every turn by the other three mages. Cornered like a rat, his plans undone by the meddling of the Eight, Rary unleashed his pent-up rage on his former allies.

“Imagine the incredible scene that must have followed as four of the mightiest mages Greyhawk has

HISTORY CHECK

A character knows generally of the destruction of the Circle of Eight with a successful DC 20 History check or Arcana check. The character knows the details of their deaths at Halmandar’s hands with a successful DC 30 check. A successful DC 15 History check reveals the major details of the Greyhawk Wars, and a successful DC 30 check discloses Rary’s activities during this time.

ever known joined in magical combat. Rary struck first by setting off the magical traps he had prepared for the ceremony. The air crackled with arcane energy, explosions, jets of fire, and bursts of magical flame. When they subsided, the mighty Tenser lay dead, the first victim of Rary the Traitor.

“Otiluke struck back viciously, forcing Rary to retreat. Bigby moved to join the fight, but the cunning Rary set off another yet round of traps, wounding him badly. The maneuver caught Otiluke by surprise, distracting him so that Rary’s attacks pierced his formidable magical defenses and struck him down. Rary then triggered his remaining traps and vanished, filling the room with deadly magic, flame, and flying debris.

“Bigby barely survived the battle. Too little remained of Otiluke and Tenser to perform a resurrection, but Bigby was confident he would see his friends again. Remembering their defeat at Halmandar’s burial mound, they had created clones of themselves to ensure their survival if they ever met with disaster again. Alas, Rary had also accounted for this.”

Hidden Plans

“While Rary battled the Circle in the Great Hall, Tenser’s and Otiluke’s holdings came under attack from troops that quickly overran their defenses and destroyed the clones of the two mages, ensuring that their deaths would be permanent. The greatest shock, though, came when word arrived that the troops belonged to Robilar. For reasons that would remain a mystery for years, the great warrior had sided with Rary against the Circle. Greyhawk’s army quickly set forth to attack and occupy Robilar’s citadel, forcing Robilar to flee with a remnant of his forces. Rary’s own tower in Lopolla, in his homeland of Ket, vanished entirely.

“What drove Rary to betray the Circle of Eight? You might say that the mage did the wrong thing for all the right reasons. A man of high ideals, Rary saw

the Circle’s noble mission being repeatedly undermined by internal bickering and petty differences. A gentle scholar, he often found his subtle methods blocked and even openly ridiculed by the more direct Otiluke and Mordenkainen. A mage charged with preserving the balance, he watched in frustration as the balance gave way time and time again to turmoil and destruction. He looked elsewhere for answers, and found them in the histories of the demigod Iuz, the Scarlet Brotherhood, and the Overkings of Aerdi. Here, he thought, were strong leaders who allowed nothing to stand between them and their goals. It was true that they had all failed in some way; but Rary believed he could learn from their mistakes and bring about real change on his own without the infighting and meddling of the Circle of Eight.

“While the others were busy fighting the Greyhawk Wars, Rary had been seeking out forbidden spells and studying the history of conquerors and the lands beyond Ket. He renounced neutrality and, having learned from his histories that the most effective rulers maintained order through spell and sword, recruited Robilar as his strong right arm. Robilar had in fact been trapped on another plane some time before and replaced by an evil double named Bilarro. Posing as Robilar, Bilarro readily agreed to Rary’s plan. By killing everyone at the Great Signing and framing the Scarlet Brotherhood for the attack, Rary would take advantage of the chaos to seize power. He would take control of the Circle, bringing in weak-willed mages subservient to him as replacements for its “tragic” losses. From there it would be easy enough to install himself as ruler of Greyhawk and influence the course of the war through the armies at his command, as well as a corps of diplomats that would report personally to him.

“Thankfully, Rary and the false Robilar did not succeed; but neither did they give up. With their original plan foiled by the events in the Great Hall, they retreated to the Bright Desert, far from the City of Greyhawk. Rary’s tower appeared in the Brass Hills, and

he established a new kingdom called the Bright Lands. Robilar and his troops proved instrumental in consolidating power within the region, bringing nomadic clans, norkers, and others under Rary’s control.

“Rary’s ambitions went far beyond being the ruler of a scattering of desert nomads. Having studied the ancient history of the Bright Desert, the traitor mounted one expedition after another to recover hidden fortunes and magical artifacts, enriching his new empire’s treasury and increasing his influence. While Robilar and his generals secured his hold over the Bright Lands, Rary researched new spells and experimented with creating great automatons that would work tirelessly to crush any who opposed his rule. For the traitor had many enemies indeed, including the Circle of Eight, which recovered from

HISTORY CHECK

A character knows of Rary’s treachery and Robilar’s assistance with a successful DC 15 History check or Arcana check. The details of the day of betrayal require a successful DC 25 History check or Arcana check. A successful DC 30 History check or Arcana check reveals Rary’s long-term plans, as well as “Robilar’s” true identity.

its losses and grew even more powerful than before. Though Otiluke was beyond saving, Tenser eventually returned, thanks to a hidden clone on a moon of Oerth. However, he refused to rejoin the Circle. Replacing the lost members were Alhamazad the Wise, Theodain Eriason, and Warnes Starcoat. They were all formidable champions.

“Now, my friends, you are among the few who know the true story of Rary the Traitor and how he betrayed the Circle of Eight. Today the spells of

Tenser or Mordenkainen are easy to find, but Rary's remain obscure, perhaps because the mage's contributions to magical learning fell out of favor when he turned to evil. Perhaps you would like to learn more of such spells? Perhaps the Vistani can help you with this? Yes, yes, perhaps.

"But now I see that our dancers have arrived at last, with what appears to be a would-be thief shackled to their wagon. Please enjoy their performance while I escort that foolish rogue to our Elder, who will be most interested in whatever secrets he has to share. Yes, the only thing the Vistani love more than a good story is a good secret."

Rary's Spells

Rary specialized in spells that affected the mental abilities of the caster or target, the best known of which are Rary's *mnemonic enhancer* and Rary's *telepathic bond*. The first can be found in "Character Themes: Heroes of Nature and Lore" in *Dragon* 399 as *mnemonic enhancer*, an order adept utility 10 power. The second can be found in *Arcane Power* as the Telepathic Bond ritual.

Plot Hooks

Below are suggested hooks for DMs who want to use Rary the Traitor or the Circle of Eight in their campaigns. DMs can also find inspiration in the *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™ supplement.

- ◆ Because of the group's influence, access to resources, and vast networks of agents, any member of the Circle can be used as a catalyst to send the characters on adventures of any type. Although the heroes will usually be sent on tasks that contribute to the greater good, The Circle's dedication to keeping the balance means the characters might find themselves working against the forces of good or aiding evil nonplayer characters. The Circle is smart enough to avoid obvious conflicts in morality and alignment, but might misread the characters when it comes to gray areas.
- ◆ Rary and Robilar/Bilarro might serve as the primary villains in a heroic tier desert or Bright Lands campaign.
- ◆ Mordenkainen or Bigby could send the characters to investigate Rary's activities, or to prevent magical artifacts from falling into Rary's hands. The artifacts might still reside in their original locations (such as tombs or treasure hoards), or might already be en route to Rary or Robilar/Bilarro.
- ◆ While traveling in the desert, the characters might be attacked by norkers under Robilar/Bilarro's command. For examples of norkers at the heroic tier, see the *H2 Thunderspire Labyrinth*™ adventure. For norkers at the paragon tier, see *Monster Manual* 3.

About the Author

Sterling Hershey is an architect and freelance game designer. He was one of the designers of *Monster Vault*™: *Threats to the Nentir Vale*™ and contributes to *D&D*® *Insider*. Sterling has worked extensively in a galaxy far, far away, designing many *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* and *Star Wars Miniatures* game books and products.

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The Winterguard of Cendriane

By *Tim Eagon*

Illustration by Furman

Criminals whisper of an inescapable prison of blue ice built atop a snow-covered mountain far to the north of the Nentir Vale. They say that its cruel fey inhabitants magically encase prisoners inside its icy walls, freezing them alive forever.

Despite the inevitable exaggeration that comes with spreading rumors, the stories are true. An order of ensnaring swordmages called the Winterguard of Cendriane administers the prison.

The stern eladrin swordmage Ilyara Lathiel commands the Winterguard. Although she appears middle-aged, Commandant Lathiel has lived for several millennia, and many within the Winterguard believe she is immortal because she is the order's only founder who has survived the many years since the prison was built. Centuries ago, Commandant Lathiel negotiated an accord with the burgeoning Empire of Nerath. In return for a considerable sum of gold and magic, the order would incarcerate the empire's most dangerous criminals—those so powerful that execution would be an insufficient means of stopping them. The emperors were pleased with the Winterguard's services, and no one heard from the notorious criminals sent north ever again.

The historic agreement between Nerath and the Winterguard permitted the swordmages to work as bounty hunters in the southern lands. Even today, most of the order's members operate in this role, generating the bulk of the order's revenue by ranging far from the prison. Merchants, nobles, and temples alike hire the swordmages to apprehend fugitives and other dangerous outlaws, and members occasionally receive assignments directly from Commandant Lathiel or others in the Winterguard's senior leadership. The prison still accepts the occasional inmate, long after the fall of Nerath, but few rulers can afford the price the Winterguard demands for imprisonment.

Criminals everywhere dread Winterguard bounty hunters. The sight of the swordmages' distinctive white-trimmed blue cloaks sends panicked lawbreakers scurrying into the shadows, and thieves' guilds warn their newer members to avoid attracting attention, lest they face arrest by a Winterguard marshal.

The Winterguard has an unmatched reputation for professionalism among bounty hunters, and its determination to complete its contracts is second to none. Allowing a fugitive to escape is a great

dishonor; any Winterguard operative who lets a fugitive escape must recapture the criminal or die trying.

The Winterguard does make every effort to pursue only those targets that are truly guilty or dangerous. Tricking or misleading the order into accepting a contract on an innocent creature, or under false pretenses, invites swift and violent retribution.

Although it prefers to capture fugitives alive, the Winterguard uses any means necessary to fulfill a contract. Every member of the order is an ensnaring swordmage, equally proficient with arcane magic and swordplay. Despite its name, the Winterguard does not specialize in cold magic. The order operates under the belief that it must have the right tools for every situation.

THE HISTORY OF THE WINTERGUARD

The Winterguard's history stretches back to ancient times. During the waning days of the Kinstrife Wars, the terrible conflict between eladrin and drow, the leaders of the fabled eladrin realm of Cendriane decided to sequester their most dangerous prisoners where the criminals could do no further harm. They constructed a prison in a remote corner of the natural world, atop a mountain known to the local human tribespeople as Winter's Rise, and magically sealed their prisoners away within the prison's frozen walls. They also assigned a company of their finest ensnaring swordmages, under the leadership of Ilyara Lathiel, to guard the distant prison.

The mighty archmages of Cendriane granted Commandant Lathiel immortality as part of her commission. They required an everlasting guardian for the prison's most powerful denizen, a treacherous archfey whose name is now lost to time. Though Lathiel would live forever, she could never again leave the prison, for the magic that gave her immortality

also trapped her in the prison just as effectively as her charges.

After an arcane cataclysm destroyed Cendriane, the grieving members of the Winterguard remained true to their original mandate. They refused to abandon their posts until they received orders to do so from the legitimate rulers of Cendriane. Because their prisoners were far too dangerous to ever set free, the order renewed its vow that none would ever escape. Commandant Lathiel quickly realized that predators, the hostile environment, and the passage of time would eventually take their toll, so she decided to recruit promising candidates from nearby tribes to replenish the Winterguard's numbers. Today, descendants of the original eladrin comprise the majority of the Winterguard's membership and hold its most important leadership positions, but a sizable number of other races—primarily humans, dwarves, and goliaths—have swelled its ranks.

The Winterguard remained largely isolated until the rise of Nerath. Although Commandant Lathiel's ultimate objectives in making the compact remain unclear, her uncharacteristically mercenary alliance with the expanding human empire proved mutually beneficial. She successfully negotiated with the empire to allow the Winterguard to operate legally as bounty hunters within its borders, thus enabling the order to recruit new members from farther afield. One side effect of the agreement has been the gradual dissemination of spells that Lathiel developed over the centuries.

After Nerath disintegrated, the Winterguard endeavored to maintain alliances with the empire's myriad successor states, but few could afford to compensate the order for incarcerating their prisoners. Many of the younger nations lack the means to apprehend fugitives, especially across newly established borders, so they still permit members of the Winterguard to operate in their territories.

Nowadays, some settlements are home to at least one of the order's arcane warriors.

THE WINTERGUARD AND CENDRIANE

Despite having lived in the mortal world for thousands of years, the Winterguard is staunchly loyal to its fallen home and vigorously extols its virtues; if asked to specify their homeland, members emphatically reply, "Cendriane!" Most eladrin members trace their lineage back to the families of Cendriane, and members from other races earn honorary citizenship after finishing their apprenticeships. Unsurprisingly, Commandant Lathiel is responsible for this ardent devotion. She is one of few living beings to have experienced Cendriane in its full glory and has instilled a sense of reverence in generations of apprentices.

In many ways, the Winterguard is a testament to Commandant Lathiel's enduring grief. She never anticipated the utter destruction of her home, or that her appointed task would endure after the decline of her homeland. Forced to witness her friends and comrades die of old age, and unable to leave the confines of the prison, Lathiel has comforted herself by paying homage to Cendriane's beauty in the natural world.

The prison's delicate icy spires resemble Cendriane's own, and within its walls, the inhabitants speak an archaic dialect of Elven, which befuddles those who are fluent in the modern language. The curriculum of Commandant Lathiel's arcane academy draws heavily on ancient eladrin texts, and her training regimen has remained unchanged for over a millennium. Nearly every facet of life in the Winterguard's prison reflects the influence of Cendriane's extinct culture. As a result, many view the Winterguard as conservative and hidebound.

Few among the Winterguard honestly believe Cendriane will rise again, though that fact hasn't

stopped some members from attempting to restore the ancient city-state on their own. Many in the order want to believe that Cendriane could be reborn, and they are strangely optimistic when discussing the possibility. Increasingly, members speculate that Commandant Lathiel's ultimate goal is to amass a fortune for just that purpose, though she has remained silent on the matter.

WINTERGUARD MARSHALS

Only a small contingent of the Winterguard's most powerful members guard the prison; the rest serve as marshals abroad. After completing their apprenticeships, the new swordmages are assigned a territory. The size of the territories is determined by local geography, the region's crime rate, and the availability of suitable bounties. Sometimes Lathiel assigns several marshals to a single territory, usually densely populated urban areas. In these cases, the senior marshal commands the junior members.

Within their territories, the marshals are free to operate as they please as long as they uphold the order's reputation and pay heed to local laws and customs. The Winterguard quickly punishes those who fail to abide by either of these directives; the first offense results in reassignment to a less desirable posting, and a second is punished with permanent expulsion from the order. In addition to bounty hunting, a Winterguard marshal might manage a jail or work as a private investigator or bodyguard. Some of the marshals spend their time adventuring, exploring ruins linked to Cendriane.

On top of requiring its marshals to send a monthly remittance back to the prison, the Winterguard requires its members to render aid to each other on request, especially when a fugitive crosses from one marshal's territory into that of another. When this happens, the marshals split any bounties among

themselves based on their overall contribution to the arrest. Cheating a fellow member is grounds for expulsion from the order.

In return for faithful service, a marshal can expect free training, access to an extensive network of informants, and the right to requisition money or items from the order's vaults, although such requests are subject to approval. Furthermore, Commandant Lathiel frequently rewards successful marshals by assigning them lucrative contracts and taking care of any additional expenses.

Any member of the Winterguard can also petition Commandant Lathiel to incarcerate a captive within the prison's glacial walls. Because of the severity of this punishment, Commandant Lathiel convenes a hearing at which the petitioner must justify the request to Lathiel and a tribunal of her trusted lieutenants. The burden of proof is quite high, and the majority of such petitions are rejected.

BACKGROUND: WINTERGUARD MARSHAL

It is your responsibility as a member of the Winterguard to track down and apprehend outlaws, using both your arcane magic and your well-honed blade. What led you to join the Winterguard? Are you a descendant of one of the original eladrin members or a recruit from another race? What are your feelings toward the fallen kingdom of Cendriane? Are you hunting down anyone in particular? If so, who are they, and what did they do to merit your attention?

Associated Language: Elven

Associated Skills: Perception, Streetwise

Personal Quests: Apprehend a wanted fugitive; escort a hostile captive through the wilderness to the Winterguard's prison; thwart a conspiracy to free a powerful prisoner from the prison.

NEW SWORDMAGE POWERS

Over the centuries, Commandant Lathiel has created a number of innovative spells, which she has taught to hundreds of apprentices. Most of her creations manipulate the magical warding generated by a swordmage's aegis. Though the spells' use is not widespread, they have entered the repertoire of swordmages of all types.

Dimensional Cleave

One of the first lessons taught by Commandant Lathiel is that fleeing criminals attack anyone who gets in their way. You need to respond swiftly when that happens.

Dimensional Cleave Swordmage Attack 1

You teleport your enemy into the path of your waiting blade.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon
Free Action **Melee 1**

Trigger: You teleport an enemy to a square adjacent to you on your turn.

Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier damage.

Aegis of Ensnarement: Add your Constitution modifier to the damage. In addition, you can use this power as part of the immediate reaction of your *aegis of ensnarement*.

Binding Aegis

Outlaws rarely travel alone, and sometimes you need to deal with their allies first. By manipulating the magic of your aegis, you keep your quarry rooted firmly in place; if it manages to escape, you spring across the battlefield to keep it from getting away.

Binding Aegis Swordmage Attack 1

Your enemy is held fast by invisible magic bonds. If it manages to escape, your retribution is swift.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleportation
Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature marked by your Swordmage Aegis power

Effect: The target is immobilized (save ends).

Aftereffect: You can use a free action to teleport up to 10 squares to a square adjacent to the target and use a melee at-will attack power against it.

Aegis of Ensnarement If you hit with this attack, the target falls prone.

Eldritch Quagmire

Your presence causes your enemies' feet to sink into the muck while you and your allies walk unimpeded across firm ground. With a wave of your blade, the ground instantly hardens, entrapping the feet of one of your enemies.

Eldritch Quagmire Swordmage Utility 6

Your spell turns the ground beneath your enemies' feet into gooey mud, which grasps and slows their movement.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Aura
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You activate an aura 2 that lasts until the end of the encounter or until you deactivate it as a free action. The ground in the aura is difficult terrain for your enemies.

Aegis of Ensnarement: When you deactivate the aura, one enemy within 2 squares of you is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Fettering Aegis

It's difficult to elude a swordmage; this spell makes it more so. After fleeing, you yank your enemy back toward you like an animal on a leash.

Fettering Aegis Swordmage Attack 7

The magic of your aegis creates an invisible tether between you and your enemy, preventing it from escaping.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Force, Implement
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged 10**

Trigger: An enemy that you can see and that is marked by your Swordmage Aegis power willingly moves away from you.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier force damage, and you pull the target to a square adjacent to you.

Aegis of Ensnarement: The target is then immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Isolating Aegis

Most fugitives escape because someone assists them. By manipulating the magic of your aegis, you cut your target off from any outside assistance.

Isolating Aegis Swordmage Attack 9

Your aegis's magic robs your foe of allies.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Force, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Target: One creature marked by your Swordmage Aegis power

Attack: Intelligence vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + Intelligence modifier force damage, and the target is not considered an ally to its allies and vice versa for the purpose of powers and auras. This effect lasts until the end of the encounter or until the target is no longer marked by your Swordmage Aegis power.

Aegis of Ensnarement: If the target starts its turn adjacent to a creature other than you and is within 10 squares of you, you can use the immediate reaction of your *aegis of ensnarement* on the target.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is not considered an ally to its allies and vice versa for the purpose of powers and auras. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn.

Master Dimensional Cleave

As you increase in skill, your ability to cut down criminals before they can further harm anyone becomes more powerful.

Master Dimensional Cleave Swordmage Attack 13

When you teleport an enemy, your blade is waiting to strike a withering blow before the enemy realizes where it is.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon
Free Action **Melee 1**

Trigger: You teleport an enemy to a square adjacent to you on your turn.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Intelligence vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage.

Aegis of Ensnarement: Add your Constitution modifier to the damage. In addition, you can use this power as part of the immediate reaction of your *aegis of ensnarement*.

Grandmaster Dimensional Cleave

Your mastery of swordplay and arcane magic rivals the skills of Commandant Lathiel herself; when you strike your enemy, you do so with impeccable timing and deadly results.

Grandmaster Dimensional Cleave Swordmage Attack 23

You swing your sword through the air, striking with pinpoint accuracy before your enemy has fully materialized.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon
Free Action **Melee 1**

Trigger: You teleport an enemy to a square adjacent to you on your turn.

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Intelligence vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Intelligence modifier damage.

Aegis of Ensnarement: The attack can score a critical hit on a roll of 18-20, and add your Constitution modifier to the damage. In addition, you can use this power as part of the immediate reaction of your *aegis of ensnarement*.

Grandmaster Training

Not all of Commandant Lathiel's teachings have spread beyond the walls of the Winterguard's icy citadel; she reserves some for herself and her most deserving apprentices. One of her signature moves is her subduing technique. By focusing the arcane energy of her *aegis of ensnarement*, she can knock a foe unconscious with a well-timed strike. Because of the technique's obvious value when trying to capture criminals alive, members of the Winterguard jockey for Commandant Lathiel's favor in hopes that she will teach it to them.

Commandant Lathiel's Subduing Technique Level 5+ Uncommon

This technique enhances a Winterguard marshal's ability to bring fugitives back alive.

Lvl 5 1,000 gp Lvl 25 625,000 gp

Lvl 15 25,000 gp

Alternative Reward: Grandmaster training

Attack Power ♦ **Encounter** (Free Action)

Trigger: You reduce an enemy marked by your *aegis of ensnarement* to 10 hit points or fewer with an attack.

Level 15: You reduce the target to 20 hit points or fewer.

Level 25: You reduce the target to 30 hit points or fewer.

Effect: The target drops to 0 hit points and falls unconscious.

About the Author

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Heroic Tier Rituals

By Robert J. Schwalb

Illustration by Kieran Yanner

A ritual is a complex ceremony, incantation, or rite whose performance produces a magical effect. This article details new ritual feats and rituals, some of which include a new way to use ritual scrolls.

Ritual Feats

You study ancient magic that originates from sources that transcend classifications such as arcane or divine. Learning these rituals is painstaking and time-consuming, yet the rewards are beyond your imagination.

Binding Mastery

Binding rituals compel other creatures, and your mastery of them gives you insight into coercing your foes.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Magic Circle and one other binding ritual

Benefit: When interacting with creatures that have an origin other than natural, you can use Arcana or Religion in place of Diplomacy and Intimidate. You also gain a +2 bonus to Arcana checks or Religion checks made for this purpose. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of a binding ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

Creation Mastery

You know how to shape eldritch energy rapidly into objects and patterns. Your skill gives you deep insight into creation.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Enchant Magic Item and one other creation ritual

Benefit: Three times per day, you can perform a ritual in half the normal time if that ritual normally requires 1 minute or more to perform. You can perform the Enchant Magic Item ritual as if your level were two higher. If you have the Alchemist feat, you can make alchemical items as if your level were two higher.

Deception Mastery

Ritual magic provides you with new ways to conceal things and mislead others, as well as knowledge of mundane trickery.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Change Self and one other deception ritual

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Bluff checks. When you would normally make a skill check or use a skill check modifier as part of a deception ritual, you can use Bluff instead of the indicated skill. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of a deception ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

Divination Mastery

Ritual magic lets you peer through time to see events as they were, or as they might be. You begin to gain an intuitive sense of coming events.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Read Omens and one other divination ritual

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to initiative checks. You can also master and perform divination rituals as if your level were four higher. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of a divination ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

Exploration Mastery

Exploration rituals are useful tools for navigating the world, surviving perilous environments, and overcoming hazards along the way. Your skill with them has made you mystically tougher.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Endure Elements and one other exploration ritual

Benefit: When you have to make an Endurance check, you can substitute an Arcana check, Nature check, or Religion check. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of an exploration ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

Restoration Mastery

Focusing on restoration magic helps you identify hidden pains and afflictions. Under your ministrations, your patients quickly recover.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Comrade's Succor and one other restoration ritual

Benefit: When you succeed on a Heal check to grant second wind, the subject gains the defense bonus that second wind normally grants. If you succeed on a Heal check to grant a saving throw, the target gains a +2 power bonus to that saving throw. You can also master and perform restoration rituals as if your level were two higher.

Scrying Mastery

Your scrying rituals have unusual reach. Your enemies cannot hide from you, and the world's secrets are laid bare beneath your gaze.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of Wizard's Sight and one other scrying ritual

Benefit: Whenever you make an Arcana check, Insight check, or Perception check as part of a scrying ritual, you can roll twice and use the higher result. The DC to sense a scrying sensor you created increases by 5. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of a scrying ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

Travel Mastery

Your affinity for magically crossing distances grants you the ability to go from one place to another with ease, and hold magical doorways open.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of two travel rituals

Benefit: Double the duration of any travel ritual you perform. A group that includes you treats its speed as 1 higher for determining its exploration speed. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of a travel ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

Warding Mastery

By mastering warding rituals, you ensure that your allies and possessions remain safe.

Prerequisite: Ritual Caster feat, mastery of two warding rituals

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Perception checks when actively searching for a trap or hazard, as well as Arcana checks or Thievery checks made to disable a trap or hazard. When you use a skill as part of a warding ritual either as a skill check or a skill check modifier, increase the result by 2. Once per day, you can ignore the component cost of a warding ritual of your level or lower that you have mastered.

New Rituals

Alarm

Level: 1

Category: Warding

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 8 hours or until discharged

Component Cost: 5 gp, plus a set of focuses

Market Price: 50 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You ward an area up to 10 squares by 10 squares, and designate a spoken password that allows a creature to enter the warded area without triggering an alarm. This alarm can send a mental signal to you or make an audible ringing sound.

If a Tiny or larger creature enters the warded area without speaking the password, the alarm you set triggers, and the ritual is discharged. However, an insubstantial creature or any creature that succeeds on a Stealth check (DC 10 + your Arcana check modifier) does not trigger the alarm.

The result of triggering the alarm depends on the type of alarm. When an audible alarm triggers, all creatures in the warded area that are capable of hearing can hear the ringing. If they are sleeping, the noise awakens them. When a mental alarm triggers, a mental ping alerts you of the intrusion and awakens you from sleep. In either case, the alarm informs you where the warded area was breached.

Focus: While holding a tiny bell (5 gp), you use a fine silver wire (5 gp) to scribe runes on the warded area's perimeter.

RITUALS BY LEVEL

Lvl	Ritual	Category	Key Skill
1	Alarm	Warding	Arcana
1	Dancing Lights	Creation	Arcana
1	Hold Portal	Warding	Arcana
1	Pass Without Trace	Exploration	Nature
1	Silent Image	Deception	Arcana
2	Animate Rope	Exploration	Arcana
2	Continual Light	Creation	Arcana or Religion
2	Explosive Runes	Warding	Arcana
2	Read Omens	Divination	Arcana or Religion
3	Calm Emotions	Deception	Arcana or Religion
3	Leomund's Trap	Deception	Arcana
3	Light Ward	Warding	Arcana or Religion
3	Wind Words	Exploration	Arcana or Nature
4	Find Traps	Divination	Insight
4	Shatter	Exploration	Arcana or Nature
5	Breach Disguise	Divination	Arcana or Insight
5	Deep Pockets	Creation	Arcana

Animate Rope

Level: 2

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 minute

Component Cost: 5 gp, a focus, and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 100 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

Lvl	Ritual	Category	Key Skill
5	Lesser Telepathy	Divination	Arcana
5	Seal Death's Door	Warding	Heal
5	Tongues	Exploration	Arcana or Religion
6	Change Self	Deception	Arcana
6	Portal Jump	Travel	Arcana
6	Steady Strength	Exploration	Arcana or Nature
7	Glyph of Warding	Warding	Arcana or Religion
7	Protection from Energy	Warding	Arcana or Religion
7	Reduce Beast	Exploration	Arcana or Nature
7	Sundered Skies	Exploration	Nature
8	Hallucinatory Terrain	Deception	Arcana
8	Leomund's Tiny Hut	Creation	Arcana
8	Stone Shape	Exploration	Arcana or Nature
9	Reflecting Pool	Scrying	Nature
9	Shatter Bonds	Exploration	Arcana
10	Object Meld	Exploration	Arcana or Nature

The rope you use as the focus for this ritual gains the ability to move and to tie itself under your command. To command the rope, you must have line of sight and line of effect to it, and the rope must be within 20 squares of you. You can take a move action to command the rope to move, coil up, uncoil, and so forth. The rope has a speed of 6 and a climb speed of 6. As a standard action, you can command the rope to tie a knot, form a tied loop, and so forth. The animated rope cannot carry or pull any weight.

Focus: A rope of any length.

Breach Disguise

Level: 5

Category: Divination

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 hour

Component Cost: 50 gp

Market Price: 250 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Insight (no check)

You grant yourself or an ally present during the ritual's performance the ability to discern when a creature appears as something other than what it truly is, such as when a creature is disguised with the *deceptive veil* power. The target can use Arcana instead of Insight to penetrate such deceptions and gains a +2 power bonus to any check made to see through them.

Calm Emotions

Level: 3

Category: Deception

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 10 minutes or until discharged

Component Cost: 2 healing surges

Market Price: 175 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Religion (no check)

You perform this ritual while speaking. When you complete the ritual, nonhostile humanoid creatures within 5 squares of you, other than those you exclude from the ritual's effect, become calm and reasonable. The ritual grants a +2 power bonus to Bluff checks, Diplomacy checks, and Nature checks made against the affected creatures. If you roll initiative, the ritual's effect ends.

Change Self

Level: 6

Category: Deception

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 hour (see below)

Component Cost: 35 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 360 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You take on the appearance of a humanoid of your size. You can also alter the appearance of your clothing, armor, and equipment, all of which must remain present and maintain the same general shape. You retain your statistics in your new form. Creatures viewing or interacting with you can make an Insight check (DC 10 + your Arcana check modifier) to detect the deception.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action if you do so from a scroll. If you do so, the ritual costs you 1 additional healing surge, and the DC to see through the deception is 5 + your Arcana check modifier.

Continual Light

Level: 2

Category: Creation

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 24 hours

Component Cost: 20 gp or 1 healing surge

Market Price: 100 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Religion (no check)

One Medium or smaller object you touch sheds bright light in a 20-square radius for the ritual's duration. You or the creature holding the illuminated object can take a minor action to end the ritual's effect.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action if you do so from a scroll. If you do, the object sheds bright light in a 5-square radius.

Dancing Lights

Level: 1

Category: Creation

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 minute

Component Cost: 10 gp or 1 healing surge

Market Price: 50 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You create up to four floating orbs of light, or one light of vaguely humanoid shape. These lights can be of any color. Each orb sheds bright light in a 2-square radius; a humanoid-shaped light sheds dim light in a 2-square radius.

Each light has a fly speed of 10. Whenever you use a move action to move, you can move all the lights as part of that action. You can also use a minor action to move all your lights up to their speed. You must have line of effect to a light to move it. Any light goes out if it is more than 20 squares from you at the end of your turn.

Deep Pockets

Level: 5

Category: Creation

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 24 hours

Component Cost: 50 gp and a focus

Market Price: 250 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You cause the pockets of a garment (the focus) to hold far more than they normally can. When the ritual is performed, up to five pockets or pouches sewn into the focus can each hold up to 50 pounds in weight or 5 cubic feet in volume. Items in the affected pockets do not change the focus garment's form or weight. The garment's wearer can draw an item from an affected pocket as a minor action. When the ritual

ends, items in the affected pockets appear in a pile at the garment-wearer's feet.

Focus: A fine cloth garment (50 gp).

Explosive Runes

Level: 2

Category: Warding

Time: 1 minute

Duration: Until discharged

Component Cost: 10 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 100 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You scribe magical runes on an object such as a book, a scroll, a map, or a similar item that weighs no more than 10 pounds. These runes look like normal writing but function as a trap. As you inscribe them, you can create a password that allows a creature to read the runes without triggering the trap. If the trap is triggered or disabled, the ritual is discharged.

Explosive Runes	Level 2 Trap
Object	
Detect Arcana (detect magic) DC 13;	Initiative – Perception DC 20
Immune all damage, forced movement, all conditions	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚔ Attack (force) ⚡ Encounter	
Trigger: A creature reads the runes without first speaking the password.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d4 force damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
⚡ Disable: Arcana or Thievery DC 20.	
Failure by 5 or More: The trap is triggered.	

Find Traps

Level: 4

Category: Divination

Time: 1 minute

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 25 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 175 gp

Key Skill: Insight

You gain an intuitive sense for traps in your surroundings, allowing you to make an Insight check to detect each trap within 10 squares of you. The DC for the check is the lowest detect DC the trap has.

Glyph of Warding

Level: 7

Category: Warding

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: Until discharged

Component Cost: 75 gp and 2 healing surges

Market Price: 520 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Religion (no check)

You inscribe a glyph that works as a dangerous trap on a flat surface such as a wall, chest lid, table, or door. As you create the trap, you set the glyph's damage type, trigger, password and/or exceptions. The trigger you set must require the trap's target to enter the glyph's square, pass within range of the glyph's attack, or open or handle a warded object without speaking the password or meeting an exception. Acceptable exceptions include creature origin, creature type, physical characteristics, and named individuals. The glyph becomes nearly invisible once it is completed. If the trap is triggered or disabled, the ritual is discharged.

Glyph of Warding	Level 7 Trap
Object	
Detect Arcana (detect magic) DC 16;	Initiative –
	Perception DC 23
Immune all damage, forced movement, all conditions	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
◀ Attack (varies) ♦ Encounter	
<i>Trigger:</i> A creature enters the square containing the glyph, passes within range of the glyph's attack, or opens or handles a warded object without speaking the password or meeting an exception.	
<i>Attack (Immediate Reaction):</i> Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +10 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> When you create the glyph, choose one of the following effects.	
♦ 4d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
♦ 4d6 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
♦ 4d6 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
♦ 4d6 lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
♦ 4d6 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
♦ 4d6 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
♦ 4d6 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
♦ Disable: Arcana or Thievery DC 23.	
<i>Failure by 5 or More:</i> The trap is triggered.	

Hallucinatory Terrain

Level: 8

Category: Deception

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 24 hours

Component Cost: 125 gp

Market Price: 680 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You lay an illusion over an area of natural terrain, no more than 20 squares by 20 squares in size, to make it look, sound, and smell as if it were a different type of natural terrain. Artificial structures, equipment, and creatures cannot be changed. A meadow might look like a hill, a pond could look like a meadow, and so on; but a road or a tower in the area remains the same.

A creature can discern the illusion if it succeeds on an Arcana check or a Perception check (DC 10 + your Arcana check modifier). This check is a minor action if the creature has not interacted with the illusion, but can be made as a free action the first time the creature interacts with the illusion. If you conceal an area of hindering terrain, a creature is still entitled to a saving throw if forced into that terrain.

Hold Portal

Level: 1

Category: Warding

Time: 1 standard action

Duration: 10 minutes or until discharged

Component Cost: 1 healing surge

Market Price: 50 gp

Key Skill: Arcana

You magically hold shut one nonmagical door, gate, window, shutter, or similar device. Your Arcana check sets the DC for the Athletics check or Thievery check needed to force the held portal open, which discharges the ritual. A creature with training in Arcana can instead make an Arcana check against the same DC to discharge the ritual.

Leomund's Tiny Hut

Level: 8

Category: Creation

Time: 5 minutes

Duration: 8 hours or until discharged

Component Cost: 100 gp

Market Price: 680 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You create an opaque, unmoving sphere of magical force in a close burst 4. Half the sphere is aboveground, while the other half is belowground. Creatures other than yourself can enter and exit the hut freely. If you exit the hut, the ritual is discharged.

The sphere's interior is 70 degrees Fahrenheit, and the exterior keeps out normal weather such as wind, rain, and dust. You can adjust the sphere's interior luminance from no light to dim light. The sphere is transparent from within but opaque (blocks line of sight) from the outside. Creatures inside the sphere have total concealment from creatures outside it.

Leomund's Trap

Level: 3

Category: Deception

Time: 1 minute

Duration: Until discharged

Component Cost: 35 gp

Market Price: 125 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You lay the illusion of a trap over a lock or similar mechanism. As you perform the ritual, you can name creatures that are immune to this effect. These can range from specific individuals to members of broad categories, such as creature origin or type. A creature can discern the illusion if it succeeds on an Arcana check or a Perception check (DC 10 + your Arcana check modifier). Unlocking the lock, using

the mechanism, or identifying the illusion discharges the ritual.

Lesser Telepathy

Level: 5

Category: Divination

Time: 5 minutes

Duration: 1 hour

Component Cost: 30 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 250 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You grant yourself telepathy 5 (see *Rules Compendium*, page 316). This telepathy can be used only to communicate with your allies.

Light Ward

Level: 3

Category: Warding

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 10 minutes

Component Cost: 25 gp or 1 healing surge

Market Price: 125 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Religion (no check)

You ward an area, up to 4 squares by 4 squares, shrouding it in darkness. This darkness blocks line of sight for all creatures. Any creature fully within the darkness is blinded until it leaves the darkness. A light source within the warded area is not extinguished but sheds no light. You can end this ritual's effect as a minor action.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action when you do so from a ritual scroll. If you do, the warded area dampens light but has no effect on creatures. While in the warded area, bright light becomes dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.

Object Meld

Level: 10

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 hour or until discharged

Component Cost: 200 gp

Market Price: 1,000 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

You and your equipment merge with a nonliving inanimate object of your size or larger. While merged with the object, you have neither line of sight nor line of effect to any creature, nor does any creature have line of sight or line of effect to you. You remain aware and can hear sounds made outside the object, and you can use powers that have a range of personal.

At any time before the ritual ends, you can move out of the object into the unoccupied square nearest the surface by which you entered the object. Doing so discharges the ritual. If the ritual ends while you are still in the object, you are shunted safely into the unoccupied square nearest the surface by which you entered the object.

If the object you occupy is destroyed, the ritual is discharged. You are immediately shunted to the unoccupied square nearest the surface by which you entered the object, you take damage equal to your bloodied value, and you are stunned until the end of your next turn.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform the ritual as a standard action when you do so from a ritual scroll. If you do, the duration drops to 5 minutes or until discharged.

Pass Without Trace

Level: 1
Category: Exploration
Time: 1 minute
Duration: 8 hours
Component Cost: 10 gp
Market Price: 50 gp
Key Skill: Nature (no check)

You and up to five allies present while you perform this ritual leave fewer tracks. The DC to track those the ritual affects increases by 5, as if you had obscured their tracks.

Portal Jump

Level: 6
Category: Travel
Time: 1 minute
Duration: 2 rounds
Component Cost: 75 gp and 1 healing surge
Market Price: 360 gp
Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

Choose one unoccupied square adjacent to you and one unoccupied square within 20 squares of you. You create a teleportation portal to link those squares. Any creature that enters a linked square can teleport to the other square by using 1 square of movement. Whenever a creature teleports in this way, it is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action when you do so from a scroll. If you do, the portal lasts until the end of your next turn.

Protection from Energy

Level: 7
Category: Warding
Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 hour or until discharged
Component Cost: 75 gp and 1 healing surge
Market Price: 520 gp
Key Skill: Arcana or Religion (no check)

You protect yourself or one ally present during the ritual's performance with a potent ward against energy. The target, whether you or someone else, can provide the healing surge component cost. Choose a damage type from among acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. The next time the target takes damage of that type, the ritual is discharged, and the damage is reduced by an amount equal to 10 + your Arcana check modifier or Religion check modifier.

If the target is already under this ritual's effect when the ritual is used upon the target again, the newer effect cancels the older one.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action when you do so from a scroll. If you do, you reduce the damage the target takes by an amount equal to 5 + your Arcana check modifier or Religion check modifier.

Read Omens

Level: 2
Category: Divination
Time: 5 minutes
Duration: Instantaneous
Component Cost: 1 healing surge and a focus
Market Price: 100 gp
Key Skill: Arcana or Religion

You can ask one question regarding a particular action, framing the question so that the answer tells you whether the chosen action will benefit or harm you or an ally. This ritual can see only about half an

hour into the future, and it deals only with the immediate effects of taking a specific action. The ritual cannot deduce long-term consequences or predict the outcome of long-term actions.

Once you ask the question, the DM secretly rolls an Arcana check or Religion check (whichever provides the higher modifier) for you against a moderate DC. Your allies cannot aid you in making this check. If you try again to predict the outcome of the same action, the ritual supplies the same check result.

Successful Check: The DM tells you that the intended action should bring one of these results.

Weal—a good result, such as when the reward outweighs the risk.

Woe—a bad result, such as when the risk outweighs the reward.

Weal and Woe—both good and bad, such as when the reward is equal to the risk.

Nothing—neither a good nor a bad result.

Failed Check: As per “nothing” above. You can't tell if this “nothing” is due to a successful check or a failed check.

Focus: You drop a set of marked sticks, bones, or similar tokens (worth 50 gp) to read the answer to your query in their arrangement.

Reduce Beast

Level: 7
Category: Exploration
Time: 1 minute
Duration: 6 hours
Component Cost: 75 gp and 1 healing surge
Market Price: 520 gp
Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

One friendly Large or smaller beast present during the ritual's performance shrinks and reduces in weight so that you can carry it in a pocket, a hand, or a pouch. The beast's statistics are unchanged, but it cannot attack while shrunken.

You can use a minor action to end the ritual's effects. Once the ritual ends, the beast teleports to the nearest unoccupied space big enough to accommodate its normal size. Each round after the ritual ends, the beast grows one size category, starting at Tiny, until it returns to its normal size.

Reflecting Pool

Level: 9

Category: Scrying

Time: 1 hour

Duration: See text

Component Cost: 325 gp and a focus

Market Price: 840 gp

Key Skill: Nature (no check)

Choose a specific outdoor location that you have previously visited and that is within 1 mile of your current position. The location must be fixed in place, and it must be at the same place as when you last visited. You place a scrying sensor in a square up to 10 squares above that location. Gazing into your focus (a pool of water), you can see and hear from that square as if you occupied it.

The sensor remains for 2 rounds. You can extend the duration by another 2 rounds by spending a healing surge.

A scrying sensor appears as a shimmer in the air. Creatures can spot the sensor by succeeding on a Perception check (DC 10 + your level).

Some warding rituals can block scrying sensors. If the location is so warded, or the location is otherwise unviable as a scrying target, then you learn this fact as soon as you start the ritual. You can then stop the ritual before you expend any components.

Focus: A 1-square or larger pool of clean water.

Seal Death's Door

Level: 5

Category: Warding

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 24 hours

Component Cost: 50 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 200 gp

Key Skill: Heal (no check)

You grant yourself or one ally present during the ritual's performance a +2 power bonus to death saving throws.

Shatter

Level: 4

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 35 gp

Market Price: 175 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

You can shatter all nonmagical objects composed of crystal, glass, ceramic, porcelain and similar fragile materials in a 2-square radius centered on you. An object heavier than 5 pounds, larger than Tiny, or more valuable than 25 gp is immune to this area effect.

You can instead focus the effect on one object of the proper composition. An object heavier than 50 pounds, larger than Medium, or more valuable than 250 gp is immune to this targeted effect.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action when you do so from a scroll. If you do, the ritual affects only a 1-square area, and the DM makes a saving throw for each object in the area. On a save, the object is unaffected. If you use the targeted effect, the target gains a +2 bonus to the saving throw.

Shatter Bonds

Level: 9

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 150 gp and 2 healing surges

Market Price: 800 gp

Key Skill: Arcana

Make an Arcana check against each lock and restraint within 10 squares of you. If your check succeeds against the DC to break, open, or escape the lock or restraint, that lock or restraint is opened. If you exceed the DC by 5 or more, you can choose to break the target instead of just opening it.

Silent Image

Level: 1

Category: Deception

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 hour or until discharged

Component Cost: 10 gp

Market Price: 50 gp

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

You create an illusion of an object or a creature, or an effect such as fire. This illusion has only a visual aspect. A creature can use a minor action to make an Arcana check or a Perception check (DC 10 + your Arcana check modifier) when it sees the illusion. If the check succeeds, the creature discerns the illusory nature of the image. If a creature interacts with the illusion, the illusory nature of the image is immediately apparent, and the ritual is discharged.

Ritual Scroll: You can perform this ritual as a standard action when you do so from a scroll. If you do, the DC of the Arcana or Perception check to discern the illusion is 5 + your Arcana check modifier.

Steady Strength

Level: 6

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 10 minutes

Component Cost: 50 gp

Market Price: 360 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

You grant yourself or one ally present during the ritual's performance a greater capacity to apply strength. Until the ritual ends, the target gains a +2 power bonus to Strength checks and Athletics checks and can always take 10 on such checks. In addition, the target doubles his or her normal load, heavy load, and maximum drag load.

Stone Shape

Level: 8

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 150 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 680 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

You form a volume of stone, up to 10 feet on a side, into whatever shape you wish. You could sculpt a statue, reshape a stone door, open a hole in a wall, and so on. You can manage only crude details, so you cannot create objects that have moving parts.

Sundered Skies

Level: 7

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 10 minutes or until discharged

Component Cost: 125 gp

Market Price: 500 gp

Key Skill: Nature (no check)

You must perform this ritual in an outdoor, above-ground environment. The ritual gathers clouds overhead in a 10-square radius centered on you. When you finish the ritual, precipitation (rain, or snow if the temperature is below freezing) pours from the clouds for the ritual's duration. This magical precipitation moves with you, remaining centered above your space.

The magical precipitation extinguishes exposed nonmagical flames in the area instantly and lightly obscures all squares in the area. Creatures in the area gain a +2 power bonus to saving throws against ongoing fire damage.

If you go indoors, the ritual is discharged. You can also take a minor action to end the ritual's effect. In either case, the gathered clouds disappear over the course of 1 minute.

Tongues

Level: 5

Category: Exploration

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 10 minutes

Component Cost: 25 gp and 1 healing surge

Market Price: 200 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Religion (no check)

You or one ally present during the ritual's performance gains the ability to speak and understand all languages. Creatures that can hear the target understand what he or she says as if he or she were speaking their native language. If the target can hear another creature that is speaking a language, he or she understands what that creature says as if it were speaking the target's native language.

Wind Words

Level: 3

Category: Exploration

Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 3 hours or until discharged

Component Cost: 25 gp

Market Price: 125 gp

Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

You whisper a message or sound, of up to 25 words, into the air. A breeze carries that message at a speed of up to 6 miles per hour to a location that you have visited and is on the same plane as you. When the wind arrives, it audibly conveys your message or sound whether or not anyone is present to hear it.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is a freelance writer and game designer who lives in Tennessee. A frequent contributor to *Dragon*[®] magazine, Robert is also the coauthor of *Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*[™] and *Player's Option: Heroes of the Elemental Chaos*[™], which releases in early 2012.

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Nerathi Legends: The Knights of Rethmil

By Richard Baker

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“Virtue, honor, courage—these are the makings of a knight in any land. But in Rethmil, knights armor themselves in spells and scribe runes of power on their blades.”

On the shore of the Sea of Dragons lies the ancient kingdom of Rethmil, the last free land in western Altara. Threatened by the relentless growth of the Iron Circle over the last twenty years, Rethmil stands fast against the servants of Asmodeus, and it is defended by the valiant Hyarthan Knights. These mighty swordmages serve as the elite warriors of the land, and they are sworn to a strict code of honor and unswerving loyalty to the magnate of Rethmil. Time and time again the Hyarthan Knights have blunted monstrous incursions from the lands of the Iron Circle, and they have ferreted out Iron Circle plots taking shape in Rethmil’s dark alleyways and jeweled palaces. As long as the Hyarthan Knights defend the throne of the magnate, the Iron Circle’s dominion remains incomplete.

Rethmil is one of the oldest surviving human kingdoms. It was established more than three thousand years ago, before the rise of Arkhosia. After Arkhosia conquered it during an expansion phase, Rethmil became a self-governing province of the dragonborn empire over the next several generations. The kingdom’s practice of sword magic dates back to this time, when mercenary Rethmilian wizards in the service of the dragonborn warlords combined their arcane arts with a tradition of faithfulness, personal honor, and unflinching martial discipline. The Hyarthan Order had its beginnings as an elite legion in this age.

After the destruction of Arkhosia, Rethmil emerged as the most powerful state in western Altara. The Hyarthan Knights swore loyalty to Rethmil’s magnate and defended the realm’s interests for centuries. Rethmil came into conflict with the rising power of Nerath about four hundred years ago. At the time, the magnates had ambitions of establishing Rethmil as an empire unto itself, and they resisted Nerathi expansion over a century of intermittent wars and diplomatic intrigues. Rethmil’s resistance broke when a failed proxy war against Nerath in neighboring

Dercassia provoked rebellion against House Sathandin, the reigning family. Nerath backed House Tedrazar against the other contenders for the throne and established a line of puppet rulers more amenable to Nerathi dominance. The Hyarthan Knights, defenders of the old order, were exiled from the realm by House Tedrazar. Rethmil's legendary swordmages spent years wandering the world in small companies, earning a living as expert mercenaries who clung to traditions of loyalty and discipline.

In the years since Nerath's collapse, Rethmil has reestablished itself as an independent realm. Without Nerath's support, a faction of Rethmilian traditionalists overthrew House Tedrazar and returned House Sathandin to power. From all corners of the world, the surviving Hyarthan Knights followed, swearing allegiance to the Magnacy Restored. But now Rethmil faces a new threat—the rise of the Iron Circle. One by one, the neighboring lands have fallen under the influence of the Citadel of Iron's Grasp, and some believe that Rethmil is doomed to follow its neighbors into tyranny and subjugation.

Rethmil's Power Structure

Rethmil is an old, decadent culture. The populace distrusts foreign influences and has little interest in the doings of other lands. Trade, the lifeblood of many other realms, plays only a small part in Rethmil's prosperity. The kingdom is mostly agrarian, and its wealth lies in the estates and ranches of its large, conservative noble class. Of the power groups in Rethmil, the most widely traveled and open-minded one is the Hyarthan Knights.

Rethmil has little liking for reminders of Nerathi rule, but common threats make for strange bedfellows. In the last few years, the magnate has grudgingly sought allies against the Iron Circle in the lands making up the League of Nerath.

Magnate Tisera Sathandin

The sixty-year-old matron of the Sathandin family, Magnate Tisera, is a stocky, square-jawed woman with a sharp mind, a sharper tongue, and a spine of unyielding steel. Magnate Tisera has no patience for fools and has a reputation for being exceptionally demanding. She routinely discharges advisors and servants who fail to measure up to her exacting standards. The only person who sees her tender side is her husband of forty years, the Prince-Consort Idramor.

As magnate, Tisera stands at the head of a large and powerful bureaucracy. The Magnacy, as the royal administration is called, concerns itself with a number of civil works, collection of taxes, land usage, law and order, and the licensing of spellcasters. Magic use is commonplace in Rethmil, and many wizards serve in the Magnacy's ranks. Swordmages and bladesingers, however, find places in the knightly orders.

The Hyarthan Order

In Rethmil, knighthood is defined not by noble birth or skill at arms, but instead by the ability to master both blade and spell. Several knightly orders take oaths to serve different causes or faiths, but by far the largest and most important is the Hyarthan Order. The Hyarthans serve the magnate; they function as an elite bodyguard to the ruler of Rethmil and also serve as military commanders, spies, and scouts.

Unlike swordmages in other lands, the Hyarthan Knights are skilled in mounted combat. Their traditional mount is the dragonne, or liondrake. These noble beasts are poor fliers, but they are deadly in battle because they can cover ground with much greater speed and agility than any warhorse. Each Hyarthan Knight must earn his or her own drake through deeds of valor and demonstrated skill at arms. Younger knights devote much of their time and attention to winning their spurs.

The Hyarthan Knights number a thousand or so individuals. Most of them are talented swordmages

from old Rethmilian noble families; placing a son or a daughter in the ranks of the Hyarthan Knights is a high honor. The lowest ranks of the order are apolitical, and most junior knights set aside their family's rivalries and interests as long as they are in service. However, a limited number of prestigious knight-captain and knight-commander positions exist within the order, and competition for these titles is fierce. If the Hyarthan Order has a weakness, it lies in the political currents that tug at its most senior members. Knights of exceptional ability can be passed over in favor of knights whose families are more important or influential.

Knight-Marshal Anton Marduum: The leader of the Hyarthan Knights, Knight-Marshal Anton, is a stern traditionalist who privately longs for the days of old, when the Hyarthan Knights played kingmaker to ensure that only the most competent and worthy magnates came to power. House Marduum is a longtime rival of the ruling House Sathandin, and Anton blames Magnate Tisera for the troubles that are mounting on Rethmil's borders. Anton is a stern and capable man of fifty, and a reasonably competent knight-marshal. He places the greatest trust in knights of good stock, so he quietly favors the old families most closely allied to his own house.

Knight-Commander Seira Driloth: Fiery and tempestuous, Lady Seira Driloth is considered the boldest and most heroic of all the Hyarthan Knights. She has won victory after victory on every march of the realm, where she and her forces have scattered savage raiders, destroyed terrible monsters, and unmasked Iron Circle plots. Many knights believe that Seira is the best and brightest of their company, but her common birth means that she will never be knight-marshal.

The Three Academies

Arcane magic is regarded highly in Rethmil, and for many centuries all who have the intelligence and talent for studying magic have been encouraged to do so. Many Rethmilian nobles undertake the study of magic as part of their training in youth. Rethmilians of the lower classes are less likely to be tutored in magic, but the Magnacy's officials keep an eye open for promising students from any social class. As a result, schools of magic are commonplace in the cities and towns of the land. Commoners, merchants, and nobles (of modest rank) mix freely in these academies.

Of the various schools throughout Rethmil, three are especially prestigious: Ascarmel, Dardath, and Sagamar. Although each academy takes on a number of promising commoners, these schools focus on training the scions of the most influential noble families. Graduates of each school form a loose association or society that looks out for current students of that school. Rivalries between alumni of different academies are very real and sometimes turn bitter, distorting the natural alliances of the various noble houses of the realm.

Iron Circle Agitators

The masters of the Citadel of Iron's Grasp have fixed their eyes on Rethmil for years, and they scheme to bring the kingdom within their domain—or destroy it, if controlling it is impossible. The cult of Asmodeus is a widespread underground threat that pervades all levels of Rethmil's society, and the followers of the cult are prevalent among disaffected noble houses, especially those who were formerly allied with the deposed House Tedazar. The cult is banned throughout Rethmil, so the priests of Asmodeus keep a low profile, patiently cultivating their followers.

Ophelia Rysandor: Seemingly an empty-headed noble given to decadent parties, gossip, and revelry,

Lady Rysandor is in actuality a high priestess of the cult of Asmodeus in Rethmil. An elegant and witty woman of forty-five, she is a widow who retains the great beauty of her youth and delights in toying with a bevy of male admirers. Twenty years ago, she began dabbling in devil worship out of sheer boredom and soon became caught up in the cult. Four years ago, she murdered her husband to gain full control of the Rysandor fortune, but few suspect her dark secret.

Dervis Beshan: One of the richest men in Rethmil, Beshan is the master of the largest counting house in Zagramor, and he runs a network of Iron Circle spies. Rethmil's merchants are bound to noble patrons who extract ruinous rents and royalties from their commerce. Like many of his fellows, Dervis Beshan thoroughly resents this situation. Years ago he threw in his lot with Rethmil's enemies, hoping to destroy the privileges of the nobility and plunder the resulting spoils. Beshan is a young,



energetic man of thirty-three, suave and darkly handsome. He goes to great lengths to conceal his true wealth and the depth of his hatred for Rethmil's nobles and their defenders.

Exploring Rethmil

Most of Rethmil is a wide, rolling plain that descends gently from the foothills of the Altaran Mountains to the shores of the Sea of Dragons. The land is arid and treeless; the noble estates and small farming villages of the countryside are given over to golden fields of grain, sun-drenched vineyards, and rangeland for cattle. Although little rain falls in Rethmil's plains, underground aquifers fed by the rains in the Altaran Mountains supply many cold, clear wells, watering holes, and oases.

Rethmil's eastern border is the broad River Zagran, beyond which the land grows drier. The western border with Dercassia is less clearly defined, and this area contains the town of Feyadyn and the uninhabited wastes of the Feya Basin within it. Most of the people in Rethmil live in the eastern half of the country, around the capital of Alam-Reth or along the fertile Zagran Valley.

Alam-Reth

The capital of Rethmil is the ancient walled city of Alam-Reth, located in a large oasislike vale forty miles south of the coastline. The city is well ordered and has long, palm-shaded boulevards, ancient statuary, monumental civic buildings, and the palaces of nobles. The soaring towers of the magnate's palace, the Magnacy courts, and ancient temples endow Alam-Reth with a striking skyline. The markets of Alam-Reth are modest in comparison to other cities of the same size—the port city of Zagramor is Rethmil's window on the outside world, and few foreigners make the three-day journey to bring their wares inland.

ALAM-RETH AT A GLANCE

Over three thousand years old, Alam-Reth is a beautiful city of ancient walls, soaring spires, marble palaces, and parklike avenues lined with palms. It is the capital and the largest city of Rethmil.

Population Mix: Alam-Reth is home to about 30,000 people, the great majority of whom are humans. A small number of dragonborn, minotaurs, and halflings also live here.

Government: The Magnacy official who administers the city government is the lord-consul. Currently, Harman Marduum, an ambitious member of the same family as the knight-marshal of the Hyarthan Order, holds this office. Lord-Consul Harman is engaged in a number of civic projects that are long overdue, such as rebuilding the city's ancient sewers and tearing down crumbling walls swallowed by the city's growth. Critics say he's little better than a vandal, or they claim that he is determined to memorialize himself with his grand projects.

Commerce: Rethmil is largely self-sufficient, and Alam-Reth has little trade with other lands. The estates and rangeland near the city produce grain, wine, dates, lentils, and olives, as well as plenty of beef and leather. The city's most important

institutions are the Magnacy bureaucracy and several excellent academies of magic, including Ascarmel and Sagamar. Libraries and scriptoriums manned by hundreds of clerks and scribes are also prominent features of the city's commercial life.

Defenses: The Magnate's Citadel is a great walled keep in the heart of Alam-Reth. Unlike many of the other fortifications in the ancient city, nothing about the Citadel's defenses is old or obsolete. The city walls are thick and strong, but they are awkwardly sited and don't cover Alam-Reth as well as they might—something Lord-Consul Harman is working to remedy. About two hundred Hyarthan Knights serve as the Magnate's guard, protecting the Citadel. In addition, a garrison of twelve hundred ordinary Rethmilian soldiers defends the city proper.

Inns and Taverns: Good inns and fine restaurants abound in Alam-Reth; nobles from all over Rethmil stay in the capital for weeks or months. The Rosewood Inn is popular with foreigners and merchants, offering good accommodations at a reasonable price. The Golden Fireflower is the most extravagant, offering sumptuous luxury for 50 gp or more per night.

Castle Jemar

High in the southern mountains, along a road that few dare to travel, lies a vast ruin of thick walls and crumbling domes. Long ago this was a city of the dreaded oni, and here oni still linger, ruled by a prince named Jemar-Khul. Centuries past, Jemar-Khul and his monstrous race warred against Rethmil, seeking to destroy or enslave the human realm on

their doorstep, but the wizards and swordmages of Rethmil defeated them. Only a shadow of the monsters' former strength remains. Jemar-Khul keeps a number of fantastic pets, and he is always eager to feed careless travelers to them.



Feya Basin

Most of Rethmil is dry but arable. The Feya Basin is the exception. This large stretch of dry scrub, thorn bushes, and boulder fields covers nearly three thousand square miles of western Rethmil. The basin has few inhabitants, and little if any water can be found in this great wilderness. Consequently, it serves as a formidable deterrent against attack from Dercassia, since would-be invaders must either funnel into the narrow coastal road or win past the battlements of Hyarth Keep. The basin is home to many desert monsters, including leucrottas, lamias, drakes, monstrous scorpions, and well-hidden genie palaces. Rumors persist of vast treasure hoards lost in the basin's dry brush and rocks.

Hyarth Keep

Citadel of the Hyarthan Order, this sprawling fortress stands in the foothills of the Altaran Mountains, commanding the western approaches to Rethmil. Those knights who are stationed here follow lives of simple discipline, sleeping in austere dormitories and devoting hours each day to sword practice and arcane study. The garrison normally numbers about

one hundred or so knights, although scores of additional knights are visiting at any given time to confer with the high-ranking officers of the order. Spacious stables beneath the flagstone courtyards house the widely famed liondrakes that serve as the Hyarthan Knights' mounts.

Suthmar

This remote town in the upper vale of the Zagran River is isolated from the rest of Rethmil, and raids and monstrous incursions from the Desert of Black Stone frequently target it. Consequently, the Hyarthan Order maintains a large, keep-like chapter house here, and a permanent garrison of twenty of more knights protects the town. Suthmar is worth defending: the mountains to the east are rich in precious ores, and the Zagran Vale has some of the most fertile farmland in the realm. The town is home to the much-diminished House Tedrazar, the former magnates who were deposed when Nerath collapsed. Some suspect the loyalty of the Tedrazar nobles, since the family did not willingly surrender its claim to the Magnacy during the Restoration, but no one has ever caught the Tedrazars plotting against House Sathandin or collaborating with enemies of Rethmil. It seems that the Tedrazars are content to rule in Suthmar, far from the intrigues of the capital.

Zagramor

The second-largest city in Rethmil—in fact, the only settlement in Rethmil besides Alam-Reth that one might call a city—is Zagramor, a bustling port town near the mouth of the River Zagran. Zagramor serves as Rethmil's gateway. All trade into and out of the country passes over its wharves, since the small towns of the western coast are hardly ports at all, and the road through Dercassia now leads to unfriendly lands. The city is home to a large garrison of Magnacy soldiers, and it is administered by the Lord-Consul Marivard Escala—a pompous, wheezing old man

ADVENTURES IN RETHMIL

Rethmil is a land surrounded by enemies. Monstrous incursions in the borderlands are a constant threat, as are the intrigues of its decadent noble houses.

The Marrowfangs: The rugged hills and mountains between the Sand Sea and the Black Stone Desert are home to scores of vicious gnoll tribes. Of these, the largest and most aggressive are the Marrowfangs. The heroes must blunt the Marrowfang raids and put an end to the threat by defeating the Marrowfang chieftain and his mysterious advisor.

Jemar-Khul, Prince of the Oni: A ruined castle in the trackless mountains south of Rethmil is home to the mighty oni mage Jemar-Khul. Under his command, the shapechanging oni have killed and replaced the family of House Stratham, and they plot to eliminate more of Rethmil's nobles in a bid to secretly assume power.

Buried Secrets: Lord-Consul Harman Marduum's grand construction projects in the city of Alam-Reth have a secret purpose: Marduum is seeking an ancient treasury of great Arkhosian battle magic. The lord-consul recently discovered hints of the vault's existence in an ancient scroll, and he is determined to seize the choicest items for himself. He entertains thoughts of overthrowing House Sathandin and raising House Marduum to the Magnacy, which would split the Hyarthan Knights in two, since Knight-Marshal Anton might well support his cousin's bid for power despite his oath of loyalty to Magnate Tisera.

who gained his position through sheer bureaucratic tenure.

Many Sand Sea nomads visit Zagramor regularly, since the Rethmilian city is the one outpost of civilization nearest to their desert home. The Sand Sea folk rarely take lodgings in the city, preferring to pitch their tents in the hills surrounding Zagramor.

The Knight's Lance

Unlike swordmages in other lands, the Hyarthan Knights often fight mounted. Long ago, they devised a swordmage spell that gave them the reach and hitting power of a heavy lance. Swordmages who study under the Hyarthan Knights often learn *arcane lance*.

Arcane Lance

Swordmage Attack 1

You form a gray lance of sonic energy around your weapon. The concussive force of its strike briefly slows your foe.

At-Will ♦ **Arcane, Implement, Thunder**

Standard Action **Melee 2**

Target: One creature

Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 thunder damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 21: 2d8 thunder damage.

Special: When charging, you can use this power in place of a melee basic attack. Add your Intelligence modifier to the damage if you charge while mounted.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and sourcebooks, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *DARK SUN*® Campaign Setting, and the D&D® GAMMA WORLD™ Roleplaying Game. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of FORGOTTEN REALMS® novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the Blades of the Moonsea series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game at Wizards of the Coast.

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Character Themes: Born from the Feywild

By Logan Bonner

Illustrations by Claudio Pozas and Ben Wootten

Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. When you begin creating your character you likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general sense of what your character's life was like before their first appearance in a campaign or adventure. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article details two character themes with a connection to the Feywild: the Wild Hunt rider and the oracle of the evil eye.

WILD HUNT RIDER

The Wild Hunt is a supernatural horde that, from time to time, tears through the lands at breakneck speed for days or weeks in pursuit of its quarry. The presence of the Wild Hunt is felt most strongly in the Feywild, but it sometimes appears in the natural world. No qualification or ritual is necessary to join the Wild Hunt. A rider might be a member of a hunting tribe in either the Feywild or the natural world, a normal person swept up in the glory of the hunt, or someone who made a deal with an impetuous fey

CHARACTER THEMES

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept. Even though it's easy to see how a druid or ranger might become a wild hunt rider, even a quiet cleric could give in to the thrill of the hunt, and join the thundering hordes. A treacherous fey could manifest the Evil Eye, but it could just as well be a curse inflicted on a normal man, causing him to be cast out from society and forced to take up an adventurer's life.

For information on using themes as part of character creation, and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," *Dragon* 399.

WHAT IS THE WILD HUNT?

Dozens or hundreds of horsemen and runners charge through the skies or over the hills in wild lands. Chasing unseen prey, they rattle their spears and scream in exultation as they ride. As with so many matters related to the fey, there's no reason for the Wild Hunt. There's no victory or destination reached at the end, no plans made in advance. It simply happens.

The Wild Hunt is the fury of nature, the skill of the hunter, the piercing light of the moon, and the hand of fate made manifest. Both natural and supernatural at the same time, the Wild Hunt can't be stopped or prevented. The fey feel the call when the hunt rides. Even the noble fey sense its pulse in their blood.

Just as nature in the Feywild grows greener and more lush than in the natural world, the Wild Hunt turns the chaos and aggression of a hunting party into an earth-shaking harbinger of danger and death. The hunt appears at unpredictable moments, and its arrival is said to presage times of ill fortune and great devastation.

lord. When the Wild Hunt appears, each of its riders suddenly vanishes from the world and becomes a member of the horde wherever it might be. The rider reappears at his or her former location days or weeks later with little memory of what happened—just flashes of rage and hunger, embodying the thrill of the hunt. No one on the hunt ever remembers what was being hunted or why.

Firbolgs, giant-sized hunters from the Feywild, make up much of the rank and file of the hunt. When the firbolgs accept a Wild Hunt rider into their numbers, that individual also becomes an honorary member of the tribe. This is not a choice the firbolgs make; they simply sense that the rider belongs. The hunt is driven by a deeper magic that follows no rules mortals can understand, and those in the hunt know better than to try.

Creating a Wild Hunt Rider

The Wild Hunt selects its riders; no one can join the hunt by seeking it out. Rangers, barbarians, druids, and other primal characters could easily find themselves swept up by the call of the hunt, but any sort of other character could discover just how strong his or her hidden instincts to hunt and kill truly are.

Characters who have much in common with firbolgs might end up in the hunt. This group includes unaligned characters and worshipers of the three deities the firbolgs revere: Sehanine (the Maiden), Melora (the Mother), and the Raven Queen (the Crone).

Starting Feature

When the Wild Hunt rages, it doesn't rest; night and day it pursues its unseen prey. For you, the light of the moon is as bright as the light of the sun. No creature can hide from your supernaturally keen eyes.

Benefit: Your attacks ignore partial concealment, and you gain a +2 bonus to Perception checks when actively searching for a hidden creature.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

The hoofbeats of the Wild Hunt's great black steeds shake the ground. Their manes trail fog and spark with lightning, and the gaze of their red eyes pierces the night to find prey for their masters to chase.

These horses appear to you and your allies in times of need or when there's quarry to be pursued, emerging from the trees or rising up from loose earth. The great beasts are desperate for the thrill of the hunt, even if the chase you provide them is only a pale imitation of the savage glory of the Wild Hunt.

Benefit: You gain and master the Phantom Steed ritual. Once per day, you can perform the ritual without expending components. You can use either Arcana or Nature as the ritual's key skill.

Level 10 Feature

When you ride with the Wild Hunt, the fetters of the world fall away as you speed across the lands or race through the skies. After experiencing such freedom, you bristle at the restraints of the ordinary world and shrug off anyone's attempts to chain you down.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to saving throws against effects that immobilize, restrain, or slow you.

Optional Powers

As you adventure, the hunter within you grows in strength. Each time you join the Wild Hunt, more and more of its magic becomes a part of you. The supernatural powers you have when you are fully immersed in the hunt begin to manifest at other times.

Level 2 Utility Power

Riders on the Wild Hunt regress, as though they were possessed by the spirits of ancient hunters. In their hands, the most sophisticated elven bow or dwarven spear becomes like a rudimentary weapon carved in some ancient cave by the hunter's own hand. A rider's body becomes strong and lithe, like those of the ancient hunters who relied on their physical prowess to survive.

Wild Hunt Leap Wild Hunt Rider Utility 2

Like the spear-wielding hunter leaping to strike, you soar through the air with ease to catch your quarry off guard.

Encounter ♦ **Primal**
Move Action **Personal**

Effect: You jump up to a number of squares equal to your speed. If you end this jump adjacent to an enemy, you gain combat advantage for the next attack you make against that enemy before the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

No matter when the Wild Hunt appears, the moon rises full in the sky above and the stars glitter like predators' eyes. The clouds clear, leaving only the stormy swirling fog around the hunt itself. As a rider of the hunt, you can call on the moonlight to lay bare what lies hidden before you.

Moonfire Aura Wild Hunt Rider Utility 6

Pale white light falls upon you, revealing those who would hide from your wrath.

Daily ♦ **Aura, Primal**
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You activate an aura 1 that lasts until the end of the encounter or until you end it as a minor action. Creatures in the aura cannot benefit from invisibility or any concealment.

Level 10 Utility Power

There is no escaping the Wild Hunt. Even those who retreat by using magical means find the riders close on their heels. When you choose your prey, all its attempts to escape you are fruitless. You do not lose a trail, and you do not stop hunting until you fell your enemy.

Relentless Pursuit Wild Hunt Rider Utility 10

Your prey flees! Instinctually, you manifest a small fragment of the Wild Hunt's magic and cut off your foe's escape.

Encounter ♦ **Primal, Teleportation**
Immediate Reaction **Personal**

Trigger: An enemy that started its turn within 10 squares of you ends its turn farther away.

Effect: You teleport to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy. You don't need to have line of sight for this teleportation.

ORACLE OF THE EVIL EYE

Like the misshapen fomorians and their cyclops servants, an oracle of the evil eye has a deformed eye with a catlike iris. The eye grants the oracle influence over the minds of other creatures and the ability to see glimpses of the future. People fear and shun anyone with an evil eye, and often rightly so.

The Baleful Ritual of the Evil Eye causes an evil eye to appear. This ritual—known to the fomorians, some of their servants, and a scattered few hags and spellcasters—takes hours to perform and is extremely painful, involving burning oils, foul incense, and surgical incisions. Fomorians, well known for their wickedness and insanity, might order that the ritual be conducted for many reasons. A ruler might give an evil eye as a gift to a faithful servant one day, then issue one as a punishment to a prisoner the next.

Only the cruelest creatures consider gaining an evil eye to be a blessing. Evil fey such as quicklings and spriggans thrill at the power of an evil eye, and eagerly do the work of the fomorians in exchange for such a blessing.

Most oracles of the evil eye who undertake adventuring careers are gnomes or eladrin. Forced to undergo the ritual, they become outcasts from their home societies. They go off into the woods of the Feywild, never to be seen again, or they travel to the natural world to lurk on the fringes of society and use their evil eyes to get what they want. An oracle of the evil eye might be adventuring in search of a way to dispel the curse and return to the warmth and comfort of society.

Creating an Oracle of the Evil Eye

Oracles usually come from races hated by the fomorians, particularly gnomes or eladrin. However, anyone who has spent time in the fomorians' underground realms could have been subjected to the Baleful Ritual of the Evil Eye. The magic has even made its way into the hands of creatures outside the fomorians' domain. An adventurer who became an oracle without ever leaving the natural world might have run afoul of a strange witch in the woods, or stumbled upon a bizarre cult ritual, and thus been cursed with an evil eye.

Starting Feature

Like each fomorian, each evil eye seethes with its own madness and base emotions. When you fight, anger boils up within it. When you see gold, the eye covets it. As time goes on, you feel your taste for fine wares and luxury grow as you become unable to distinguish between which desires are truly yours and which come from your evil eye.

Benefit: You gain the *gaze of the evil eye* power.

Gaze of the Evil Eye Oracle of the Evil Eye Attack

Your foe feels the foreboding stare of your evil eye warning it away from you.

At-Will ♦ Arcane, Psychic

Minor Action Ranged 5

Target: One creature you can see that isn't marked by you

Effect: The target takes 2 psychic damage whenever it hits you with an attack (a creature can take this damage only once per turn). The effect ends if you don't have line of sight to the target at the end of your turn, or if you use this power against a different target.

Level 21: 4 psychic damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

The evil eye channels the deceitful and power-mad nature of its fomorian creators. It shapes the thoughts of those you encounter, whether subtly insinuating itself into their minds or filling them with raw fear.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Bluff checks and Intimidate checks.

Level 10 Feature

The eye is a product of evil magic, and not subject to the limitations of mortal flesh. Mundane light and darkness mean nothing to it; the evil eye sees all.

Benefit: You gain low-light vision, or you gain darkvision if you already had low-light vision.

Optional Powers

For all the oracles who try to rid themselves of their evil eyes, there are some who embrace the power—even the horror—of the eye. These oracles use the eye's abilities with abandon, thus enabling those abilities to grow stronger. Some think they can control the eye, a mistaken belief that has driven many to darkness and depravity.

Level 2 Utility Power

Though your evil eye is a lesser version of what the fomorians possess, it grows in power over time. It can sometimes call on its abilities to temporarily give you magical sight.



Eye of the Fomorian Oracle of the Evil Eye Utility 2

Your eye changes color, and your vision becomes suddenly more acute. All is made clear.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you gain a +2 power bonus to Perception checks and can see invisible creatures.

Level 6 Utility Power

Tiny glimpses of the near future appear to you in erratic bursts. The eye sees far more, but lets you see only what it chooses. Scenes of violence, glittering gold, and desperate people assault your senses as the eye rejoices in anticipation of spilled blood and screams of pain.

Urge of Destiny Oracle of the Evil Eye Utility 6

The eye sees violence in the near future. Its bloodlust fills your ally, making the carnage even more glorious.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Minor Action **Ranged 5**

Target: One ally you can see

Effect: The target deals 1d6 extra damage until the end of the encounter, or 2d6 extra damage to creatures marking it.

Level 10 Utility Power

Your eye seeks to keep you (and itself, by extension) safe from harm while it watches others bleed. At the moment an enemy chooses to strike, when it lets go of rational thought and allows its instincts to drive an attack home, the eye can warp the foe's thoughts.

Evil Eye Mesmerism Oracle of the Evil Eye Utility 10

A foe decides you don't deserve harm. Only later does it realize that your eye had made it believe you weren't its enemy.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Charm

Immediate Reaction **Close burst 10**

Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of you misses you with an attack.

Target: The triggering enemy in the burst

Effect: The target can't attack you until the end of its next turn.

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Character Themes: Heroes of the Moonshaes

By Matt James

Illustrations by Beth Trott and Jason Juta

Resplendent in their stark beauty, the rocky cluster of islands known as the Moonshaes pepper the Sea of Swords west of the Sword Coast. Each island has a story all its own—of eerie mists that transport a traveler far distances in a heartbeat or of deep forests in which fierce monsters guard legendary treasures. Three distinct cultures, only two of which are human, claim these lush and bountiful shores. The relatively peaceful Ffolk dwell mainly in the southern portions of the isles. Northlander warriors sail the seas of the north, raiding year after year. The fey of Sarifal form a fanatical collective sworn to protect the forests of Gwynneth from human intrusion.

Adventurers from a variety of professions call the Moonshae Isles home and perform various functions in the world.

CHARACTER THEMES

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. The themes presented here give you information your character knows within a Moonshaes campaign, and provide story hooks that you can use to roleplay. Each theme can encompass several stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation, and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see “Heroes of Nature and Lore,” *Dragon* 399.

NEW STORY, SAME THEME

The first three themes in this article aren't new themes per se. They are suggested ways of using themes from the *Neverwinter™ Campaign Setting*, each with a different story.

Knight of Synnoria

Iliyanbruen Guardian

You are a Llewyr elf (see page 6). Once the dominant race of elves on the Moonshae Isles, your folk now claim only a few small, remote locations. You are a crusader adept at protecting the hidden sanctuaries of your people, and the primal and fey wonders of the Moonshaes. Those who respect primal spirits and the fey are your allies, and when corruption threatens, you heed the call to defense alongside such friends.

Use the Iliyanbruen guardian theme (*Neverwinter Campaign Setting*, page 28) to represent this theme.

Northlander Reaver

Uthgardt Barbarian

With a war cry on your lips and battleaxe in hand, you live for the thrill of conquest. As a Northlander, you hold the sea in your heart and a yearning for plunder in your veins. Primal forces of storm and sea are your friends; the spirits of your ancestors beckon you to glory. Feared up and down the Sea of Swords, your people are renowned for their ferocious spirits. Warriors from your clan patrol the seas around the Moonshaes in longships that inspire terror in any who spot their rectangular sails.

Use the Uthgardt barbarian theme (*Neverwinter Campaign Setting*, page 30) to represent this theme. Your powers are tied to storms and respect for your clan ancestors, rather than the thunderbeast.

Consider replacing the 5th-level Uthgardt barbarian feature with a +2 bonus to Perception checks to spot and a +2 bonus to Acrobatics checks to balance.

Darkwalker Kin

Pack Outcast

Descended from the seed of Malar the Beastlord and the beast Kazgoroth, you carry within you the feral bloodline of the Darkwalker. Suspicious yet uncertain of your vile lineage, you remain aloof from society and favor the borderlands and wild places. Despite your inner turmoil, you are a fierce warrior with a good heart, desperate to bury your dark ancestry.

Use the pack outcast theme (*Neverwinter Campaign Setting*, page 32) to represent this theme.

BACKDROP: MOONSHAE ISLES

For maps and additional information about the Moonshae Isles, see the “Backdrop: Moonshae Isles” article in *Dungeon* 196. The Backdrop article is intended more for Dungeon Masters than players, providing guidance for running adventures set in the region, but players will find much of the Moonshae lore helpful in creating characters native to the islands.



SARIFAL FEYWARDEN

Baleful armies from the Feydark march, and the kingdom stands on the precipice of ruin. For the High Lady, I shall see these interlopers suffer the wrath of the feywardens!

To become a feywarden, you must suppress the innate capriciousness of your kind. Threats to the kingdom are manifold, and the High Lady demands much of her champions. Only when it is time for Sarifal to retreat once more beyond the twilight veil can a feywarden relax his vigil. Heed the principles of your noble eladrin matriarch, and you might earn the High Lady's appreciation.

You are never completely at ease beyond the wilderness. Most feywardens run in a loosely organized party with the eldest serving as the leader. Rare individuals, such as yourself, are sent beyond the verdant confines of Sarifal to gather intelligence on the kingdom's enemies.

Feywardens are guardians of Sarifal and all things that dwell there. Your principal enemies are denizens of the Feydark who seek to despoil the pristine lands under your protection. You distrust humankind, seeing their attempts to tame and clear the wilderness as wasteful. You have a deep reverence for the primal spirits that watch over the Moonshaes, the Earthmother in particular.

Outsiders regard feywardens as curiously introverted and evasive. Most feywardens are unaligned or good. Few fey realms are subject to the same sort of dagger-in-the-back power struggles that often erupt in human kingdoms, but agents of the Unseelie fey are ever watchful for opportunities to lure feywardens into temptation and ruin.

Building a Sarifal Feywarden

You are a champion of the Feywild and guardian of the fabled kingdom of Sarifal. You have recently crossed through the twilight veil and into the world on a mission of great importance to your people.

Class Prerequisite: None. Any class can benefit from this theme's features, although primal classes are most common.

Race Prerequisite: Any fey race but drow.

Wild elves and wood elves fit this theme well (see the optional rules for these variant races in the *Neverwinter Campaign Guide*, pages 51-52). Of the eladrin subraces, only the Llewyr are typically welcome in Sarifal.

SARIFAL FEYWARDEN BACKGROUND

The fey of Sarifal are uniquely attuned to the world around them. They have a Feywild connection that transcends the mortal world. Many fey hailing from Sarifal can traverse difficult terrain with surprising ease and swiftness.

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Stealth.

Starting Feature

Feywardens of Sarifal are blessed with the eldritch, life-giving power of the Feywild. Calling on such power, you and nearby allies temporarily gain protection from harm.

Benefit: You gain the *Sarifal's blessing* power.

Sarifal's Blessing

Sarifal Feywarden Utility

You call for and receive a boon that shields you from harm and weakens your enemies.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Aura, Primal

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Choose cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, or thunder.

You activate an aura 2 that lasts until the end of your next turn. While in the aura, you and your allies gain resist 5 to the chosen damage type. Any enemy in the aura has vulnerable 5 to your attacks that deal the chosen damage type.

Level 11: The resistance and vulnerability increase to 10.

Level 21: The resistance and vulnerability increase to 15.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

You have become a trusted feywarden. Having passed several tests of initiation, you are free to perform tasks without oversight from your mentors. Now you continue your work in hopes of becoming an exalted denizen of Sarifal. Others come to you for your knowledge and experience, and expect you to act in accordance with the decrees of the queen. By sharing your experience and knowledge with new pupils, you encourage others to walk a similar path and become enlightened about the workings of nature.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Nature checks. In addition, you have mastered the Spirit Fetch ritual (*Dragon* 380). Once per day, you can use the ritual without expending components.

Level 10 Feature

You are the epitome of nature's defenders and a principal protector of Sarifal. You constantly work against the corruption of the sacred lands you have protected for so long. As a leader, you speak for Sarifal and advance your culture's interests. You ensure that future generations maintain the connection to nature to which you have devoted your life.

You have a reputation for action, not words, rallying those around you to protect not only the forests of Sarifal, but all of Toril. Because you continually promote living responsibly with nature, many powerful spirits have visited you. They encourage you to make sure that the connection between your worlds remains healthy and strong.

Your knowledge of and experience with primal forces enhance your body.

Benefit: You gain a +1 power bonus to Fortitude.

Optional Powers

As a defender of Sarifal and all it stands for, you trained for contingencies unique to your location. You know specialized powers that draw magic from the fey realms and nature. With nature on your side, you call upon powerful spirits to assist you.

Level 2 Utility Power

Your continued dedication to the protection of Sarifal makes you renowned in both the natural and supernatural realms. A special advisor comes forth from the Feywild to aid you.

Sarifal Advisor Sarifal Feywarden Utility 2

A faint popping noise accompanies the appearance of the tiny fey you summon to aid you.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Summoning, Primal Minor Action Ranged 5

Effect: You summon a Sarifal advisor in an unoccupied square within range. The creature is an ally to you and your allies.

The advisor lacks actions of its own. Instead, you spend actions to command it mentally, choosing from the actions in its description. You must have line of effect to the advisor to command it. When you command the advisor, the two of you share knowledge but not senses.

When the advisor makes a check, you make the roll using your game statistics, not including temporary bonuses or penalties.

The advisor lasts until it drops to 0 hit points, at which point you lose a healing surge (or hit points equal to your healing surge value if you have no surges left). Otherwise, it lasts until you dismiss it as a minor action or until the end of the encounter.

Sarifal Advisor Level 2 Summoned Creature

Tiny fey humanoid, pixie

HP your healing surge value; **Healing Surges** none, but you can spend a healing surge for the advisor if an effect allows it to spend one

Defenses your defenses, not including any temporary bonuses or penalties

Speed 4, fly 6 (altitude limit 1) Low-light vision

Advisor's Acumen

The advisor gains a +2 bonus to Arcana checks, Nature checks, and Stealth checks.

Speak with Beasts

The advisor can communicate with natural beasts and fey beasts.

Minor Action ♦ Encounter

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you can sense the world through the advisor's senses. You gain neither line of sight nor line of effect for your powers from the advisor's space, but you can make Perception checks from it.

Minor Action ♦ At-Will (1/round)

Effect: The advisor crawls, flies, runs, stands up, shifts, squeezes, or walks.

Level 6 Utility Power

Feywardens embody the physical and spiritual qualities of the Feywild. When you call upon its power, you assume a glowing, shimmering form that leaches strength from your foes.

Light of Sarifal Sarifal Feywarden Utility 6

Light emanates from you so intensely that your enemies cannot bear to ignore you.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Aura, Primal Minor Action Personal

Effect: You activate an aura 3 that lasts until the end of your next turn. Enemies in the aura take a penalty to damage rolls against creatures other than you. The penalty equals your highest ability modifier.

Sustain Minor: The aura persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 10 Utility Powers

Being among the feywardens has made you adept at fey trickery.

When you gain a 10th-level utility power, the following powers are among your options: the wizard powers *blur* and *mirror image* (*Player's Handbook*®), the shaman power *spirits of the shadowed moon* (*Player's Handbook 2*), and the warlock power *warlock's leap* (*Player's Handbook*). For the purpose of retraining, these powers follow the same rules as optional theme powers.

CALLIDYRR DRAGOON

Duty bids me to defend the realm of my ancestors. Honor demands that I act with temperance before valor. For the glory of the High King, this I swear.

Callidyrr stands as a beacon of hope in a region overrun with malevolent fey, marauding giants, and bloodthirsty lycanthropes. As a Callidyrr dragoon, you are a stalwart defender of the realm, a privileged member of the High King's elite guard. Dragoon is a special title awarded to individuals who have shown exceptional service to the crown.

Unlike knights of the realm, dragoons do not muster with the realm's army but instead receive assignments best handled alongside a small number of compatriots. As such, Callidyrr dragoons receive specialized training in diplomacy and espionage. Dragoons have access to the Palace of the High King and can speak with royal authority throughout the realm. In exchange for these privileges, a dragoon must swear a binding oath of unwavering allegiance to the High King and the land. The Royal Hierophant administers this oath and seals it with a geas that binds the dragoon to the honored ancestors. If the dragoon ever forsakes the vows to king and country, the geas irrevocably wipes the fallen dragoon of his memories.

The rank of dragoon is relatively new, having been born of the nation's conflict with Amn at the dawn of the century. After repeated failed attempts to forcibly liberate the kingdom of Westphal from Amnian occupation, High Queen Alicia Kendrick founded the dragoons to work against the Amnian invaders clandestinely.

When the High Queen died unexpectedly in the Year of the Halls Unhaunted (1407 DR), the dragoons were instrumental in quelling insurgent uprisings throughout Callidyrr. Common belief held

that agents of Lionel Carrathal, heir to the former royal dynasty of Callidyrr who claimed to be the "true" High King of the Moonshaes, poisoned the beloved High Queen.

In the years since, the dragoons have thwarted countless assassins, driven off sahuagin incursions, and even brokered a tenuous peace with the fey of Sarifal. This proud legacy is what you inherit as a Callidyrr dragoon. May you live up to its valorous ideal.

Building a Callidyrr Dragoon

You are a champion of Alaron and a defender of the kingdom of Callidyrr.

Class Prerequisite: None. A member of any class might be a Callidyrr dragoon. However, the benefits of this theme heavily favor strong melee combatants and defenders. Fighters and wardens compose the majority of this elite unit, but paladins in service to nature deities are occasionally called to service.

Race Prerequisite: Human or halfling. These two races are most representative of the kingdom of Callidyrr (the DM might allow other races under special circumstances, but characters of strong fey heritage are unwelcome throughout much of Callidyrr).

CALLIDYRR DRAGOON BACKGROUND

A dragoon's rigorous daily training is a marvel of physical discipline. These learned defenders of the realm are equally ardent in mastering the art of nonviolent conflict resolution.

Associated Skills: Athletics, Diplomacy, Insight.

Starting Feature

All dragoons start out as knights of Callidyrr. They excel at mounted combat and close-quarters fighting.

Benefit: You gain the Mounted Combat feat (*Player's Handbook*). In addition, you gain proficiency with one martial melee weapon of your choice.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Your words have the authority of the High King and the power of noble Ffolk ancestors behind them. Any declaration you make is a spiritually infused guarantee of action. You are able to act in good faith on behalf of Caer Callidyrr, and you command respect from friend and foe.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Diplomacy checks and Intimidate checks.

Level 10 Feature

After extensive training and experience, your superiors promote you to higher ranks within the organization. Because you are a respected member of the Callidyrr dragoons, your assurances have the power to bring comfort to your allies.

Benefit: You can use the Diplomacy skill as if it were the Heal skill to grant either a saving throw or a use of second wind. The subject of your check can be up to 5 squares away from you.

Optional Powers

Level 2 Utility Power

Callidyrr dragoons are renowned for their tactical acumen, ancestral ties, and self-sacrificing defense of others. A true champion, you risk everything to shield your allies from harm.

Dragon Warding Callidryr Dragoon Utility 2

You vow to protect an ally, creating a spiritual tie between you and shielding the ally from the worst of any assault.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Primal**
Minor Action Melee 1
Target: One ally

Effect: The target gains a +2 power bonus to AC and Fortitude. Whenever the target is adjacent to you and takes damage from a melee or ranged attack, you can take half the damage, halving the damage the target takes. Nothing can reduce the damage you take. These effects last until the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

So versed are you in combat stratagems that you have an uncanny knack for reading your enemies' movements and countering their attacks.

Dragoon Parry Callidryr Dragoon Utility 6

Subtle changes in the enemy's bearing reveal its intentions, allowing you to parry and throw the foe off balance.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Primal**
Immediate Interrupt Personal
Trigger: An adjacent enemy hits you with a melee attack while you are wielding a melee weapon.

Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex against the triggering attack. In addition, you gain combat advantage against the triggering enemy until the end of your next turn.

Level 10 Utility Power

You are a true knight of the land, and that status brings with it ancient and tested power. By focusing your will and giving a traditional battle cry, you stir the ancestors to action.

Dragoon Summons Callidryr Dragoon Utility 10

You howl the ancient battle cry of Efolk warriors and the wind gains a sudden chill, followed by the ghostly arrival of an ancestral defender.

Daily ♦ **Primal, Summoning**
Minor Action Ranged 5

Effect: You summon an ancestral defender in an unoccupied square within range. The creature is an ally to you and your allies.

The defender lacks actions of its own. Instead, you spend actions to command it mentally, choosing from the actions in its description. You must have line of effect to the defender to command it. When you command the defender, the two of you share knowledge but not senses.

When the defender makes a check, you make the roll using your game statistics, not including temporary bonuses or penalties.

The defender lasts until it drops to 0 hit points, at which point you lose a healing surge (or hit points equal to your healing surge value if you have no surges left). Otherwise, it lasts until you dismiss it as a minor action or until the end of the encounter.

Ancestral Defender Level 10 Summoned Creature
 Medium natural animate

HP your bloodied value; **Healing Surges** none, but you can spend a healing surge for the defender if an effect allows it to spend one

Defenses your defenses, with a +2 bonus to AC and not including any temporary bonuses or penalties

Speed 0, fly 6 (hover; altitude limit 1)

⚙ **Battle Blessing** ♦ **Aura** 1

You and your allies gain a +2 power bonus to damage rolls while in the aura.

Minor Action ♦ **At-Will**

Effect: The defender administers first aid to an adjacent ally. It uses your Heal skill with a +2 power bonus to the check.

Minor Action ♦ **At-Will** (1/round)

Effect: The defender crawls, flies, runs, stands up, shifts, squeezes, or walks.

Immediate Interrupt ♦ **Encounter**

Trigger: An ally adjacent to the defender is hit by a melee or a ranged attack.

Effect: The defender is hit by the attack instead.

Racial Variants

Elves in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting are made up of distinct subraces. The Llewyr elves of the Moonshaes are one such variant. See the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting* for additional racial variants.

Llewyr Elf (Eladrin)

During the Crown Wars, the Llewyr were a community of moon elves and green elves dwelling in the verdant woodland known today as Neverwinter Wood. When Vyshaan armies swept through their lands, the Llewyr fled across the sea seeking the fabled isle of Evermeet.

A fierce squall forced the refugees to make landfall on the Moonshaes, where they were greeted by the enigmatic leShay, legendary progenitors of the fey. The leShay permitted the Llewyr to settle in isolation and safety among the mountains of the large central island. The Llewyr named their new

kingdom Synnoria, after the queen who led them to this island sanctuary.

Over the next eleven millennia, the Llewyr evolved into a unique subrace rarely seen outside the Moonshaes. Llewyr share many of the same societal attributes of their moon elf ancestors, including the building of grand cities and advanced mastery of arcane arts. Llewyr have fair skin, but unlike their moon elf cousins, the elves of Synnoria have golden hair. Llewyr born in the last century share the hauntingly opalescent eyes common to all eladrin, with the pupils of older generations colored in shades of green and brown, with gold flecks.

At the heart of Synnoria is the resplendent city of Chrysalis, resting upon a verdant tor rising from a crystal clear lake. The city is a dazzling display of soaring glassteel towers, crystalline gardens, and majestic silver-glyphed boulevards.

Today, much of the city is abandoned, for the Llewyr have paid a price for their long isolation. Birth rates are low, and centuries of attrition has dwindled their numbers dramatically. Males are uncommon, constituting less than a quarter of the population.

Roleplaying a Llewyr Elf

Sun elves were the aggressors who forced the Llewyr out of the Llewyrwood on the mainland, so you harbor a lingering animosity toward them. This distrust extends to other elf subraces as well. Having lived in isolation for so long, most Llewyr feel no kinship toward their elf cousins, and have no desire to be caught up in elven politics and intrigues. You swear fealty to the High Lady of Sarifal, not the crown of Evermeet.

You share a bond with the natural world and primal spirits of the land. Unlike many eladrin, the Llewyr do not worship Corellon Larethian or other divine entities of the Seldarine. Instead, the Llewyr venerate the “fey gods,” mighty primal spirits and archfey that have watched over the Moonshaes for millennia. Greatest among these primal manifestations are the Earthmother and her children.

Your people have survived for millennia by forming strong family and community bonds, and you honor these. An oath given by a Llewyr is a binding pledge. Though Llewyr are slow to trust, once a bond is formed, the friendship lasts a lifetime.

Llewyr Elf Benefits

When creating a Llewyr elf character, you can pick from the following benefits.

Historical Insight: Armed with a voracious appetite for studying the antiquity of humanoid culture, you have an uncanny ability to discern the intent of individuals based solely on the historical exploits of their kind.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Insight checks. This benefit replaces the normal eladrin skill bonus to Arcana.

Elf Weapon Proficiency: Elves and eladrin of all stripes take time to learn the traditional weapons of their people.

Benefit: You gain proficiency with the longbow and the shortbow. This benefit replaces Eladrin Weapon Proficiency.

LLEWYRR ELF BACKGROUND

Llewyr elves study the natural world and master arcane magic. A long-standing cooperation with the druid circles of the Moonshaes has given the Llewyr an understanding of their rare tongue. Many Llewyr are avid historians with a keen interest in the lineages of humanoid societies.

Associated Skills: Arcana, History, Insight, Nature.

About the Author

Matt James is a freelance game designer from the Washington DC area. His recent design credits include *Monster Vault™*, *Threats to the Nentir Vale™*, *D&D Lair Assault™: Attack of the Tyrantclaw™*, and *Into the Unknown: The Dungeon Survival Handbook™* (due to release in 2012). Matt is a disabled veteran, wounded during combat operations in Iraq during 2005. You can follow his gaming insights via @matt_james_rpg on Twitter and at Loremaster.org.

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Making Race Count, Part 2

Utility Powers for Drow, Eladrin, and Elves

By Robert J. Schwalb and Matt Sernett

Illustrations by Howard Lyon and Eva Widermann

The foulspawn's magic slammed into Rook with such force that he fell from his ebony fly, landing in a heap on the floor. The hulks, big brutes that were all muscle and oozing wounds, closed in on him. For a moment, Rook worried. Then he spat it away along with a bloody glob containing his tooth. He was drow, and he wouldn't let aberrant scum take his life. Surging to his feet, he called upon Lolth's magic to shroud himself in darkness and then opened a doorway in the cloud to slip away.



Riedenal danced around the owlbear, feinting and stabbing with the pale white blade that the Lady of the White Well entrusted to him. The owlbear, bleeding from a dozen cuts, roared and charged forward. Riedenal was unconcerned. He stepped sideways and away from the monster's path to reappear behind it. Raising his weapon, he made ready to deliver the killing blow.



Ella the elf ranger tracked the quickling thieves, her keen eyes following their blurry movements as they skirted around trees and underbrush like windblown leaves. This was her homeland, the forest of her ancestors, and these villains were interlopers. She moved into the underbrush, easing between the briars and branches without making a sound, and took position to send an arrow into the next fiend to race past her.

The first “Making Race Count” article (appearing in *Dragon* 402) presented a suite of utility powers designed for dwarves, half-elves, halflings, and humans as a way to reinforce how important racial choice can be when creating a new adventurer. This article picks up on the idea and presents new options for the elven races. Drow gain utility powers to supplement their cunning tactics, while eladrin can harness even more of the Feywild's magic. Elves can embrace their people's homeland and take advantage of the environments like never before. Each racial utility helps realize your race's culture and identity, allowing you to further characterize your adventurer beyond class and paragon path and become an exemplar of your people.

Character race is a key decision you make when you create a new character. The traits you gain from your race provide significant benefits, ranging from ability score modifications to potent powers that give you an edge in battle. When race is combined with class, you have the fundamental building blocks in place to carry you forward through all thirty levels of adventuring.



Yet after you choose your race and record its benefits, that choice often does not affect your character's development. It's true that certain feats might interact with your racial traits, and some races have access to racial paragon paths. Although these options can help develop your character, the most interesting gains can come through the choices granted by your class whenever you gain a level.

To help you enhance the importance of your character's race, this article introduces new racial utility powers. Racial utility powers represent an awakening of natural talent and capability. Taking a racial utility power demonstrates your character's ability to call upon his or her heritage and natural abilities.

GAINING A RACIAL UTILITY POWER

Racial utility powers are similar to utility powers granted by a class, except that you must be a member of the race to gain and use a race's powers. Whenever you gain a level that grants you a utility power from your class, you can choose a racial utility power in place of a class power. The racial utility power must be of the same level as or lower in level than the class power you would have gained.

You can use retraining to replace a class utility power with a racial utility power or vice versa, as long as the new power is of the same level as or lower in level than the replaced power. You cannot replace a utility power from a paragon path or an epic destiny with a racial utility power.

DROW

"I am your nightmare given flesh. I am the death in the darkness, the murder in your shadow."

The drow, called dark elves by their surface-dwelling kin, have endured in the Underdark since being driven there for their crimes against their elven kin and for their willing service to the Demon Queen of Spiders, who corrupted and twisted them toward evil. In the long ages since their exile began, the drow have nursed their hatred for the light-dwellers, plotting vengeance against those they once called brother and sister, all in service to their twisted goddess's mad ambition. The wickedness pervading the dark elves stains them as a race, yet the evil does not touch all. Some dark elves recoil in horror from their people's corruption, rejecting the edicts handed down by their priestesses. They seek their own paths, free from the treachery and betrayal so common to their cities. But freedom from the Underdark does not always mean freedom from Lolth. Escapees find ways to access the dark heritage that blackens their legacy and use it to mislead and confound their enemies.

You must be a drow to gain and use drow powers.

Glimmering Forms

Drow might not be the strongest people in the Underdark, but few can match their cunning. Trickery makes up for any shortfalls they might have in brute strength, and treachery lets them get the upper hand against their foes. A drow armed with *glimmering forms* can create hovering lights that, to an untrained observer, resemble torches, lanterns, or glowing humanoids. Drow use these lights to lure enemies into deadly traps.

Glimmering Forms

Drow Racial Utility 2

Bright lights blossom into existence. The way they flicker makes them appear to be burning torches.

At-Will ♦ Illusion

Minor Action

Area burst 1 within 10 squares

Effect: You cause four glowing forms to appear in unoccupied squares in the burst. The forms can appear as torches, lanterns, glowing spheres, or vaguely humanoid shapes. Each form emits dim light to a range of 2 squares. The forms last until the end of your next turn. They also vanish if you use this power again.

Sustain Minor: The forms persist until the end of your next turn, and you can move two of them up to 5 squares apiece.

OTHER DROW MAGIC

The *Neverwinter™ Campaign Setting* contains a drow character theme, the Bregan D'aerthe spy, that boasts two utility powers, *levitation* and *continuous levitation*. These powers are also available to drow characters who do not take the Bregan D'aerthe spy theme. *Levitation* can be taken as a drow racial utility power of 2nd level, and *continuous levitation* can be taken as a drow racial utility power of 6th level.

Vanish from View

Drow know well the ways of slyness and deception. Being hidden from view can be useful for more than patient spying. Vanishing for the blink of an eye can be the difference between life and death.

Vanish from View Drow Racial Utility 6

You use a moment where your enemy can't fully see you to avoid an attack and gain the upper hand.

Encounter

Immediate Interrupt Personal

Trigger: You are hit by a melee or a ranged attack while you have cover or concealment from the attacker.

Effect: You make a Stealth check. If your result exceeds the attack roll, the attack misses you, and you gain combat advantage against the attacker until the end of your next turn.

Quell Magic

Magic infuses the drow, and your people take advantage of it both by learning to channel it personally and by attending rigorous schools of magical training that educate hundreds of spellcasters. With so many individuals of magical might in drow society, it is no wonder that some develop their personal force as a means to quell the magic of others.

Quell Magic Drow Racial Utility 10

You snuff out the magic you see before you as easily as a child blows out candles.

Daily

Standard Action Area burst 2 within 10 squares

Target: Each conjuration and zone in the burst

Attack: Intelligence + 4 or Charisma + 4 vs. the Will of the creator of the conjuration or the zone

Hit: The target is destroyed. All its effects end, including those that normally last until a target saves.

Dark Doorway

Drow have not always lived in the shadows. Once, they counted eladrin as siblings and shared the starlit wonders of a life on the surface among the fey. You have reached deep into the mystical history of your heritage to find the magic that eladrin now take for granted. Yet your touch upon that magic taints it, casting a shadow on the ability you gain.

Dark Doorway Drow Racial Utility 16

You see your moment and seize a pathway of magic that pulls you through shadow to arrive elsewhere.

Daily ♦ Teleportation

Minor Action Personal

Requirement: You must be hidden from each enemy within 10 squares of you.

Effect: You teleport up to 10 squares to a square providing any degree of cover or concealment. You can make a Stealth check to remain hidden when you arrive, ignoring the normal -5 penalty to the check for movement.

ELADRIN

"I stand at the crossroads of two worlds."

The eladrin, or high elves, claim descent from the elves who stayed in the Feywild after the cataclysmic battle that fractured the elven people into three races. These elves, who thought themselves closest to Corellon, refused to abandon the old ways and customs, and remained sequestered in their gleaming citadels. Trapped in the past, they clung to a time of peace and prosperity long lost. Over the long years since the war, some eladrin have drifted away from the Feywild to seek new lives in the natural world. A few go to reclaim magic lost long ago. Others seek reconciliation with their estranged kin. Whatever the reason, these high elves have begun to venture into the world, bringing ancient magic and power with them.



The eladrin recall the gift Corellon bestowed on the elven races, and they have kept their traditions alive. Though elves abandoned the magic they once knew, eladrin continue to embrace the arcane, channeling Feywild power into themselves to teleport short distances. Eladrin who study the magic flowing in their veins find new ways to employ its energy.

You must be an eladrin to gain and use eladrin powers.

Sense Magic

Eladrin have a strong attunement to the magic around them, embodied by their talent for the arcane arts. Many eladrin emphasize this ability through formal instruction. You have similarly enhanced your natural aptitude to sense magic's presence.

Sense Magic

Eladrin Racial Utility 2

You attune your senses to the magical world, and in a flash, nearby magic becomes as obvious as birdsong on the wind.

Encounter

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You sense the presence of magic within 10 squares of you as if you succeeded on an Arcana check to do so. You can then make an Arcana check as a free action to identify any revealed magical phenomena, conjurations, or zones.

Eladrin Escape

Your people learned long ago to exploit the gaps between worlds to move from one place to another in an instant. You have a knack for such travel and find ways to use your talent to make a quick escape.

Eladrin Escape

Eladrin Racial Utility 6

Your enemy has but one chance to corner you. Wasting it gives you the opportunity to flee.

Encounter ♦ Teleportation

Immediate Reaction Personal

Trigger: An enemy misses you with a melee attack.

Effect: You teleport up to 5 squares.

Recursive Thought

The eladrin ability to resist enchantment and illusion is legendary, but a few lucky fey are capable of more than mere resistance. You've polished your mental shield to a mirror finish, allowing you to reflect afflictions back upon your enemies.

Recursive Thought

Eladrin Racial Utility 10

When you clear your mind, your affliction bounces back to your unsuspecting foe.

Daily

Free Action Special

Trigger: You save against a dazing or stunning effect.

Target: The enemy that subjected you to the effect

Effect: The target is subjected to the effect you saved against until the end of your next turn.

Spiral Dance Assault

Eladrin knights stand among the most feared and respected warriors in the planes. What they lack in brute strength, they more than make up in battle cunning. *Spiral dance assault* is a complex fighting maneuver that keeps an enemy guessing where your next blow will strike.

Spiral Dance Assault

Eladrin Racial Utility 16

You strike and dance away, only to reappear at your enemy's side.

At-Will (Special) ♦ Teleportation

Free Action Personal

Trigger: You hit an enemy with a melee attack on your turn.

Effect: You teleport to a square adjacent to the enemy.

Special: You can use this power only once per round.

ELF

"We claim no ownership of these lands, though we will defend them with every ounce of our blood."

Born from violence and betrayal, the elves, or wood elves, quit the Feywild to escape the horror and loss of their great war and start anew in the natural world. Leaving behind their kin and customs, some elves even set aside their religious obligations to Corellon and Sehanine. Though the Seldarine are honored still, many elves now put their faith in themselves and

their accomplishments. Far from the Feywild, elves have grown into a distinct people.

Elves make their homes in wooded lands. Surrounded by bark and leaf, they live at peace with nature, cutting no tree and showing respect to the beasts whose lands they share. Elves develop talents to help them navigate their homelands, to protect themselves against the wicked humanoids that haunt their lands, and to hunt down those who wrong them.

You must be an elf to gain and use elf powers.

Long View

Elves seldom act impulsively. With life spans measured in centuries, they approach situations with patience and insight to find the easiest path to any destination. *Long view* lets you single out an important enemy and strike with alarming accuracy.

Long View

Elf Racial Utility 2

You scan the battlefield for your target. When you find it, you take aim, knowing your next shot will strike true.

Encounter

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Choose one creature you can see. Until the end of your next turn, you gain combat advantage against that creature for any weapon attack you make using a longbow or a shortbow.

Leave No Trace

An elf grows up learning the ways of nature. Living in the wild instills in them a deep understanding of the relationship between predator and prey. One of the surest ways to become prey is by blundering through the wilderness without a care for the trail you leave. You've seen this and practiced the lessons of your people to hide your tracks.



Determined Accuracy

Whether through supreme skill or uncanny luck, elves tend to hit what they aim at, especially when their need is greatest. Through many battles, you have honed your focus to a razor's edge. When you need to most, you can call upon that clarity to be absolutely certain you hit—unless all of fate is arrayed against you.

Determined Accuracy Elf Racial Utility 10

Resolved not to put a lie to the legendary accuracy of elves, you call all your powers of focus to the fore.

Daily

Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You use *elfen accuracy* to reroll an attack and dislike the new result.

Effect: Reroll the attack roll with a +2 power bonus. Use this result, even if it's lower.

Communion

Elves interact with loved ones on a level that outsiders rarely glimpse or understand. They possess the power to connect soul to soul, matching emotions and heartbeats. You have learned to share this sympathetic bond with an ally. Through a brief touch on the battlefield, you can give strength to a friend who has been beaten down, and in turn take courage from that ally's recovery.

Communion Elf Racial Utility 16

You touch your ally and set your own heart to beat in time, unleashing the healing power of emotional connections.

Encounter ♦ **Healing**

Minor Action **Melee 1**

Requirement: You must have at least one healing surge remaining.

Target: One ally

Effect: You lose a healing surge but gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + one-half your level. In addition, the target regains hit points equal to his or her healing surge value.

Leave No Trace Elf Racial Utility 6

You use instinct and training to avoid showing signs of your passage and hide all signs of your approach.

Daily ♦ **Stance**

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the leave no trace stance. Until the stance ends, the DC of any Perception check to find your tracks or the tracks of up to eight allies who travel with you is increased by 10. If your tracks are found, identifying them requires a Nature check against the same DC. In addition, you and allies adjacent to you have a +2 power bonus to Stealth checks.

This stance ends after 8 hours, when you roll initiative, or when you end this stance as a minor action.

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Matt Sernett is a game designer at Wizards of the Coast whose recent credits include the *Neverwinter Campaign Setting*.

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Not Fair Assault

By Shelly Mazzanoble

Illustration by William O'Connor



Do you remember when I was in mourning for my beloved minotaur barbarian, Kevin Rogers, who died unfairly in a playtest? Big bully Mike Mearls made fun of him because he said Kevin was a dumb name for a minotaur and he deserved to die. *Deserved to die!* This is really painful for me to remember, but I'll do it for you, D&D Players of the world. Why? Because I am your Player-in-Chief and I fear I may have forsaken you!

If you happen to be privy to my D&D diary (and some of you are probably thinking "oh we are, every month, right here.") you would know that I never really got over Kevin's untimely demise. Perhaps because I feel responsible. He was my character, after all. I made him, I played him, and I subsequently buried him. RIP, my furry, bull-headed buddy.

I can't take all the blame, of course. It's not in my nature. I also blame my Dungeon Master. And whatever lunatic wrote that clearly unbalanced and TPK-friendly adventure. And okay, sure, I blame the big white mama dragon who was ultimately responsible for the fall that ended up killing Kevin. But the person I blame the most?

Chris Tulach, D&D Organized Play Manager.

That's right, I said it. I don't care if we're friends in real life. I don't care if I have often described him

as having a +583 in niceness. Doesn't matter if I'm a sucker for his stupid, low-fat brownies and cupcakes decorated with little spiders on top. He's the one who called for this madness! He's the one who orchestrated that playtest!

I was so naïve, D&D Players. I actually believed that those twenty-three glorious minutes of Kevin's life were not all in vain. After Kevin's death, R&D and Organized Play would surely realize that creating adventures like this was a terrible idea! How could this be fun for the player? Why give Dungeon Masters more incentive to kill PCs? Why widen the divide between PC's and DM's?

I was wrong.

Super wrong.

No, R&D and OP didn't scrap the program and start over. They didn't lower the dragon's hit points and decrease the number of minions. You know what they did?

They went back and made the challenges even *harder*. They gave the DM's even more power. And then they bundled it up in a neat little package and called it—Dungeons & Dragons Lair Assault.

At first I was excited about D&D Lair Assault. I thought it sounded *fun*. Ha! Even I fell into their trap! I didn't know that the game I had playtested would eventually be making its way into stores to

pit tactically gifted players against dungeon masters with big, old chips on their shoulders.

Soon I started hearing stories from the new batch of playtesters around the building.

OMGthatwassofreakinhardIalmostpeedmypants-twice!

Perhaps I'm paraphrasing. Whatever. But people were talking, and it didn't sound good. The bursts of laughter and sweaty palms over their foreheads couldn't mask the truth. Players, we were going down.

"So about this whole D&D Lair Assault thing," I asked Chris Tulach (who will now be known as Tulach because there's a lot of Chris's in this story). He was standing by my desk with a plate of his homemade, low-sugar, non-fat, absolutely delicious brownies. (Tulach likes to tweak recipes—min/maxing the ingredients until they create something oddly tasty and bad ass. Same as he does with his characters.)

"What about it?" he asked. "I mean other than it's awesome."

"It seems sort of . . . tough," I mumbled, shooting crumbs all over my keyboard. "Kind of broken if you ask me."

Tulach laughed. "Nah! You're just bitter about Kevin. But look at this way. His death wasn't all for nothing. He helped make for an even better experience for all the minotaurs who will follow him off suspension bridges into battle."

"That's ridiculous," I said, taking another brownie. "You guys just went and made it harder. I'm trying to bring peace between the players and Dungeon Masters. This will surely tear them apart!"

"Not a chance," Tulach said. "It's good to have some rivalry in D&D. And contrary to what you might think, players *want* a challenge. DM's are just giving them what they want."

"Oh yeah?" I asked, grabbing a copy of the first Lair Assault and flipping it over to show him the copy on the back. "What's this mean, then? How do you explain *that*?"

Tulach read it out loud. "The players think their characters are invincible. It's time for you to show them otherwise." He shrugged. "What? It's funny."

"Oh really?" I asked. "You think it's time to show me otherwise?"

He smiled. "If you're up for it. Which I doubt you are. See ya!"

And with that he took his brownies and flitted off to antagonize someone else.

I continued reading the back cover. "Gather your players—the tacticians, the rules experts, and the power gamers..."

Well, I'm none of the above, but I am a girl with mission. A girl with a mission who grew up watching soap operas. I know how to exact revenge! The time had come to avenge the premature death of Kevin Rogers. I was sure I could find some tacticians, rules experts, and power gamers. I only needed to look right next to me.

"Hey, Chris," I said to my cube mate, Chris Lindsay. "You feel like a game of D&D Lair Assault sometime soon?"

"Sure," he said, without taking his eyes off his computer screen. "Just tell me when."

Assembling my party would be a piece of cake. Asking people around here if they want to play D&D "sometime soon" is like asking me if I want to hit the Nordstrom Half-Yearly Sale. Umm... yeah. Been there, done that, emerged victorious. I can only hope the same is true for what I'm about to schedule next Friday afternoon.

Chris Lindsay helped me round up the rest of our group which included Josh and Mark from Game Support and Bart—because we carpool and if I'm going to stay late on a Friday he might as well too.

"Just remember," I told Bart. "This is war. It's serious business. We don't have time for your care-less, willy-nilly 'I think I'll just wander over to this strange looking portal and put my finger in it' ways."

"That's exactly the type of player you need for D&D Lair Assault," Bart said. "You know you're going to have to take some risks if you want to survive." He said this last part like Vincent Price at the end of the *Thriller* video.

"Ohhhhhh, spooky! I can handle it," I said. "I've been putting a lot of thought into my character. She's going to be very, very risky."

It's true. I did put a lot of thought into my character. A lot of thought about who was going to help me roll her up. Like I said to Bart, this was war. Sure, I could do it. But would she be the best possible character she could be? I can't trust myself not to get all *magic missiles* and *burning hands* here. I needed an expert's opinion.

"A wizard?" Chris Lindsay said when I asked for his advice. "Way to think outside the box."

"This is too important for me to go out of my comfort zone," I explained. "I need every advantage here. I'm not just going to be a wizard. I'm going to be an amazing wizard. With your help."

Now, I don't know what it's like for you when you ask coworkers for help, but imagine saying, "Hey there, Bob. You're really good with Powerpoint. Can you help me animate this slide?" And the next day Bob comes back to work with not one but *three* different versions of an entirely animated Powerpoint slideshow.

"I have a few options for you," Chris Lindsay said, coming over to my side of our two-foot wall. "I made a warlock version. Don't panic! It will still be familiar, but maybe a little more bad ass."

"Wow, when I asked for help I didn't mean for you to just do it." I really didn't, but I'll admit I was kind of glad he did.

As cool as the warlock was, I decided on one of the wizard options because I knew Bart wanted to play the warlock.

There's a lot of preparation that goes into a game, but D&D Lair Assault takes it to a whole new level. There's at least one full week of trash-talking and empty threats between the players and the Dungeon Master. Or in our case, the player.

"Must you antagonize the DM?" Josh asked, after hearing Tulach and I go at it in the kitchen while we waited for our lunches to heat up.

"He doesn't scare me!" I shouted, making sure Tulach's retreating form could hear me.

"Well, he should," Josh said. "He's ruthless. Not like he is in real life at all."

One morning during the D&D cross-functional meeting, I was telling the team about an ebook promotion when I noticed Tulach across the table glaring at me with this odd, intent look on his face. Was he chewing an extremely large wad of gum? No, it looked like he was mouthing something.

"Are you kidding me?" I asked, interrupting my presentation. "Really, Tulach?"

"What?" he asked all innocently. "What did I do?"

"Maybe you want to share that with the rest of the group?"

"Sure," he said not missing a beat. "I'm running Shelly through a D&D Lair Assault this week and I was just saying that I'm going to kill her character."

"That's not what you said."

"Okay, I said 'crush your character's little chicken bones.' Snap! Snap, snap, snap!"

"Oh, you poor thing," Kim from Market Research said, putting her hand on mine. "You don't handle that stuff well, do you?"

"I'll be fine!" I shouted. "My character is super tough! And strategic! The whole party is. Tulach is

the one who should be worried. We're going to beat his challenge so hard his mama will feel it!"

There was a lot of head nodding and eye rolling and stories about *their* experiences going through a challenge.

(NOTE: A lot of TPK's were happening around here. And they don't think this program is broken?)

As Friday drew closer my anxiety level increased. Every night before bed I studied my genasi wizard, fearing with four pages of powers and spells I was bound to forget something important. Bart was enjoying this.

"I kind of wish we could do our vows over," he said. "I really like this side of you."

"As long as you leave out the 'til death do our characters part,'" I said. "We're going to rock this challenge. Right?"

"Oh yeah," he said picking up his Kindle. "I guess I should roll up a character, huh?"

The day before our game, Tulach and I were in another meeting together.

This time we were sitting on the same side of the table so he wasn't able to silently threaten me. He had to use his voice.

"How's it going, Monster Snacks?"

When at a loss for a pithy comeback always resort to MC Hammer.

"Can't touch this!" I sang.

Later in the meeting when he asked if I could email him a copy of the business plan we were referencing, I shouted "NO!"

Everyone, including my boss and her boss, turned around.

"Are you okay?" Laura asked.

"Yep," I said. "Why?"

"Because it's kind of your job to, you know, do that."

Tulach laughed. "She's fine. She's just thinking about tomorrow's game. Don't worry, Mazzy Star. It's going to be over so quickly you'll barely have time to get acquainted with your character. His name's not Kevin, is it?"

Okay that was it. Those were fighting words. I was going to make Tulach rue the day he ever asked for my business plan.

Friday finally rolled around and I was pumped. In fact, I did my workout in record time with minimal complaining, which worried my trainer.

"You actually, like, did stuff today," he said. "Did you burst a snap on your skinny jeans again?"

No, I did not but only because I gave those stupid jeans away. They're dangerous.

"I'm on a mission," I told him. "I am a warrior in training. I need to do more push-ups. Count for me!"

"Is there some beer festival this weekend or something?"

There was, but that was beside the point.

When the clock struck game time, I entered the conference room like I was Tito Ortiz entering the ring.

"Oh yeah!" I pointed at Tulach. "You're going down!"

"You know you can't kill the DM," Mark said. "I mean, you really, *really* know that, right?"

"Sure, whatever. But I'm not worried. This party is top notch. Like Navy SEALs elite. No monster you put before us will bring us down. Our will is strong, but our tactics are even stronger. Bring. It. On."

Tulach laughed.

"I'm scared," Josh said. "Of Shelly."

"Pshaw!" I was about to take my seat when I noticed something on the table. Something that

reeked of a sneaky, shifty, no-good Dungeon Mastery. So this is how it was going to be.

“What the heck are those?” I asked, pointing to the bounty.

Tulach raised his eyebrows quizzically. “Oh those? Why those are Take 5 candy bars. Didn’t you say once they were your favorite?”

I must confess. I’m a stress eater, and okay, maybe I was feeling a tad stressed. I may have been prepared to fight bugbears and orcs, but I was no match for a Take 5. I took 5.

Tulach asked us to go around and introduce our characters.

We had Garret the Halfling warlock played by Bart, Sarthian the Eladrin fighter played by Josh, Danlyn the elf cleric played by Chris Lindsay, and Theren the elf avenger played by Mark.

“And you are?” Tulach asked, looking at me.

“I’m your mom,” I answered. “I’m Chris Tulach’s Mom.”

Something flashed over Tulach’s face as he wrote my name on an index card. For a minute I thought he might be angry—who knows—maybe his mom has had some shady dealings with pirates and sea hags, and he’s sensitive about it. Who wouldn’t be? But then I saw him smile.

“My mom’s name is Christine,” he said.

“Fine. Call me Christine Tulach,” I said. “Especially when saying things like ‘Christine Tulach takes 39 points of damage.’”

He wrote something else down. “Noted.”

And so it began. The biggest battle of my D&D career. One might say the *mother* of all battles.

Come on, Christine Tulach. Don’t fail me now.

To be continued...

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble may have trashed talked her way out of low-fat baked goods forever. Please send recipes.

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