Observer is known to employ groups of adventurers in matters of importance to the nation. Though it has many paladins and clerics in its ranks, outside assistance is essential to the continued defense of the realm.

The Companion

The second sun that sits directly above Elturel burns night and day. This orb is commonly called the Companion, but some ascribe it to one deity or another. Where the natural sun journeys across the sky and disappears at night, the Companion is steady and loyal, ever preventing creatures of darkness from assaulting the city.

This second sun provides daytime illumination to the people of Elturel at all hours, and its illumination is as harmful to creatures vulnerable to sunlight as the sun is. This constant daylight lessens the farther one travels from Elturel, casting a sort of wan dawn light for fifty or so miles around the city. Beyond that, the orb is visible as a bright beacon in the sky. It can be seen clearly at night from as far away as Boareskyr Bridge and Berdusk, looking like an unmoving star low on the horizon. It might be fairly said that every land touched by its light is now under "Elturel's Shield," but such claims raise hackles among Elturgard's neighbors.

The Creed Resolute

With no clear sign of the source of the Companion and so many faithful arriving in Elturgard each day, the first High Observer brought together a cadre of paladins and devised the Creed Resolute. This series of oaths and maxims outlines, among other things, that those who swear by it will not ascribe the Companion to any one god, nor allow religious differences to come between themselves and others. Those who swear the Creed Resolute also promise to serve the High Observer and uphold the laws of Elturgard, and always be in service to the greater good. While originally the Creed Resolute was intended to forge the fractious paladins of Elturgard into the Companions, the oath has since been taken by all among the Hellriders as well. If a Hellrider or Companion oversteps the bounds of the law or good conduct, often a fellow will say "recall the Creed," and soon things are set right.

Though some of the Creed's agents seem unnecessarily stern, the people of Elturgard hold the Hellriders and Companions in the highest esteem. The Companions are without a doubt the champions of the people first and foremost, and the folk of Elturgard love them for it. Though it might be hard to get the Companions to crack a smile, I've found even the lowliest of the guards here willing, without a second thought, to lay down their lives in defense of their people, and the folk of Elturgard know it. Disrespect the Creed, and it isn't the Creed's wrath you face, but that of the local citizenry.

Elturel

Elturel is a city on a hill. It stands overlooking the River Chionthar, constantly illuminated by the Companion. A major location along the trade route through the Western Heartlands, Elturel and its environs for many miles around are a safe haven for visitors and citizens alike. Much of this safety comes from the efforts of the Hellriders, whose cavalry patrol the roads that lead into Elturgard, as well as the paths along the river.

In the city's center, directly beneath the Companion, is a cliff-sided tor that holds aloft the High Hall. This castle, whose walls surround the summit of the mount, is home to the High Observer, and to a great deal of the bureaucracy of Elturgard. A stream runs out of the center of the castle, spawned by the powerful springs in its cellars. It flows north across the tor's top and then down one of its cliffs in a series of waterfalls called the Maidens' Leap. By canal it forms a moat for the eastern Dock District, before it joins the Chionthar. Along the stream across the tor lies the long, narrow garden, an open place of flowers, wooded paths, and arched bridges. The garden is a favorite meeting place for citizens of Elturel and retains a wild beauty in winter. The rich folk of the city dwell nearest the garden atop the tor, while folk in the town below live mostly in tall, narrow homes that are rich in balconies and windows.

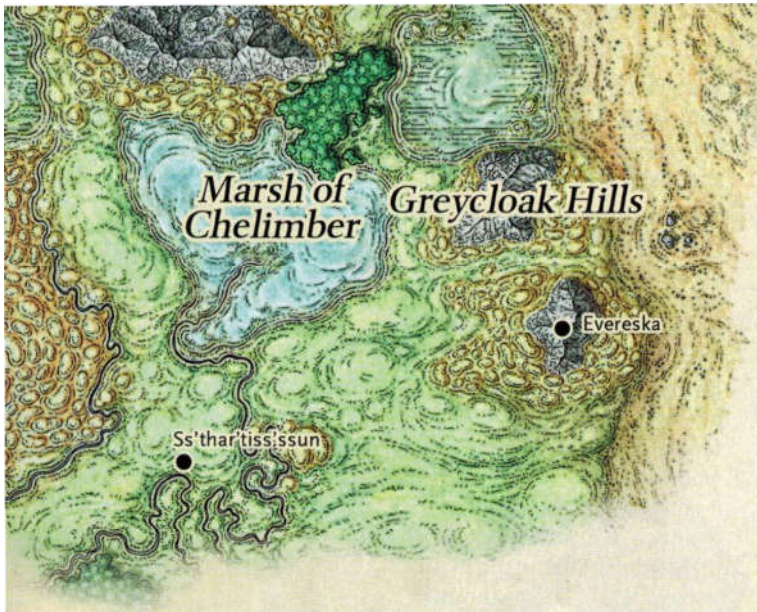
Its benefits notwithstanding, the constant illumination that bathes Elturel can be difficult for newcomers to adjust to. Inns and boarding halls usually swathe the windows of their guest rooms in thick cloth to block out the light so that visitors can get some sleep. Without the onset of dawn or dusk to frame the day's labors, citizens rely on the tolling of the bells from the High Hall to denote the start and end of the workday. The lack of natural darkness means the city sees less of the sorts of activities that city folk in other places often undertake at night. Elturel has a low incidence of brawling and ambushes in the alleys around its inns and taverns, and those who would engage in thievery must be especially careful and shrewd to succeed.

Other Communities

A few other major settlements of note are located within the borders of Elturgard. I describe three of them briefly here.

Berdusk. A large population of artisans drives the activity in the city of Berdusk. Its native nobility, the so-called "First Folk of Berdusk," have made a great show of their piety since the founding of Elturgard, and a great many of the high-ranking priests hail from their families. Over the years a few bad apples in their midst have given Berduskans a reputation for the sin of "false piety"—pretending to a stronger faith than one actually possesses. Though this attitude is disapproved of by the Creed, it has given rise in other parts of Elturgard to the expression "as holy as a Berduskan priest"—which is to say, not very.

Scornubel. Known far and wide as the City of Caravans, Scornubel is the great trading nexus of the Kingdom of Two Suns, and the Elturgard city I am most familiar with. Though responsible for a great deal of the nation's prosperity, it is also the source of plenty of its trouble; Scornubel is a haven for outlanders, many of whom are either troublemakers or folk whom trouble is pursuing. Add to this the machinations of Scornubel's native merchant-princes and the rumors of a thieves' guild somewhere in its walls, and it can be understood why the saying "The High Observer's headache is named Scornubel" has some merit.



Soubar. Soubar is a small walled town with supporting farmsteads strung along the road to the north and south. It is a waypoint settlement much like any other except for the existence of the Black Abbey. This dark stone structure once served as a monastery to Bane and lay in ruins for many years. Now priests of Bane have begun rebuilding it, bringing an influx of wealth and trade, along with the many skilled masons and laborers necessary for such a project. Some people question the desirability of a temple to Bane in Elturgard, but those who do are encouraged to recall the Creed. For their part, the priests of Bane have pledged to aid in Soubar's defense against raiding goblinoids and other threats, a promise that gives some solace to the suspicious.

Evereska

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Evereska, but I will be brief for I have no desire to publish all its secrets. I shall endeavor to describe my own homeland in as unbiased a way as I might, but I must warn: I am a daughter of the Greycloak Hills, and its mists yet roil through my soul as surely as elven blood does through my veins. Ere I make mention of my home, though, I will discuss the meeting-ground that is the closest most outsiders will ever get to fair Evereska: the Halfway Inn.

The Halfway Inn

Evereska lies hidden in the Greycloaks. Our paths to it are secret, cloaked by natural features and magical guise. No significant human settlement stands within a hundred miles west of it, and to the east lies the hungry desert sands of Anauroch.

Strange, then, that the Halfway Inn should stand where it does. Perhaps it is there because, as humans put it, "It is halfway to everywhere." A small village surrounds the titular inn, which is itself not a single building, but a small compound that includes stables and other outbuildings. The folk who live here year-round are hunters, trappers, gold prospectors, gem seekers, smallholders and their families, and it is they who staff the inn when traders come to see what goods can be reaped from the region.

Evereska is self-sufficient, but its citizens in their travels sometimes stop at the Halfway Inn and, if traders are present, exchange goods with them. Whenever I return home, I make it a point to spend at least a night at the inn to see old friends (often much older since last I saw them) and learn what has passed since my last visit.

Elf artisans sometimes come out of the Greycloak Hills to sell their goods here, and some of the best-known can sometimes spark impromptu bidding wars over the right to purchase their wares. My kin don't do anything so pedestrian as set up booths or tables for themselves, but instead deal with a few traders who might be at the inn at the time. These agents then travel out and sell the elven crafts to others, which has given the Halfway Inn an undeserved reputation as Evereska's trading post.

Permit me to state this in as clear a fashion as writing allows: don't venture into the mountains seeking Evereska unless you are in the company of a citizen of Evereska. You will not find such accompaniment easily, for we are determined over the whole of our lives that no outsiders may gaze upon our homes without invitation from the eldest among us. If strangers need to meet with any of us, that is the purpose the Halfway Inn fulfills.

The Refuge in the Hills

When I rest at the end of the day and retreat into reverie, I do not revisit the wonders of ancient ruins and majestic creatures I have seen on my wanderings. At those times, I recall the Evereska I wandered as a youth, when I followed a haunting song or a wisp of light among the roiling fogs of the Greycloaks, picked sweet berries in the hollows of the hills, and swam in the cold streams that flowed out of their heights.

Evereska nestles in a sunny canyon, high in the mountains. The surrounding peaks hide it from all but the most powerful fliers who can stand the chill and high winds of their towering heights. Yet should such approach Evereska, its guardians mounted on giant eagles would ensure no ill befell the vale.

Unlike cramped and crowded human cities, Evereska is composed of clusters of buildings throughout the many levels of the great valley, with many a footpath between them. These clusters are separated by clearings, meadows, and small woodland groves—natural spaces just as much a part of the city as the buildings are, their presence essential to our way of life.

With the recent tragedy of Myth Drannor's second fall, Evereska has seen the largest influx of new citizens in many centuries, in the form of our Cormanthan brethren. They have been warmly welcomed into Evereska, but some of our people are concerned that so many new residents will disrupt the peace and balance we've thus far been able to maintain. At the same time, some of the newcomers have reacted unpleasantly to Evereska's reclusiveness, which they see as a form of prejudice or cowardice, and a few of their younger folk have taken it upon themselves to speak on such topics rather heatedly. I'm hopeful that the coming decades will smooth over these differences and sooth the contentions. Evereska is a beautiful place, and I see no reason to mar that beauty with an argument among friends.

Fields of the Dead

The expanse known as the Fields of the Dead has been the battleground for myriad wars and skirmishes over the centuries. It is said that the hills that dot the countryside here all hold the dead, and there is some measure of truth to that—many of the hillocks are indeed barrows, raised to house the fallen dead of one faction or nation on either side of a war. I have seen more than one such barrow, either broken open from the outside by those seeking lost treasures, or somehow broken from within.

The Fields of the Dead is a vast, rolling plain of windswept grasses that seems to go on to the horizon in every direction. Regular travelers through the area speak of the "whispers of the dead," the popular term for the sound that results when a breeze rustles the grass. The wind almost always blows here, and it isn't uncommon to smell salt in the air even dozens of leagues inland.

Though this land is uncivilized, it isn't barren. Even if many monsters hide in the tall grass or build burrows in the sides of the hills, the fields represent an opportunity for shepherds and free folk to claim a plot that no one else has yet occupied. Small, stout farmhouses and even a few walled enclosures that contain several such dwellings can occasionally be found a short distance away from the roads and rivers that run through or near the Fields.

The folk of this land are kind but wary, usually willing to share their wells or cisterns, and part with the goods they store away in return for goods in trade. I have met a few who show greater hospitality, letting strangers make camp within the shelter of the low stone walls that surround their steadings. They are a good and honest people, by and large.

Away from the vicinity of these settlements, there are threats aplenty. Small bands of nomadic humanoids traverse these grasslands, as do monsters from out of the Wood of Sharp Teeth to the south, the Trollclaws to the north, or the serpent kingdom of Najara to the east. Occasionally, one of the barrows bulges and vomits forth undead, wakened by some instinct known only to them, or a patch of terrain buckles and collapses in on itself, revealing a sinkhole to warrens beneath.

Dragonspear Castle

Though the structure is crumbled and perpetually shrouded in mist, more than one of the caravans I've guided through these lands have seen Dragonspear Castle from afar and expressed a desire to seek shelter there. As I tell them at such times, it is better to seek shelter inside an opened tomb in these lands, and crawl in to huddle among the warrior dead within, than to seek anything like sanctuary from Dragonspear.

Built by an adventurer named Daeros after he found a wealth of gems in a sunken dwarven settlement, Dragonspear Castle was erected above the very caverns where that settlement—fallen Kanaglym—was interred. Two hundred years ago, sorcerous machinations brought about the fall of Daeros and the opening of an infernal portal in the depths of the castle.

After that event, Dragonspear's ruins were occupied by hobgoblins and myriad bands of bandits, until Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate sent troops to root them out. Discovering that the portal yet existed, but unable to destroy it, they established the Hold of Battle Lions, a fortified temple of Tempus, in an attempt to prevent anything from coming through. In time, though, devils broke through new portals inside the castle's walls and overran the defenders.

Then came the Second Dragonspear War, more than a century ago, during which a strange cloak of mist settled over the castle, and the forces of Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate once more attacked. This time, they defeated the devils, leaving the castle ruined and still cloaked in mists. At least one other time since then, the devils have punched back through, amassing other fell creatures to attack the nearby settlements (notably Daggerford), but they have been fought off by adventurers each time. The most recent stories tell of heroes confronting Red Wizards of Thay and other devilry. I pray that this will be the last time such efforts are necessary, but somehow, I think not.

Today, Dragonspear remains crumbled and mist-shrouded. Rumors say that the castle—seemingly quiescent—has become home to undead horrors of some sort, but no one seems terribly inclined to investigate such claims, so long as they don't threaten the folk who live nearby. Some interested parties out of Baldur's Gate offered me more than a fair amount of coin to investigate the truth of these rumors, though I demurred. I don't fancy myself an investigator or a spy, and I know better than to seek out whatever foulness might have taken hold in this place.

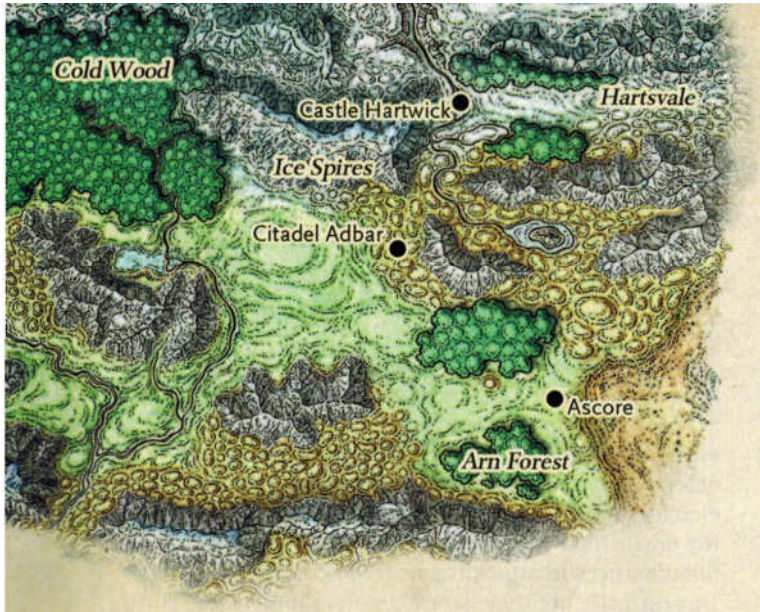
Trollclaws

A tangled landscape of rough hills along the northern edge of the Fields of the Dead, the Trollclaws are home to a great many of the regenerating, bloodthirsty beasts. Exactly what makes these hills such prime ground for trolls is unknown (and a favorite topic of conversation around many of the campfires I've sat at while passing through or near this place), but there's no doubt that they dwell here in great numbers.

Those traveling south to Baldur's Gate or north out of the Fields of the Dead typically travel through the Trollclaws. The Trollclaw Ford, so named for obvious reasons, is the only place for leagues that wagons can safely cross the Winding Water. Important as it is, the site has been occupied by several forces over the years, as evidenced by the ruined remnants of forts and similar buildings nearby. But those claimants have always fallen eventually to prolonged assaults by trolls. My advice is to avoid the region entirely, but if you can't, keep a lit torch handy at all times.

Hartsvale

I have been to Hartsvale only once, and found it surpassingly beautiful each time. Its wonders are wild and untamed, with even the so-called civilization of the place exuding a kind of primal beauty that is found nowhere else that I know of.



Hartsvale is far in the windswept north, a fertile mountain valley where the Ice Spire Mountains abut the High Ice. The Clear Whirl River, easily the cleanest and coldest I have ever bathed in, flows south into the valley out of the lands of the Endless Blizzard, feeding the rich soil tucked between the northern and southern arms of the Ice Spires. The river splits as it runs through the hilly lands, eventually draining into a series of lakes along the southern edge of the vale. Two small woods also grow in the vale, one along its northern edge, between the vale proper and the northern Ice Spires, and another fed by the lakes on its southern edge.

Originally the home of giant clans and ragtag barbarian tribespeople related to the Uthgardt, Hartsvale was conquered by the hero Hartkiller. He was a giant who had ventured into the lands to the south and learned of their ways. When he came to Hartsvale, he rallied the human tribes, uniting them into a fighting force capable of defeating the giants who tyrannized them, and they threw the giants down, claiming the vale between the mountains for their descendants.

Giants aplenty still dwell in Hartsvale's mountains and forested hills, but they've reached an accord with the humans of the vale. So far as I know, they live peaceably distant from the human lands, and taboos exist among both humans and giants that keep them separate. In my time in Hartsvale, I saw no giants, but surely I saw their works. At the boundaries of lands where humans (and other folk smaller than giants) may not go stand titanic menhirs, likely erected by stone giants.

The folk of Hartsvale are ruled by House Hartwick, a line of royals supposedly descended from Hartkiller. Though human, House Hartwick's scions are all very tall and strong, most standing seven feet in height. The king of Hartsvale sits on the Alabaster Throne in Castle Hartwick, and the many earls of the vale's duchies owe their fealty to him.

Peace has reigned for many years in Hartsvale. Grauman, called the Good King by his people, sits the Alabaster Throne, though his years are advanced. His eldest son and heir, Taumarik, is a young ranger who has recently returned from a three-year journey to explore the North. He came back with a wife, the sorceress Ylienna of Silverymoon, and has begun to take on more of his father's onerous responsibilities. There is some strife in the court, however, for the earls don't seem to trust his "out-vale witch-bride" (a phrase that infuriates Taumarik, but seems to gently amuse Ylienna). For myself, I found the lady Ylienna a delight on the one occasion when I was in her company.

The vale is well guarded, as all jewels should be—in this case by the perils of the mountains and giant-steads that surround it. Nonetheless, a certain strong breed of merchant travels the narrow mountain passes leading into Hartsvale. The dwarves of Citadel Adbar jestingly refer to these people as "goats of coin," for they will cling like such animals to the most precarious of mountain ridges while seeking the opportunities that wait beyond. My own journeys with the goats of coin have impressed upon me the skill of these folk, who brave crumbling paths, avalanche-ridden passes, terrible howling blizzards, and monsters of all sorts to reach Hartsvale and get safely out of the vale again.

It isn't merely the high mountains around the vale that hold dangers. Though the valley has scattered settlements, all of Hartsvale can hardly be considered civilized. In my time traveling these lands (with one of the few goats of coin that refused to be daunted by the fens around Castle Hartwick), I've found these lands to be still frontier-like, similar to some of the wilder portions of the North, particularly in the days before the founding of Luruar and the resettlement of Mithral Hall. Fell beasts aplenty make their lairs in out-of-the-way places across the valley, and raiding bands of ogres often come down out of the mountains.

Castle Hartwick and Stagwick

Between two branches of the Clear Whirl River lies a great island on which Hartkiller built his castle. Stagwick, on the east bank of the river, is a small community of folk who work as farmers, fishers, herders, and artisans. These folk do a brisk business, as most outland merchants choose not to journey beyond Stagwick and instead sell their wares to the Hartsvale merchants. Perhaps a third of the merchants who journey to Hartsvale choose to undertake the trip out to the fiefdoms of the earls, who pay more to encourage this behavior.

The Ogres

For reasons I can't fathom, Harstvale and its surrounding mountain ranges host many tribes of ogres—indeed, not mere family groups, but whole tribes of them! Whereas elsewhere ogres seem to live like bears, near Hartsvale they act more like orcs. Thankfully the brutes are still too stupid for such complex tasks as working metal, but from what I heard in my time in the vale their culture is surprisingly sophisticated. Different tribes worship different gods, Vaprak being the one I heard most about, and these differences in religion apparently set the tribes against each other. From what I heard, both the giants and the people of Hartsvale hate the ogres, a fact for which I'm sure many are grateful. If one or more giants decided

to organize the ogres, I don't know if any in Hartsvale could stand against them.

Helm's Hold

Helm's Hold has stood as a place of watchfulness and protection for generations. Ever since its foundation by the Company of Crazed Venturers, travelers have used it as a safe place to rest and recuperate on their journeys. Even during the dark times when Helm ceased showing signs to his faithful, the priests and people at Helm's Hold kept their doors open and their eyes on the road, providing refuge to any who came in peace. This outlook was recently sorely tested, and I'm uncertain if Helm's Hold passed or failed the test.

Even though the Watcher was destroyed just prior to the Spellplague, the faithful toiled on through terrible times to complete a grand central temple for the good of the community and the glory of their god. The kindly clergy of this temple, dubbed the Cathedral of Helm, took in those who had been touched by the plague or rendered insane by the destruction of Mystra's Weave. Sadly, as all too often occurs, corruption crept into the settlement, in the form of predatory creatures and malefactors who sought to experiment on the unfortunates in the care of the temple

In time the leadership of Helm's Hold was itself corrupted, falling into the hands of a shapeshifting succubus, who turned many monks into willing servitors. When her machinations were at last revealed and the battle for Helm's Hold began, other otherworldly forces came to the fore: summoned devils, undead raised from the very crypts of the temple, and tentacled, jelly-skinned things whose origin I dare not consider. With the aid of adventurers from nearby Neverwinter, all were defeated and Helm's Hold at last cleansed.

Order of the Gilded Eye

Among those stalwarts who saved Helm's Hold was a member of the Order of the Gauntlet. This man was Javen Tarmikos, and seeing the horrors unleashed on the world in Helm's Hold, he found his own order at fault. The Order of the Gauntlet doesn't punish the criminal before the crime is committed. When evil arises, members of the order strike and strike hard, but they leave the orcs alone in their mountains and don't disturb dragons in their slumber. After Helm's Hold, Javen found this philosophy flawed. Evils unlooked for can breed in the shadows, growing stronger until they attack. This seemed particularly true of otherworldly threats, such as portals to fiendish realms, evil spirits that seek to possess the living, and the corrupting influences of alien planes.

Javen says he was ruminating on this when he received a sign of Helm's return. In the main chapel, the faithful had erected a new symbol of Helm after the last had been desecrated. Javen says he was gazing at this symbol and meditating on his order's failure when Helm's unblinking eye wept tears of gold. Soon after, uncorrupted priests of Helm's Hold, men and women who had remained ever watchful for Helm's return, experienced their own divine signs. In response to prayers, some were even rewarded with spells. Javen took those priests and followers from the Order of the Gauntlet loyal to him and formed a new order, swearing them in under the watchful gaze of Helm's still-weeping eye.

The Order of the Gilded Eye is dedicated to protecting the world and good people by rooting out hidden evils and severing connections with other planes. According to their members, it's not enough to fight threats that arise. Many lives can be saved if the signs of evil and those who dabble in darkness are actively sought out and destroyed before they open the gateways to larger threats. Since its founding, the Order of the Gilded Eye has grown in number and its capacity to deal with threats, welcoming exorcists, abjurers, and spies, as well as paladins and clerics of Helm. I've even heard that assassins bear the order's symbol—Helm's eye upon a golden gauntlet curled into a fist—and it is a claim I can't disregard. The Order of the Gilded Eye can be brutal in their pursuit of evil.

Did Helm's symbol weep as Javen Tarmikos and others have said? If it did, was Javen's creation of this order Helm's intention? Is the Helm that has returned from death different from the god whose worship was familiar to me in my youth? How can we mortals know? Helm was ever a god of watchfulness and protection, but that didn't make him a just god, nor a kindly one.

Whatever the truth may be, know this: The Order of the Gilded Eye controls Helm's Hold now. If you hide evil in your heart, or if there is the whiff of something otherworldly about you, ride on. You'll find no sanctuary there.

Places and People of the Hold

Helm's Hold is still a relatively small settlement: a handful of streets that encircle a central marketplace, with sturdy stone-and-timber embankment walls all the way around. In the center of town sits the Heartward, a large marketplace with several rows of stalls radiating out from its central feature, an old gallows that doesn't see much use these days. The market is so named for the shrine to Sune that once stood along its edge. That shrine has since been replaced by a recently constructed temple to Lady Firehair, called the Heartward Hall.

Not far from Heartward lies the town hall, a former inn that has been turned into the council building where the Speakers of Helm's Hold meet. The Speakers are the duly elected representatives of the hold, numbering eight in all, plus the Chief Speaker. The current Chief Speaker is Amarandine Wanderfoot, an older halfling matron who was an adventurer in her day. The Speakers work closely with the Holy Watcher to see to the proper governance of the hold.

A short distance from the town hall lies the Venturer's Rest, a favorite stopping-off point of adventurers in the area, and of the locals who like to sit at the bar and listen to the tales such folk bring with them. The Rest was until recently called the Old Dirty Dwarf, but was rechristened by its new owner, a winsome Chauntean paladin by the name of Kharissa Anuvien. Dame Kharissa claims that one of her ancestors was in the Company of Crazed Venturers, associated with the

founding of Helm's Hold, and her quick-rising popularity among the people has won her a seat as a Speaker.

Dominating the skyline of the hold is the great edifice: the Cathedral of Helm. As much a fortification as it is a temple, the cathedral has a small building on its grounds that serves as an orphanage, wards for caring for the sick and injured, as well as a newer addition that houses the mad and deformed who have been brought up from the catacombs.

The settlement enjoys prosperity today, but such benefit was hard-won and requires vigilance to retain. Helm's Hold is vulnerable on many fronts, in large part because of its proximity to Neverwinter Wood—which, if anything, has become more dangerous in recent times. Rumors of maddened treants abound, as well as stories of Uthgardt barbarians once again raiding the trails that lead to the hold.

Worse still, the Holy Watcher has seen premonitions of something unspeakable rising from the depths beneath the hold, bringing down the lowest vaults of the cathedral in its bloody ascension. As a result, the temple has dramatically increased guard patrols in the tunnels, perhaps as a prelude to hiring adventurers to explore the tunnels deep under Helm's Hold for some clue of what those visions might portend.

High Forest

Anyone with even a hint of elven blood can't help but feel it stir upon setting foot in the High Forest. The sheer age and the power of the trees, the depth of their roots, and the wind whispering through their leaves—all these things call to us.

A vast green cloak in the midst of the North, the High Forest is a reminder of ages past, when thick woods blanketed much of Faerûn, and sylvan creatures of all types lived among the trees. Even today the High Forest has barely known the tread and touch of humans, and old growth dominates its flora.

Elven communities in the forest are typically small and often nomadic. In part, this is a reflection of the desire to keep the woods untouched, but there are ruins here, such as those of Ascalhorn—now called Hellgate Dell—that remind us of the fallen cities and empires of the past.

The High Forest once sheltered three great elven realms beneath its boughs, and the bones of those empires still lie tangled in its roots. Many tribes of wood elves—and a few moon elf tribes—still roam the wood protecting these ruins, the monuments to their golden age. Few beyond the borders of the High Forest know much about these elves, who have no single leader and make little contact with the outside world. Travelers in the High Forest must always be wary of elves they meet for they can never be sure of their welcome, and any promises of safe passage might not be honored by the next band of elves.

One elf is leading the effort to change this situation. Known as the Red Lady, or simply the Lady of the Wood, Morgwais is a wood elf who seeks to unite the disparate tribes. She leads the Caerilcarn, the "Council of the Wood," which periodically gathers many tribal leaders together to share information, consult, and deliberate. Her stated aim is to resurrect the kingdom of Eaerlann, and she has made bold steps in that direction by allying the settlements of Nordahaeril, Reitheillaethor, and Teuveamanthaar (which most know as Tall Trees). As yet though, the elves who believe in this vision are small in number and spread far apart over the eastern reaches of the High Forest.

Fey and sylvan creatures of all sorts—including satyrs, dryads, and treants—inhabit the High Forest. Small wonder that one almost immediately feels the presence of unseen watchers upon entering the woods.

Nowhere in the forest is this feeling more palpable than near the Grandfather Tree, an oak larger than you might imagine possible, which serves as a holy site for the Treeghost tribe of the Uthgardt. Four smaller oaks—enormous indeed, though still smaller than the Grandfather—mark the boundaries of the site, protecting the tree and aiding those whom its spirits determine are worthy, speeding their natural healing. Teleportation magic often goes awry here, and the caverns deep beneath the site are rumored to contain all manner of magical portals.

If it isn't the elves, the fey, or the trees themselves watching visitors, it might be the centaurs who make the High Forest their home, claiming the plateaus near the head of the Unicorn Run. For decades, the centaurs have been growing in number, enough so that they may soon divide their tribes and claim additional lands as their territory. Pegasi and unicorns can be found here, and even some of the fabled aarakocra, the winged birdfolk, live among the peaks at the heart of the wood.

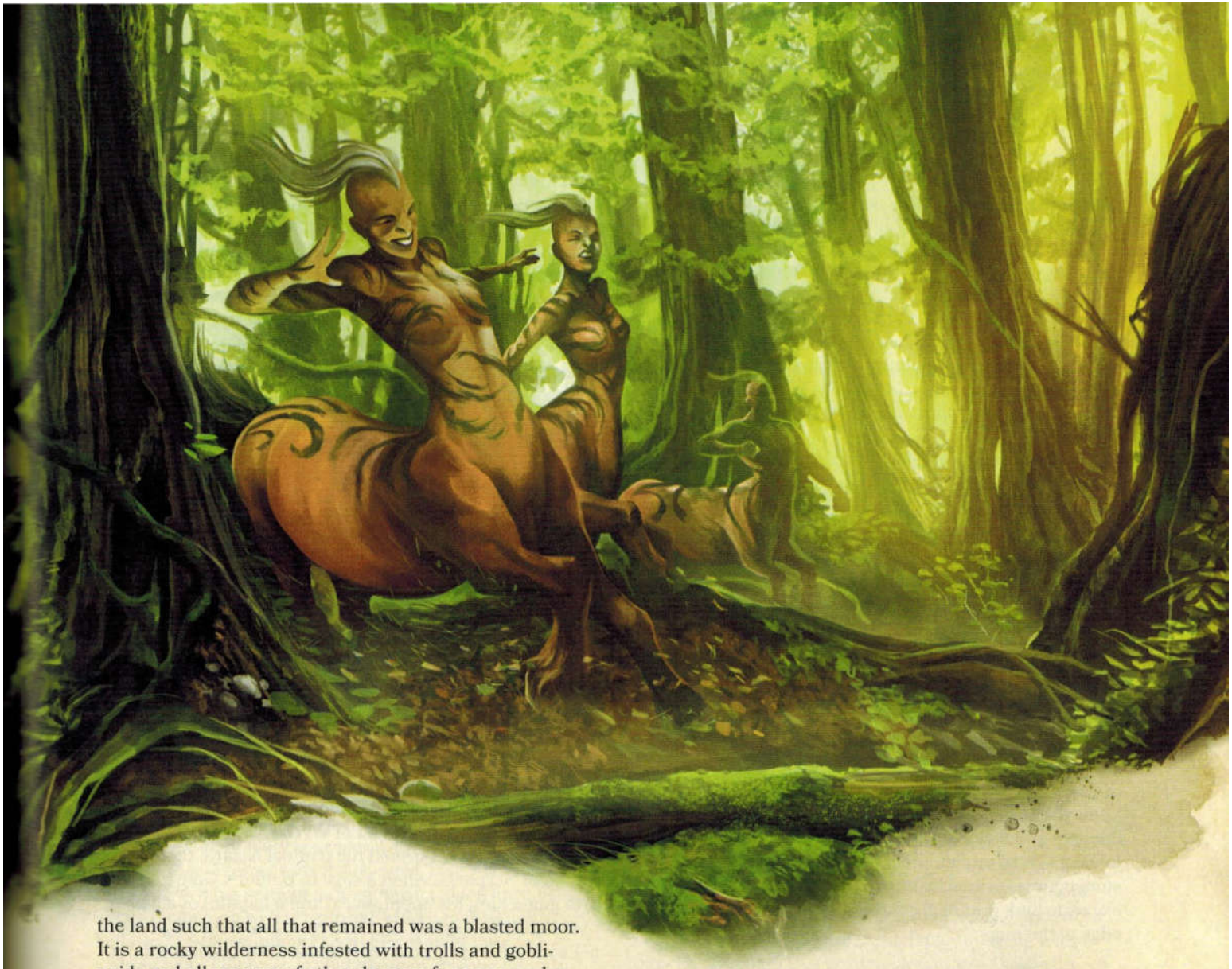
Within the depths of the forest is an entire mountain range known as the Star Mounts. Constant strong winds keep weaker flying creatures from approaching the peaks of the mountains, with the strange exception of the aarakocra, who had an ancestral homeland there before being chased out by a dragon. Most the peaks may be viewed only from afar, and at a distance they seem to glitter from the strange, massive crystals dotting their slopes. They are also known to hold rich deposits of iron and nickel, but no one has mined these mountains in hundreds of years.

The Star Mounts are the source of the waters of the Unicorn Run, which cuts through the rocks of the lower range to form a series of gorges and cliffs known as the Sisters. The sight of the tiered waterfalls is positively breathtaking, well worth the challenge of reaching them. Mist shrouds the Sisters, and feeds the vegetation on the small plateaus of the area. To the north, the headwaters of the Dessarin River flow down from a smaller pair of mountains called the Lost Peaks.

Far less idyllic are the cursed ruins of Karse. Here are the remains of the great heresy of the Netherese wizard Karsus, who sought to claim godhood, slew the goddess of magic, and brought about the end of an age and untold destruction across the entire world.

High Moor

The High Moor was once a place much like the High Forest or the nearby Misty Forest, but during the Crown Wars, thousands of years ago, powerful magic burned



the land such that all that remained was a blasted moor. It is a rocky wilderness infested with trolls and goblinoids and all manner of other dangers for anyone who treks across it instead of going around.

As the name suggests, the High Moor is a raised area extending for many miles of heath, lichen-covered outcroppings, and hidden gullies. Herd animals wander the land, from sheep to rock ponies to the occasional rothé. These beasts graze without great risk, because wolves and other predators that would thin the herds are themselves the prey of the trolls and goblinoids that otherwise rule the moor. These two-legged threats sometimes seed the High Moor with traps, but are normally occupied with fighting and killing their prey and each other. There is something of a cycle to the hunts of the High Moor: wolves are killed off by the hobgoblins one year, leading to more sheep grazing, which brings the trolls out (the local trolls enjoy mutton, it seems), which brings intrepid adventurers to deal with the growing menace, enabling just enough of the wolves to survive that they aren't wiped out completely.

Human barbarians also inhabit the High Moor, living mostly on its western fringes with large herds of sheep and goats, the soil being too thin and too poor for farming. They aren't Uthgardt or related to them, but they might have some distant ties to the Northlanders, as they seem to be of Illuskan stock. They speak a dialect of Illuskan I'd not heard before, and my first meetings with them were quite tense and filled with misapprehension. However, I came to know people from both the Girondi and Belcondi tribes, all of whom acted with bravery, honor, and good humor in my presence. Travelers in this region should note that the human tribes share the suspicion of magic common among many Northlanders, but thankfully it isn't the fanatic hatred shown by the Uthgardt.

There are also some small orc tribes, Redclaw and Blue Feather, among them. The humans and goblinoids both despise the orcs, and my hosts said they allied with one another in the past when the orcs grew great in number.

Orogoth

For such a large expanse, the High Moor contains few known ruins. One such is Orogoth, the former villa of a noble family of old Netheril. Local legends say the family dabbled in dragon magic, attempting to capture those powerful wyrms and acquire their powers. The tales differ as to what folly led to the family becoming immolated in its home, but most agree the culprit was a dracolich, of all things, residing in the ruin and

defending the family's wealth. The gods only know what led to the creation of such a creature or what binds it to this place. The answers—if any there be—lie within its lair.

Misty Forest

West of the High Moor but heavily influenced by it, the Misty Forest draws its name from the fog that rolls off the heights of the moor to shroud its trees. Melandrach, King of the Woods, rules here and holds the forest as the exclusive domain of the elves. Though game animals roam in plenty, the local humans know well that the elves protect them and punish trespassers who poach in the forest. Even barbarians know better than to hunt here, as they don't wish to draw Melandrach's attention or ire.

Travelers who leave the inhabitants of the Misty Forest alone, and who build their campfires small and solely of fallen branches, are usually permitted to pass, so long as the folk of the forest aren't in a foul mood or stirred up against outsiders for some other reason.

Secomber

Just off the High Moor, on the north bank of the Delimbiyr near the Unicorn Run, is the small town of Secomber, on the border between the North and the settlements of the Western Heartlands. Built over the ruins of Hastarl, capital of the ancient kingdom of Athalantar, Secomber is a quiet place where fishers and farmers go about their work, and local folk hire out to hunt or fish, or guide travelers through the area. Skilled guides who know the High Moor well, and can navigate its many dangers and its local tribes, are common—or appear to be, given how often their services are offered. Local stonecutters, primarily from a small clan of dwarves, excavate pink granite from the rock walls on northern edge of the moor.

Rhymanthiin: Hidden City of Hope

Stories persist that Faer'tel'miir, an ancient city of Miyeritar, was restored by High Magic sometime in the last century—perhaps even before the Spellplague—up on the High Moor. The restored city of dark, smooth stone, called Rhymanthiin, or "The Hidden City of Hope," appears on no maps, and is reputedly concealed by magic or some other artifice. Supposedly only those who are worthy, without malice in their hearts, may reach it, while others (as the tales have it) "shall not find their way there." Such tale-tellers must be few and far between, as I know of no one who can rightly claim to have seen it, but still the stories seem to have a life of their own.

Najara

Gone are the days when the tales of a kingdom of serpents were rumor and hearsay, stories concocted by adventurers and travelers who strayed far off the path and somehow managed to escape. It was once easy to doubt their veracity, for what nation didn't patrol its borders or establish communication (amicable or otherwise) with other nations? The stories of naga and yuan-ti were easy enough to believe, for this area had always hosted such things. But a nation of such creatures?

As we now know, the kingdom of Najara, as proclaimed by the serpents that live within, lies along the northern edge of the Trade Way, northeast of Boareskyr Bridge and southeast of the High Moor. The Winding Water flows through these lands, and its other main geographical features are the Serpent Hills, the Marsh of Chelimber, and the Forest of Wyrms.

I discovered for myself the truth of Najara, the Kingdom of Serpents, when a sage in Baldur's Gate hired me to guide him, his apprentices, and a handful of adventurers to some ruins in the eastern edges of the High Moor. I will forever regret accepting that commission, for not only did half the adventurers turn out to be greedy swine intent on plundering the ruins rather than allowing the sage his study, but their idiocy awoke an ancient spirit that caused most of the group to drop off into a deathly sleep while it consumed their souls. Since I am unaffected by magics that force slumber, I escaped, along with a half-elf among the apprentices to the sage. The spirit chased us across the moors relentlessly, forcing us into the tunnels beneath the Serpent Hills, where we were taken prisoner by yuan-ti patrolling the borders of their domain. The half-elf was hauled away in slaver's chains, but for some reason I was taken to the court of Jarant, the Serpent King. A brief account of that experience follows.

Ancient and evil, the spirit naga Jarant rules the kingdom by virtue of his personal power and thanks to the aid of the *Marlspire of Najara*, a thin silver crown that has protective and other magical abilities. Though he still preferred to remain utterly isolated from the outside world at the time when I met him, ten years ago the Dark Serpent began sending ambassadors to neighboring kingdoms to warn them about the consequences of interfering in Najaran matters. Though I saw the king for but a moment, Jarant's influence in his realm is undeniable, for his name is spoken reverently by all

his subjects. A guard might swear "by Jarant's crown" to emphasize an edict, and the yuan-ti who owned the keys to my shackles referred to Najara's laws as "Jarant's will."

No one knows why Jarant chose the time he did to make public his kingdom's sovereignty, or what he hoped to gain by such an act. The yuan-ti ambassadors he sent forth made their king's wishes clear to the nations they visited: leave Najaran prosperity alone, and discourage intruders (such as adventuring types) from violating Najaran borders to steal the fortunes of the serpentfolk. In return, the serpents promised that any caravans and other legitimate travelers passing through Najara's dominion would be unharmed and unhindered—as long as they don't stray from the main route.

Reaction among the places approached raged from one extreme to the other. Darkhold reportedly feted the ambassadors well, and the serpentfolk left with not only an agreement from the Zhentish lords, but also an offer of a possible future military alliance. Not surprisingly, Elturgard refused the edict outright—and in the process of expressing that refusal, bloodshed erupted. The paladins slew all but one of the ambassadors, and sent the survivor back to Jarant's court to communicate their answer.

The other responses to the Najaran ambassadors fell *somewhere in between*. Acceptances and refusals to cooperate, usually polite, trickled in, but regardless of their substance, Jarant's goal had been accomplished: Najara's neighbors now saw the realm as a nation, no matter whether they viewed it as a potential ally or foe.

The economy of Najara, such as it is, depends on slaves to exist. Slavery is arguably the only actual trade conducted in Najara, with the ruins of Thlohtzin in the Forest of Wyrms serving as a gathering place for those who would stoop so low as to sell slaves to the yuan-ti. Different factions among the Najarans have agents waiting near Thlohtzin, each hoping to strike a bargain with slavers before others arrive. Slaves with unusual abilities or specialized knowledge sometimes set off bidding wars among the yuan-ti. I fear that such was the fate of that apprentice who accompanied me out of the High Moor.

To everyone of any influence who might read this, heed my words: do not be misled. The serpents do not intend to coexist peacefully—they merely wish to use their strange diplomacy as a cloak and a shield, to protect them against the vigilance of others until they are ready to put their plans, whatever they may be, into fruition.

The Court of the Serpent King

I was imprisoned in Ss'khanaja, a mostly subterranean city on the Winding Water, where gathers the court of King Jarant.

During my time in the custody of the Najarans, I learned much about—and from—Dhosun Silverscale. A yuan-ti pureblood in Najara, Dhosun acts as a councilor to the king and often seeks to mitigate Jarant's excesses. I believe that the sending out of the ambassadors was Dhosun's idea, for while I was imprisoned, he visited me several times, asking what I knew of the arts of embassy and ambassadorship. From the talk at court, Dhosun makes no secret of his desire to help his king build a nation whose status equals or outmatches other realms across the face of Faerûn. Jarant keeps him near, it is said, because of all the king's courtiers, Dhosun is the likeliest to attempt to steal away the *Marlspire*. Whether or not he is capable of such an act, I found the yuan-ti naga to be honorable—it was he who secretly arranged the opportunity I needed to escape, and I know he has done likewise for others in the past. I owe him a debt I intend to repay one day.

Another figure of note in the court is the cunning green dragon Emikaiwufeg, often called the Emerald Daughter. She is young for a dragon and still small enough to fit in tunnels leading down to Jarant's audience chamber. Jarant is said to appreciate the twists and turns of her wit. Some courtiers believe that she is frequently kept to hand as a foil to Dhosun, as her slickly vicious nature offsets the Dhosun's more honorable tendencies. For my part, I believe she's biding her time. A great many metallic dragons dwell in the Serpent Hills, and a clear rival for mates, wealth, and power—the green dragon known as Ralionate—lives in the nearby forest of Wyrms.

A variety of advisors and hangers-on can be found within Jarant's court, which is a dangerous place. A trio of yuan-ti warlocks, who claim to have tapped into the vestiges of the ancient serpent deity once worshiped at Ss'thar'tiss'ssun, leads the yuan-ti of Najara, though at court they frequently lurk in the background, simply watching.

Serpent Hills

The Serpent Hills is a desolate region of red clay hills and deep, treacherous ravines, featuring stretches of rough, ridged land surrounding tall mesas. Only scrub can manage to grow here, tenaciously clinging to the dry clay. Beneath this perilous territory—filled with serpents and poisonous creatures of all manner—lie the Serpent Ways, a series of intricate, well-guarded tunnels interspersed with caverns and chambers. The passages serve as the main pathways for the folk of Najara through these lands; indeed, it was while resting within such a cavern that the half-elf apprentice and I were captured by yuan-ti. I have since learned that in general, the serpents don't care who tromps *over* the hills, so long as they stay out of the places *under* them. The Najaran capital city, Ss'khanaja, is found in the northwest of the Serpent Hills, but an even larger population of snakefolk live beneath the surface. It is common to find settlements inside the large underground chambers connected by the tunnels, excavations many centuries in age.

Marsh of Chelimber

I didn't have occasion to travel to Chelimber before my "sojourn" with the Narajan court, but I did ask Dhosun about the place. It was through those questions that he divined my intention to escape, in fact, and offered his aid. A vast marshland pocked with sulfurous pools that often gout their steaming contents high into the air, the marsh is inhospitable even to most serpents;

the majority of the denizens in these lands are lizardfolk. Once a Netherese principality, ruled by vampires, and then a holding of the Zhentarim, the Marsh of Chelimber is solidly within the grasp of Najara today. Though each tribe of lizardfolk is dominated by a chieftain from among their kind, each of those leaders has sworn fealty to the King of Najara.

Forest of Wyrms

In the end, it was through the Forest of Wyrms that I fled Najara, though Dhosun advised me against doing so. Ultimately, I chose it for the same reason he tried to discourage me: because only a fool would enter this wood intentionally. The forest is infested with a great many serpents of both normal and monstrous varieties.

Sages who have studied the serpent-life of the forest claim that some force seems to draw ophidian creatures here and then changes them—varieties of snake that ought not be poisonous bite with envenomed fang in this forest, and most breeds of snake grow to nearly double their size here. Ralionate, an ancient green dragon apparently not aligned with the yuan-ti, makes this forest her lair. It is good terrain for her; tall redwoods and coarse pines create a dense, dark canopy.

Dhosun warned me that the ruins of Ss'thar'tiss'ssun, an ancient temple-city, lie in the northern fringes of the forest. At some point in the distant past, humans built a small settlement, once called Serpent's Cowl, above these ruins, but it now stands empty, likely due to the depredations of yuan-ti. Though discernible as little more than low hills in the forest today, Dhosun told me that deep inside the ruins lies the Shrine of the Cowled Serpents, a site of pilgrimage for the serpent-folk.

A place of great danger within the forest is Thlohtzin, once the citadel of a lich and now an important site in Najara's slave trade. Slavers from around the region know that the serpent-folk pay good coin for slaves brought here. They are then usually transported to other places in Najara for service.

I chose to make my escape from Najara through the Forest of Wyrms because, though serpent-infested, it is a woodland yet, and I am at home in such places. I moved through its shadows, remaining deep enough within the forest to avoid notice but not so far as to come near its heart, and then skirted its edges until I could see the hills of Trielta in the distance.

Trielta Hills

In the rolling terrain of the Trielta Hills, scattered with small settlements of gnomes and halflings, life seems pastoral and idyllic. Halfling farmers tend to their plots, and gnome miners scrape out the interior of the hills seeking the bits of gold and silver they may find waiting there. No warlords threaten this land, no liches or dragons plot to seize it for themselves. There are no great castles to covet here, nor ruins to pillage. All told, the place seems dull and unremarkable.

That, of course, is just the way its residents like it. They enjoy their solitude, which is broken only rarely.

The hills of Trielta do occasionally offer up some impressive bounty, in the form of heretofore-undiscovered gold and silver. While such finds are usually small lodes that are played out almost before others become aware of them, Trielta has played host to full-on gold rushes from time to time. Someone stumbles on a particularly large vein of ore, and prospectors and fortune-seekers come pouring in by the dozens. Trieltan folk tend to see these occasional influxes of gold-hungry seekers the way other settlements look upon periodic plagues of locusts: aggravating, inevitable, and thoroughly disruptive, but also part of the natural order, and so nothing to get bothered about.

Indeed, even the largest of these discoveries isn't so lucrative as to be worth the construction of the full-scale mining operations that can be found in other lands. No large nations or trading consortiums are waiting in the wings to invade and take over the mines of Trielta. They are what a dwarf acquaintance of mine once referred to as "scratch mines"—close-to-the-surface operations, with decent yield for a small amount of digging, but not worth the construction of "proper" (by which he of course meant dwarven) mines.

I was in Trielta resting after my escape from Najara when just such an outbreak of "gold on the brain" (as the locals term it) occurred. Though most of those who come at such times are honest prospectors seeking to make their fortunes, the sudden opportunity for wealth does attract less scrupulous sorts, including all manner of thieves, swindlers, and claims-jumpers—not to mention monsters that prey on unlucky or ill-prepared miners who unknowingly invade their territory.

The most intense traveling I've done through these hills was in pursuit of a band of marauding lizardfolk. The head of the kindly gnome family I was staying with was taken prisoner, along with his oldest son. I helped the local halfling sheriff and the small band of militia he put together to track the band, and to do so quickly, rescuing the captives. I've been welcomed in this area ever since, and have gotten to know the goodly folk here well.

Hardbuckler

At the southern edge of the hills lies the walled settlement of Hardbuckler. It is a town of mostly gnomes, with the occasional human, halfling, or half-elf among their number. It is one of the best-defended towns I've visited, with a several batteries of ballistae on impressive cog-run cranking mounts that allow for a nearly constant cycle of firing and reloading from any of the wall emplacements. Though the folk of Hardbuckler don't have cause to use them very often, these weapons usually discourage the bandits, raiders, and occasional orc bands that would lay claim to Hardbuckler's wealth.

The town eschews the sort of street network that tends to delineate most large settlements; instead it has a single street running inside the circular town wall, and another pair of straight roads crossing the town north-to-south and east-to-west that meet in the center of town in a crossroads marketplace. Many buildings structured for larger folk line these streets, for taller folk tend to prefer the comfortable familiarity they provide, but the rest of the town is made up of a series of narrow paths between the smaller-proportioned buildings that are the homes of the city's gnomes.

The first time I walked along these tight lanes, I felt as though I was only seeing a small portion of the actual settlement, and I was right. Later I discovered that beneath the slate-roofed houses, with their modest little adjoining gardens behind plank fences or fieldstone walls are the tunnels that constitute the true thoroughfares of Hardbuckler.

Beneath each small dwelling is an extensive cellar, often three or more levels in depth. These spaces are where the industrious folk of Hardbuckler engage in their livelihoods. Some of the cellar spaces are shops or workspaces for artisans who sleep in the house above. Other of these croftholds rent out their extra space to travelers, setting aside a few rooms for rent, and using a single large space as an open taproom, serving the sort of fare one might find in an inn. The food in such an establishment is odd—a great deal of mushrooms, potatoes, turnips, dense lichens, and stews made of shrews and voles—but filling and tasty in its own way.

The chambers in these underground inns are well heated by generous hearths, and thus provide for very comfortable accommodations. More than a few merchants arrange their travels so as to be in Hardbuckler ere winter arrives, so that they can spend the cold months beside a hearth, with a slice of fried pie in one hand, and a tankard of bitter gnomish stout in the other.

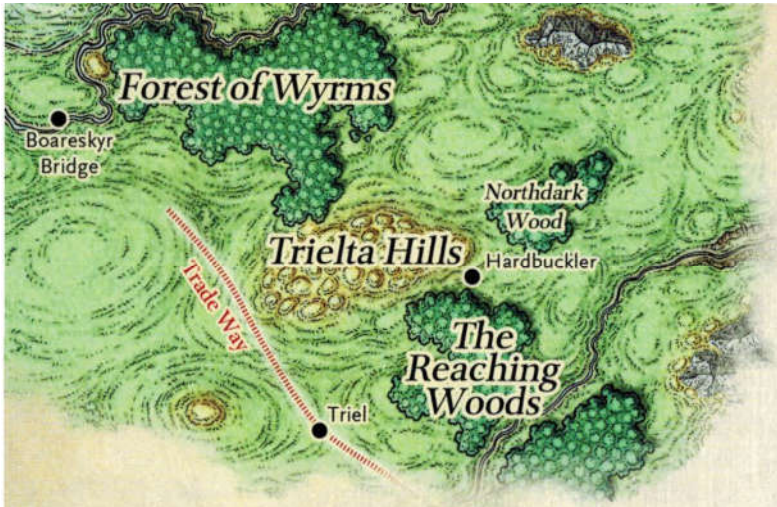
Any cellar space not devoted to another purpose is used for storage rather than being left vacant. Almost every family in the town has some space that it uses for its own needs or rents out for use by others. Those who buy storage from a Hardbuckler must purchase their storage crates and other necessary goods from local artisans, who also make locks, latches, waxy sealants for waterproofing crates and boxes, and the like. The crates are all built to specific sizes, with shelving and space in the cellars measured so that each container fits snugly and exactly.

Hardbuckler has a well-paid wizard who provides magical security for stored items, for those who wish it. Outlander wizards aren't permitted to lay wards or protections on goods destined for the cellars—such must be applied by Daelia Inchtarwurn, the latest wizard in a long line of folk who have worked in Hardbuckler over the generations. She wears a set of magical bracers passed to her by her father.

Rural Settlements

Most of the outlying settlements in the Trielta Hills consist of a dozen or two dozen halfling or gnome families, living in homes molded gently into rolling hills. Relatively shallow valleys serve as agricultural land, while the slopes are used for growing vine crops (such as pumpkins and strawberries) or grazing small herds of the large-horned sheep many of the halfling families keep, or the ornery braid-bearded goats favored by gnome goatherds.

Most of these small communities aren't exclusively populated by halflings or gnomes, since such groups seem to prosper better when members of both races



are in residence. Halfling families often focus on agricultural endeavors (aside from the small fungi gardens many gnomish households maintain in their cellars), while the area's miners are almost exclusively gnomes. Both folk work as herders, with halflings favoring sheep, and gnomes goats, as well as artisans of all sorts. Each community has a sheriff who maintains peace and leads defense—a role most often fulfilled by a halfling, I've found, though gnomes will certainly rise up in defense of their homes and neighbors when called upon.

Some of the rural settlements mark the former locations of mines that have been played out. It isn't uncommon for halflings to move in where a gnomish mine have been abandoned, fixing up the surface entrances into acceptable, comfortable homes, with built-in tunnels that worm through the settlement. These passages might be helpful for defense or escape, but they are most often used when it's raining out to reach a neighbor's door and borrow a cup of honey, so as not to get oneself wet or track mud everywhere.

On occasion, a community that sports large dwelling-tunnels, with ample space for larger folk (or "big'uns," as the local gnomes say), turns its settlement into an establishment that caters to such clientele. The inns I know of are the Merry Mine-Lass, the Pipe and Hearthstone, and the Giants' Respite, my favorite.

Each of these settlements is impressively self-sustaining. When official leadership is needed, the eldest halflings and gnomes are called upon to act in that capacity, but amity is the heart of community life in these hills. It is a shameful act among the Trieltans to refuse to reach a peaceable accord with one's fellows over some dispute. The folk here enjoy their simple lives, although I've come across a half-dozen or so young adventurers who hail from here, seeking out the newness of the world as a contrast to the familiarity of their homeland.

Few dangerous creatures lurk in the hills—they are so densely settled (on and beneath the surface) that there is little space for monsters to lair. Cruel or ravenous creatures do occasionally creep into Trielta, mainly from the Forest of Wyrms, but such incursions don't last long—after a few sheep (and possibly a shepherd or two) are eaten, the sheriffs waste no time in forming a posse to hunt down or chase off the predators before they can do more harm.

Now, sad to say, this situation might be changing for the worse. According to recent letters I have received from friends in these hills, parties of Najaran raiders have become more common and numerous. My friends fear that the threat from the Serpent Kingdom to the north will force Trieltans to seriously consider putting up an active defense of their lands for the first time in generations.

Uthgardt Lands

When I was newly departed from my homeland and first found my way to the North, I encountered a band of Uthgardt nomads on the trail—a part of the Elk tribe, led by a warrior named Gyrt. It was a tense meeting.

I think the only reason I was not killed on sight is that I was an elf traveling alone. I think they feared I was a wizard. Uthgardt hate all magic but that of their shamans and any enchanted weapons and armor they find, but a wizard willing to walk the wilds alone could be a powerful one. Traveling as we were on a grassy plain, we could see one another for some distance. Since I didn't strike them down with lightning from afar, they were willing to approach peaceably.

Still, they stopped when they were within bowshot and seemed to be arguing about whether to shoot me. I waited as patiently as I could until one who seemed to be their leader addressed me in heavily accented Common. I replied a greeting in Bothii, their own ancient language, which again set the group to argument. At last, the leader dismounted and approached me, giving her name as Gyrt. Glad was I then that I took the time to learn the language from a learned friend in Evereska!

In anticipation of any demand, I offered Gyrt a fine dagger from Evereska, as well as a necklace I wore. For her band I offered a bag of baubles I'd brought for such an occasion. Pleased with my gifts and assured that I was no wizard, Gyrt and I sat down to talk. I asked to share her campfire for the night, and Gyrt made space for me. That was my first meeting with Gyrt, but it wouldn't be my last, nor my last encounter with Uthgardt. I'm grateful to my friend Gyrt for teaching me so much about her people, for it has allowed me and many fellow travelers to see Uthgardt and live to tell the tale.

Over the years, as I earned Gyrt's respect and she mine, we became friends, and I came to know her three sons as well. Though Gyrt died some decades ago, I still visit her children, whom I played with when they were young. They now have children of their own, and all call me auntie.

During my time with Gyrt and her kin, the people of the Elk explained much to me about the workings of their tribe—their view of the world and their place in it, their traditions and the laws they live by. I came to realize, as I came across other Uthgardt tribes in my travels, that much of what is true for the Elk tribe is true for other Uthgardt. Though they comport themselves in seemingly disparate groups honoring different totems, Uthgardt have much in common. What follows is what I have learned of the people who call themselves "children of Uthgar."

Though the Uthgardt each belong to a given tribe, these are markers of identity, rather than coherent populations. In my experience, it is rare outside of occasional large events (such as the ascension of a new chieftain, or certain religious gatherings) for all members of a single tribe to come together in one place. Instead, the Uthgardt tend to travel in bands, groups of tribesfolk that number between a dozen and a hundred, usually twenty to fifty. These bands generally consist of several family groups, each led by a matriarch or patriarch. In many ways, these folk are similar to nomadic *Tel'Quessir*, in that they make their decisions by consensus among the heads of the families, and disagreements are handled efficiently: those who don't like the decision of the majority go their own way, forming a new band or joining a different one.

The Uthgardt are spread across the North, rarely found farther south than the High Forest. There is no nation of Uthgardt to which they belong; instead, each tribe has a central ancestral mound, regarded as a holy site. Gyrt told me that the holy site of the Elk tribe is at a place called Flint Rock, somewhere in the Evermoors. She, understandably, never offered to take me there, and I was never foolish enough to ask.

By and large, the Uthgardt are a hunting people who rely on game for much of their sustenance, favoring large herd animals such as elk, rothe, and deer. Young men and women looking to make a name for themselves sometimes build their reputations by hunting dangerous predators and great beasts: bears, great cats, large boar, and even monsters such as wyverns, owlbears, and displacer beasts.

Some tribes put the prowess they demonstrate in hunting to good use in another endeavor, for which the Uthgardt are well known: raiding. As a rule, the Uthgardt engage in raiding only in remote areas—meaning that the closer a potential target is to civilization, the less likely it will be set upon. The raiders prefer to strike against wealthy merchant caravans and nobles' baggage trains, which offer the likelihood of fine foods, alcohol, and jewelry that Uthgardt wear as trophies and trade among themselves. For the most part, Uthgardt have little use for coin, so travelers hoping to buy their way out of a confrontation are advised to offer something else.

Uthgardt don't see national boundaries or the bonds of civilization that tie a merchant to a farmer whose house the merchant passes on the road. To them each interaction with us—meaning we who aren't Uthgart—is different. Thus, an Uthgardt band that raids in one season might come to trade during the next. They do understand the concept of belonging to a larger group, and that those groups might be in conflict. After all, each tribe of Uthgardt has its ancestral enemies among the other Uthgardt tribes. Yet when I attempted to explain how I, and elf from Evereska, was connected to folk in Waterdeep or Silverymoon, Gyrt just laughed. She had not seen these cities, so I might as well have said I knew folk who lived on the moon. When I mentioned Yartar and Red Larch, places that I knew Gyrt's band had passed near, she laughed still harder. To her I was too great, too "strong" as she put it, to have any

The Uthgardt Tribes and Their Territories

For most Uthgardt tribes, the only stability in their history is the site of their ancestral mound. Most of the Uthgardt holy sites have existed since antiquity, but the fortunes of the tribes that revere them have hardly been static. Following are brief descriptions of the Uthgardt tribes today.

Blue Bear. The easternmost of the Uthgardt are the Blue Bear—thought destroyed more than a century ago—who have recently emerged from inside the High Forest and reclaimed their ancestral mound at Stone Stand, just south of the Moon Pass and north of the forest. The Blue Bears have reoccupied much of their old territory in the time since they returned to prominence, though they don't venture near Hellgate Keep, considering it a taboo place.

Black Lion and Red Tiger. North of Blue Bear territory, in the Glimmering Wood, is Beorunna's Well, a settlement of some size that near the ancient ancestral mound of the Red Tiger tribe. The settlement was founded some time ago by members of the Black Lion tribe, who put down roots here rather than continuing to live as nomads.

Though the Red Tigers are less than comfortable with the present situation, they consider Beorunna's Well their holy site, so they make the best of things. Bands of Red Tiger tribespeople often winter in Beorunna's Well, and many of its hunters and trappers use the settlement as a place to sell the leather and furs they acquire in nearby forests.

Sky Pony. In a part of the Glimmerwood called the Moonwood stands the One Stone, the ancestral mound of the Sky Pony tribe. These are a people divided; half of the tribe has settled and built a sizable steading around the One Stone, similar to what Black Lion has done at Beorunna's Well. The other half of the tribe considers this act an insult to their totem, so they launch raids on the settlement, burning as much of it as they can and then escaping, often on pegasus-back.

Tree Ghost. In the depths of the High Forest stands the Grandfather Tree, the ancestral mound of the Tree Ghost tribe. The Tree Ghosts split off from the Blue Bears long ago and all but disappeared into the forest, although occasional reports reach civilization that they are still alive and can sometimes be seen clustered around the Grandfather Tree. Some sages postulate that the newly reborn Blue Bear tribe might well be Tree Ghost Uthgardt who are following a call from a revived Blue Bear totem.

Great Worm. The Frost Hills, a small southern spike of the Spine of the World Mountains just north of the Evermoors, is the site of Great Worm Cavern, the ancestral mound of the Great Worm tribe. These Uthgardt are notoriously reclusive; it has been twenty years since the tribe has sent raiding parties out anywhere but against the orcs of the Spine Mountains.

Black Raven. As forbidding as the Spine of the World Mountains they roam, the Black Ravens are fanatical in their adherence to the old Uthgardt ways. Ranging out from Raven Rock, their ancestral mound deep inside the mountains, they have been known to send raiding parties as far south as Silverymoon, but their most frequent targets are the caravans that come in and out of Mithral Hall.

Elk. Flint Rock in the midst of the Evermoors is the ancestral mound of the Elk tribe. The Elk were once prolific raiders, extending their reach even into Nesmé and Mithral Hall, but the tribe was shattered a handful of decades past by the forces of those cities. Though their numbers have replenished, the Elk remain mostly hunters and foragers. They are masters at avoiding or repulsing the threats of the Evermoors, and often hire themselves out as guides for outsiders.

Lost Tribes of the Uthgardt

Given the rebirth of the Blue Bear tribe in recent years, it might be incorrect to assume that any Uthgardt tribe is truly extinct. Nevertheless, several tribes are known today only by prior reputation, not present accomplishments.

The **Thunderbeast** tribe has not been heard from in several years. When the Thunderbeasts made their annual pilgrimage to Morgur's Mound in Neverwinter Wood, they found their holy site desecrated. Soon thereafter, their chieftain took them back into the depths of the High Forest, and they have not emerged since.

The **Gray Wolf** tribe, made up of lycanthropes, was destroyed by a Selûnite crusade because of the tribe's curse. Some of the surviving Gray Wolves took shelter among other Uthgardt tribes.

The **Griffon** tribe came to an untimely end when it rose against the forces of Luruar allied with giants and orcs.

The **Red Pony** and **Golden Eagle** tribes vanished centuries ago. They were last seen in the vicinity of the One Stone, the ancestral mound those tribes shared with Sky Pony.

connection to places she saw as providing prey for her tribe.

If a band of Uthgardt come upon your campsite, my advice is this. First, do what you can to hide all signs of magic or spellcasting. Then show them hospitality and invite them to warm themselves. If you have jewelry or a fine weapon, offer these gifts to the one who seems like the leader. Ask how their hunting goes, and give them a chance to brag. Be appreciative, but not obsequious. Tell them you have heard of the prowess of the Uthgardt people—their hunting skills and strength first and foremost—but attribute these claims to a tribe other than their own. The strongest among the band will insist on the chance to prove him- or herself better than the stories you've heard, and will want you to bear away tales of about his or her tribe instead.

You or one of your companions might need to agree to a challenge of some kind, a feat of strength or a bout of fisticuffs, by which the band may measure your prowess. It doesn't greatly matter if you win or lose, though. Simply express a desire or a willingness to compete, and you will earn some measure of respect. If you win the challenge, be gracious, and express gratitude that you finally found someone of great status to test yourself against. If you lose, be self-effacing and rueful, and give the victor the best part of the meal at hand.

This advice will not always work, of course. Some bands aren't so easily assuaged, particularly if they are out deliberately hunting you or folk like you. At all times, remember that these are a proud and strong people with a fierce love of life and its simple pleasures. Demonstrate an outlook complementary to theirs, and they might make of you a comrade. Show fear or contempt, and they will respond with quick violence.

The People of Uthgar

The Uthgardt trace their origins back to the mighty hero Uthgar, a warrior without compare. During my time with his tribe, Gyrt spoke freely of the tales of Uthgar that have been passed down among his people. The saga begins in the distant past when the humans of the North lived in fear and isolation. Great spirits roamed the forests of the North, preventing humans from banding together to rise up against them. Into this turmoil came Uthgar, who challenged each of the great spirits, one at a time, besting them and subjugating them to his rule. Each of the defeated spirits became embodied in the totem of one of the groups of humans who followed and revered Uthgar. Thus were born the tribes of the Uthgardt, each taking the name of their totem spirit.

The sites of Uthgar's victories are marked even today with the great ancestor-mounds of the Uthgardt. Each is said to have been built over the remains of a tribe's totem spirit, along with the tribesfolk who died while helping Uthgar to fight the creature.

A tribe lays claim to the territory around its ancestral mound for many leagues, declaring it as the grounds in which the tribe hunts and sets up camps. Generally speaking, Uthgardt bands of a given tribe will range as far as two to three weeks' travel away from the tribe's ancestral mound, with raiding parties going much farther afield. These holy sites are scattered through the North; in almost all cases, the exact location of one is known to few people other than members of that tribe.

Almost all of the original tribes of the Uthgardt are active in the North today. Even a tribe thought to be lost or destroyed might be represented somewhere by a small number of humans who claim to be descended from the one of the tribes of old, but such people, where they exist, aren't numerous by any means, and their claims are often spurious.

The Uthgardt take their ritual practices and taboos very seriously. Most taboos and traditions vary from tribe to tribe, but at least one stricture is universal among the Uthgardt: magic other than that of the shamans or the magic of weapons and armor is forbidden.

The priests of the Uthgardt revere their ancestor-god and also invoke the names of their totems as intercessors with the Father of the Tribes. Their ethos is simple: strength is rewarded with more strength, and when strength fails, it is because a person is not worthy.

Warlock's Crypt

On the western edge of the Troll Hills lies an area of bizarre terrain: shattered rubble is strewn across the landscape, between and among mounds of upturned earth and deep furrows of the sort one commonly sees in the wake of trebuchet blows that miss their mark. Farther in from the perimeter of this blasted land lies a scattered mess of buildings, some relatively intact, others half-collapsed and leaning on their neighbors.

In the center, rising above it all, is a handful of twisted towers looking for all the world like talons clawing at the sky. These towers can be seen from a good distance, seemingly unharmed by the cataclysm that produced the damage around them. Indeed, because of their pristine condition, some folk conjecture that these towers must have been built after that event.

The truth of the place now called Warlock's Crypt is something different altogether. All of the structures visible here, from the now-shattered outbuildings to the central towers, comprised a city that floated atop a disc of stone during the time of ancient Netheril. When the

ancient and wicked magics of the Netherese failed, this city plummeted from the sky; the chunks and slabs of stone scattered about the site are not natural terrain, but are the shards of that disc.

My Only Visit

I have been to the Warlock's Crypt but once, in the days of my youth before I knew better. I was hired by Daerismun Aerath, one of the Avowed—the esteemed scholar-monks of Candlekeep—to guide him there. He was writing a treatise on the place and desired firsthand experience of the locale. Fresh as I was from Evereska, I'd never heard the warnings of the wise regarding this site. I am either extraordinarily beloved of Solonor, or stupidly lucky, to have made it back out alive. Tragically, Daerismun was not so fortunate.

As we approached, this ruined cityscape seemed uninhabited. Its expanse is fairly limited, and consists almost entirely of a mess of destroyed buildings and massive boulders.

The central towers were apparently preserved by some aspect of their magical construction—which isn't to say that they were entirely unaffected by the crash. Upon closer inspection, one of the central towers has a great crack running along its western edge, and several of the others display a degree of damage.

As we came even closer to the towers, they appeared to be anything but abandoned. In their windows flickered occasional eldritch lights, and on their sides we could see indistinct shapes scampering across the surface. These buildings were crafted to appear as though clad in black mail, made of overlapping plates and slightly discordant, off-center architecture creating the impression of joints that might bend at any moment.

The towers, joined in a rough circle by walls of smooth black stone, form a perimeter around the heart of the Crypt—which can be seen only from a terrifyingly close vantage. Obscured and protected by the towers are several strange plots of land: some barren, others overrun with twisted, thorny flora not found in nature. Rail-less bridges connect these towers at various points, and all of them spiral around the heart: that which is reputedly the demesne of the lich-king Larloch himself, who has also been called the Shadow King.

Threats and Defenses

I warn you: do not come to this place. And if you must, do not tarry, for its defenders are brutal and bloodthirsty, as inimical to life as any plague or poison, and they take delight in the suffering of those who come into their reach.

This place is rife with undead, of all varieties. In addition to the Shadow King, the Crypt houses several other liches, undead sorcerous vassals to Larloch. He calls upon their power when he has need, but otherwise leaves them alone to conduct the experiments and plots he demands of them. Though he once bound their influence tightly, reports suggest he has begun giving them a greater lead on their leashes, for magical horrors that could well be the result of their experiments have been seen unleashed in the Troll Hills and Troll Forest around the ruins.

Such monstrosities are also common prowling the ruins of the Crypt itself. During my brief sojourn into this place, I identified several creatures that likely began their lives as griffons, owlbears, trolls, and even a beholder, but they had become twisted and nearly unrecognizable. What it is these liches do to these creatures is a question for minds far more wise than mine—I know only that the first such abomination I fought nearly killed me, and I barely escaped from the others we sighted.

The Crypt has defenses other than monsters, as well. My companion Daerismun asserted that it was protected with layers of "spell webs," constructions of magical energy waiting to unleash spells against those who stumbled into them. I had the terrible opportunity to see one of them in action, when the Avowed scholar unknowingly breached one of those so-called webs and set off a ball of fire, which ignited with himself at its center.

As one might imagine, this blast drew the attention of all manner of twisted predators and hungry undead, which came forth to investigate. I don't know how these creatures kept from being caught in these traps, or if they had simply dwelt here long enough to know how to avoid them. Before I could give the matter any thought, I was forced to flee, and I don't intend to ever return.

Luskan

Anyone who goes to Luskan should know about its ruling Ships and the Arcane Brotherhood. The Ships of Luskan have been described as bands of pirates, but that characterization misses how deeply ingrained the Ships are to the society of Luskan and the mentality of its citizens. Attack a Ship member and you might incur not just the wrath of the Ship, but of much of the city as well. As for the Arcane Brotherhood, one member of it may or may not come to another's aid, but know that each of these egotistical mages is eager to prove his or her magical prowess, and none can afford to show weakness before the folk of Luskan.

Luskan, the City of Sails, spans the icy River Mirar, which tumbles from the Spine of the World, races past Mirabar, and then plunges toward the sea. The swift river has cut deep here, and Luskan rests atop two escarpments on either side, with sheer, forty-foot bluffs of gray stone rising above the water. Around the city's perimeter, thick stone walls with squat towers provide defense. The southern gate, called the Twin Teeth, boasts the most impressive towers, standing twice as tall as the city walls, and bedecked with crenellations and arrow slits enough for numerous defenders, in a show of strength toward the southern approach.

The Ships

Within the city walls and on the nearby waters, Luskan is ruled by its Ships and their five High Captains:

- First High Captain Beniago Kurth
- Second High Captain Barri Baram
- Third High Captain Dagmaer Suljack
- Fourth High Captain Throa Taerl
- Fifth High Captain Hartouchen Rethnor

The five High Captains take the names of their Ships when they ascend to leadership. The captains are the highest authorities in Luskan; they and the members of their Ships conduct themselves as a sort of nobility, albeit one that isn't hereditary.

Despite the name, each Ship is not a single vessel, but an organization of stalwarts owing allegiance to one another and to their captain, whom they elect for life. To be a member of a Ship is a select privilege, one that only one in ten of Luskan's residents can claim.

The five Ships of Luskan are more than gangs of pirates. They are fellowships of people who live, train, work, make love, and go to war with each other. To join one is a mark of honor and continues a grand tradition that Luskar associate with democracy, self-determination, and individuality.

Each Ship has its own symbol and colors. Members of a Ship often wear their colors, decorate their round shields with the symbol and colors, and tattoo themselves with the symbol. Like their Northlander relations, Luskar Ship members regularly tattoo their faces, but instead of representing their island, the tattoos are either personal marks or tattoos of their allegiance to their Ship.

Membership in a Ship is voluntary, but once undertaken it is until death. To join a Ship, a Luskar must be of fighting age (fourteen or so, for humans), and possess at least one sword or axe, one spear, and three of the sturdy, bossed shields the Northlanders prefer. Each Ship accepts new candidates from time to time to fill vacancies caused by death, but as a rule, the Ships don't expand their ranks by taking on a large number of new members at one time.

Each Ship has some number of sailing vessels, the size, crew, and type of which help to determine the influence of the Ship's High Captain and its rank within the city. The current First Ship, Kurth, has so many vessels that it nearly outnumbers the next two Ships combined, and its membership is so numerous that Ships Suljack, Taerl, and Rethnor could merge and still not equal it.

The laws of the city govern the behavior of the Ships and their captains, decreeing the Ships responsible for the city's defense, its administration, and the management of its resources. Beyond these universal tasks, each captain takes on other duties as desired in order of that Ship's standing in the hierarchy, leaving less glamorous and less lucrative tasks to the captains and Ships of lower rank.

Since each of the Ships has the ability to take what it likes and leave what it doesn't want to the lesser Ships, a strict division of duties has arisen among them.

Ship Kurth controls the city's docks and activity occurring thereupon. Among the most profitable of the merchandise that passes through the port are weapons and tools from Ironmaster, and ambergris for the perfume trade.

Ship Baram operates Luskan's fishing industry. The food it provides is so vital to the city's welfare nowadays that Baram has risen to Second Ship on the strength of its successful forays out to sea.

Ship Suljack holds sway over, and conducts most of, the piracy and raiding that originates out of Luskan. It occasionally passes the more meager opportunities down to Taerl.

Ship Taerl, recently elevated from Fifth Ship, had been accustomed to taking the hindmost. Now its workers and sailors happily accept chances for profit handed down from above, and just as happily delegate the most menial and undesirable chores to Rethnor.

Ship Rethnor engages in few worthwhile activities aside from guard duty, which is a poor source of income. Rethnor toughs sometimes roam the streets of Luskan, looking for a quick and perhaps violent way to grab some coin.

People and Laws

Without question, the people of Luskan show their Northlander heritage. They raid ships and coastal settlements, engage in interdiction and piracy, and value strength of arms above most other qualities. During Luskan's long history on the Sword Coast, however, the city has adopted many of the attitudes of mainland folk. Luskar don't kidnap people from other settlements or tribes, and they hold that women have social standing equal to men (two of the High Captains, Suljack and Taerl, are women). They don't distrust magic, as their island brethren do. Slavery is, at least nominally, illegal in Luskan, though a slave taken and sold at sea is usually overlooked by authorities.

The law in Luskan is supposed to be upheld by soldiers of the Ships, who are empowered to arrest criminals and bring them before the Magistrates of the city. In practice, arrests are as often made by mobs, but the result is the same: an appearance before the Magistrates. Each of the five Magistrates is chosen by a High Captain, but need not be a member of that captain's Ship. The Magistrates are, at least officially, neutral. Most citizens have their cases decided by a single one of these judges, but a dispute involving a Ship member is heard by all five.

Trade and Commerce

Luskan doesn't officially tax its citizens; the city makes its money through trade, fishing, piracy, and raiding. The defense of the city comes at the expense of the Ships, paid for by the profits of those activities as well as the protection money the Ships extort from businesses and homes to keep the thieves and gangs at bay. Bribery

is a common practice, a seemingly accepted means of gaining the favor of one of the High Captains to obtain fishing rights, earning an advantageous decision from the Magistrates, or having a business rival or undesired suitor arrested, accosted, or roughed up.

Given its status as the harbor that feeds the goods of Mirabar to the Sword Coast, bridging the coast with the utter north, and offers the only convenient crossing of the River Mirar for many miles, Luskan makes considerable coin as a crossroads. Merchants wishing to avoid Luskan can choose to use the Blackford Crossing, some thirty miles upstream, eventually connecting with the Blackford Road on the northern bank, but the savvy know that Luskan's Ships control the cable-guided ferries at the crossing, and demand tolls based on the size and contents of the goods being ferried across. The Blackford Road still bears the ancient marks of the dwarven realm of Gharraghaur, reminding travelers of whose wealth sustains the region.

North of the city, the Northern Means heads up toward Icewind Dale. Not many take this route without purpose, but scrimshaw from the dale finds its way into Luskan, where those who would purchase it can do so without going any farther into the frozen terrain.

The north side of the city, known as North Bank, is devoted almost entirely to warehouses, caravan yards, and workspace. It includes the Mirabar Shield, the fortified compound that represents Mirabar's trading interest in Luskan. Mirabar uses it as a base to trade with the Sword Coast and the islands of the Trackless Sea.

The main city stands on the southern side of the River Mirar. North of Reaver's Run is the Reach, where most of the homes and smaller businesses are located. South of the Run are the slums, the "bad" area of town. Near the slums is the Captain's Close, where the residences of High Captains Taerl and Suljack stand, but the area is otherwise quite poor.

The Islands

Five islands stand in the bay formed by the River Mirar and are claimed by Luskan:

- Blood Island is filled with Ships' soldiers tasked with guarding the city; it holds a guard tower, barracks, an armory, and little else of interest.
- Closeguard Island is the home of High Captain Kurth.
- Cutlass Island has two rocky heights split by a pebble-strewn beach. The southern peak is surmounted

by the Sea Tower, where Luskan's first pirates built their stronghold, while the northern one is home to the Hosttower of the Arcane and the stables it shares with Ship Kurth.

- Fang Island has no inhabitants, and is named for its propensity for destroying vessels swept down the River Mirar.
- Harbor Arm Island is a tall spire sheltering Whitesails Harbor from the worst of the storms and waves that wash in from the south.

The Bridges

The North and South Banks are spanned by three bridges: the Upstream Span, from the South Bank straight to the North Gate; Dalath's Span, the middle bridge with a name none can place in legend, and Harbor Cross, split between the Short Span that runs from the South Bank to Blood Island, and the Long Span that continues on to North Bank. Only Ship members and those authorized by a High Captain may traverse Harbor Cross.

Dark Arch connects South Bank with Closeguard Island, and only members of Ship Kurth and the Arcane Brotherhood may cross that span unchallenged. The same is true of Sword Bridge, which crosses from Closeguard Island to Cutlass Island. Although Closeguard Island is officially unguarded, it's still true that only members of the Arcane Brotherhood or Ship Kurth are expected to be there, so anyone out of place is aggressively questioned about their presence.

The Arcane Brotherhood

In the last decade or so, two great changes have come over Luskan. The first was the plague that crippled the gangs that had controlled the city, allowing the High Captains to reclaim the power they had long held in Luskan. The other, far more sudden, was the return of the Arcane Brotherhood and its five-spired tower. A few years ago, the ruined Hosttower of the Arcane began regenerating its damaged stone, climbing into the sky once more. Shortly thereafter, mages of the Arcane Brotherhood emerged, almost immediately began cleansing the Luskar ruins of undead, and fought off a dragon menacing the city. Cheered by the citizens, they swore to keep themselves out of the politics of the High Captains and the city at large, but the notion that powerful wizards closely aligned with one another can truly remain neutral is laughable to anyone familiar with such things.

Now, the Arcane Brotherhood again walks the streets of Luskan, marked by the distinctive colors and patterns of their cloaks. From a distance, these cloaks all bear the same cut and silhouette, but each wizard of the Hosttower chooses a color or a design, and a moniker to match it. The leadership of the Arcane Brotherhood is the archmage and the four overwizards of the other spires of the Hosttower:

- Cashaan the Red, Archmage Arcane
- Zelenn the White, Overwizard of the West
- Jendrick the Blue, Overwizard of the South
- Teyva the Gray, Overwizard of the East
- Druette the Raven, Overwizard of the North

Other notable members of the Brotherhood include Vaelish the Brown and Maccath the Crimson.

The Symbol of the Arcane Brotherhood

Icewind Dale

Go far enough north, and you will come to the mountains rightly called the Spine of the World. Turn west and go toward the Sea of Moving Ice, and you might eventually come upon one of the scattered communities of Icewind Dale. You can also travel up the ever-narrowing road from Luskan called the Northern Means, and eventually come upon the frozen tundra beyond.

Why travel so far? Well, if you're like many who've drifted up there from the south, it is because an easier life doesn't suit you, you're running from something, or you just don't fit in anywhere else.

Ten-Towns

Coming up the hard road from the south, the first thing you'll see is Kelvin's Cairn, a great mountain scarred by a crack down its southwestern face. Even in high summer, its peak is capped in snow and ice. In the mountain's southern shadow is Bryn Shander, the largest, most populous, and most fortified of the Ten-Towns of Icewind Dale. Ten-Towns is a grouping of communities clustered around the three lakes of the area: Maer Dualdon, from which the Shaengarne River flows down toward Ironmaster; Lac Dinneshere to the east, whose waters are nearly always cold enough to kill; and Redwaters, named for an old battle between rival fisherfolk that left the waters bloody.

Ten-Towns thrives on fishing and trade, both endeavors reliant on the knucklehead trout of Icewind Dale's lakes. Without these fish, the people of Ten-Towns would starve, but there would also be little for them to barter or sell. The ivory-like bones of these fish are the

basis of the famous scrimshaw that is sold as far south as Calimshan and farther east than I care to consider. The bones are also used to make all manner of small, sturdy tools: fish hooks, arrowheads, sewing needles, buttons, and more. Each town on the lakes has its own fleet of fishing boats, and the towns carefully divide the lakes to protect the population and the delicate balance between the communities.

Independent-minded folk who come to Ten-Towns are discouraged from striking out on their own, and when they do, they often fail, either due to the dangers of the waters, being blocked out of the best fishing areas, or simply being refused trade by the scrimshanders, whose wares are expensive. Icewind Dale is a place where cooperation is essential for survival, and ignoring that fact can leave one quite alone in a time of need.

Where nine of the Ten-Towns survive primarily on fishing, Bryn Shander lives on trade, making it the place to visit when you come here. The walls keep the town safe from barbarians who raid the area and the beasts of the tundra, and the packing in of its people means Bryn Shander is also warmer than the other towns, both literally and in terms of the welcome you receive.

I have visited only a few of the other towns, and while they have their quirks and charms, they are mostly what you might expect: fishing villages at the edge of frigid waters in a frozen waste. Certainly, there is trade to be done, coin to be made, and intrigue to be investigated in even in the smallest of these communities (which can number as few as a hundred souls). The only other point of interest is the town of Targos, on Maer Dualdon, which has grown rapidly and is threatening to burst the bounds of its protective wall, and thus has a hum of opportunity about it.

Reghed Barbarians

Ten-Towns isn't the only community in Icewind Dale. Tribes of human barbarians called Reghed also operate in the area. Hunters and raiders who value strength and devotion to their ancestral heroes, they claim a great many heroes among their honored dead, including some who were responsible for the safety of Ten-Towns, Icewind Dale, and beyond. A Reghed camp is made up of a large ring of hide tents, able to be broken down and transported as the Reghed move to keep up with the herds of reindeer they depend on for food and clothing.

The Dwarves

Dwarves still live in the mines of Kelvin's Cairn, but in fewer numbers than they once did, and with less influence than they had on the rest of Icewind Dale a century or two ago. The dwarves here claim their continued allegiance to Clan Battlehammer of Mithral Hall, even though they returned to the colder north when they discovered their ancient home no longer suited them. Bryn Shander serves them as a trading post, allowing them to keep humans and other strangers away from their mines, which are some distance away in the shadow of the Cairn. The dwarves send a representative to the council of speakers that governs Ten-Towns, but have no say in their proceedings except to declare acceptance or refusal of the decisions of the human gathering.

The Underdark

Do you know what it is to be a slave? To feel the *crack of a whip, the venom of a drow priestess's snake-headed lash, the weight of a burden you can't possibly lift after so much toil? No, you don't. So close your mouth and open your eyes and ears, and dip your quill.*

—Oshgir the half-orc, to Kimitar Thaeless, glyphscribe of Deneir

Known by many as the Realms Below, the vast, miles-deep network of caverns, caves, and underground waterways called the Underdark is home to many strange creatures and even stranger societies. No one is quite sure the extent of this massive ecosystem, except to say that it reaches at least the breadth of the continent, and that most creatures are fully capable of surviving their entire lives within it, provided they can find enough food and safety to do so. Breathable air is plentiful, and clean water can be found. Beyond that, most surface folk only have the tales of adventurers, the survivors of attacks, and the occasional escaped captive to describe the horrors lurking below the surface.

What follows are portions of the tale told by Oshgir, a half-orc warrior who was captured by a duergar raiding party, sold to a Zhentarim agent, captured by drow, and then escaped his captivity by killing an overseer and fleeing to Blingdenstone. This account was recorded by a traveling scribe of Deneir named Kimitar Thaeless and submitted to the library at Candlekeep. Most don't believe that a half-orc was quite so eloquent in his telling, and thus contend that the scribe embellished the tale somewhat.

Capture

It's impossible to describe the shame of a hardened warrior driven to his knees by a half-dozen duergar that have just slain his fellows. Never mind that we were asleep and unarmored at the time, or that I was able to take four of them down before an axe cut the strength from my leg. I was shackled and gagged, my wound wrapped in a bandage tight enough to stop the bleeding and numb my leg, as the gray pests laughed and spouted jokes at me, and then forced me to walk until I lost consciousness. When next I awoke, there was no longer a sky overhead.

Gracklstugh

After days of walking in the deep, dark places beneath the surface, I was led, in heavy chains, to Gracklstugh, on the shores of the Darklake. I was set to work almost immediately at a forge, to pump bellows, heft ingots, and carry barrels of quenching oil. The place is called the City of Blades, for good reason: the fine steel of the duergar is impressive, considering the quality of the iron they were starting with. Hammering, refining, and careful polishing gave the metal the strength and sleekness necessary, and diligent sharpening added wicked edges to many of the blades I handled.

The duergar make their homes mainly beyond a great wall, which I never passed through. To the north, the floor of the cavern that contains the Darklake hovers dangerously low, such that in some places it is barely ten feet above the water's surface. The whole of the great cavern glows, and the continuous flow of hot iron through the city gives the illumination a yellow cast at all times. It is frightening, if you forget where you are. More than that, it is hot.

After a month or so of working under a minor smith, I quarreled with the apprentice set to supervise me, and he dared me to test the strength of his new blade. It broke, as I expected, but did the job well enough. The duergar didn't seem to be angry that the apprentice lay dead at my feet, but it was only a short time thereafter that I was dragged off to the market to be sold. As it happened, a human was in the city on some diplomatic mission. I caught his eye, and he purchased me.

Mantol-Derith

I soon learned that I was not bought entirely for my brute strength, but also for what knowledge I had of the duergar. My new owner was a member of some group he called the Zhentarim, and when I told him all I knew, he offered me my freedom and a place among his agents. Together we would journey to a place called Mantol-Derith, where I would serve as his bodyguard. From there we would go to the surface, and I could remain in his employ if I wished. Freedom and a job? How could I refuse?

Mantol-Derith is a hidden place accessed by secret ways. Slaves, such as I had been, are typically not permitted to go there. Once in the cavern, I had to remain near my employer, but by keeping my eyes and ears open, I learned a lot about this place.

Mantol-Derith is where duergar, drow, and svirfneblin come to trade with each other and with surface-dwellers interested in conducting business with the deep places. Its location is kept secret—I only know that it is fairly close to the Darklake. The drow sell weapons, armor, magic scrolls and potions, and fine works of art. The duergar trade mainly in fine steel, and demand high prices to do so. Deep gnomes come to market with gems, certain fungi only they are capable of growing, and salt, which much of the Underdark has little ready supply of. The surface folk bring wines, ales, and spirits, cloth, wood, paper, and a great many other goods.

The laws of Mantol-Derith don't seem to care about anything other than commerce. There must be no prohibition on what sorts of creatures can visit here—among other things, I saw a pair of mind flayer envoys doing business in the market. The most serious of crimes are theft, the use of magic to influence negotiations, and the counterfeiting of goods by mundane or magical means. Anyone discovered to be in violation is sentenced on the spot, wrapped in heavy chains, and carted off to be tossed to the bottom of the Darklake.

When my employer's business was concluded, he was true to his word, and we left for the surface. If only the drow with whom he did business were so trustworthy. We were ambushed, he was killed, and I was again put in chains.

Menzoberranzan

I eventually got away from the place, but not before I had learned more about Menzoberranzan than any sane person would care to know. Although the life of a slave can be brutally short in the City of Spiders, the drow aren't so extravagant that they do away with every captive they take. At the same time, they are masters of punishment—it is fear of pain, not fear of death, that motivates the slaves of drow. If you're lucky, you'll only feel normal shackles and the occasional whip or light spell-blast. A bit less luck or more malice, and the serpent-headed whips of the priestesses come out.

If you aren't a drow in the City of Spiders, you aren't worth a name. All manner of surface-dwellers—orcs and elves, humans and halflings—are brought here to serve as slaves to the drow in their refuge. The constant fear of punishment, from one's mistress or another, more powerful drow, keeps most slaves obedient, even when they aren't directly supervised.

The great cavern of the city is filled with tall spires, and homes both great and small are carved into the stalagmites and stalactites that pierce the darkness. Gentle illumination from magic or glowing fungus decorates some homes and businesses, as well as the mansions of the high houses of the city, eight of which have positioned themselves above all others. While the lesser houses dance and fight and scheme for advantages over each other, they all live under the heel of House Baenre and the Matron Mother, who rules the city in Lolth's name.

On a large plateau high above the cavern floor is Tier Breche, also called the Academy, where the city trains its priestesses, mages, and noble warriors. The city's market is centrally located, and rothé are raised on an isle toward the eastern edge of the city.

If you are ever so unfortunate as to be enslaved by the drow of Menzoberranzan, my advice to you is simple and stern: do as you are commanded, avoid insulting their goddess (which means don't even brush off a spider crawling on you), and attempt escape only if you are desperate or sure of your survival. If you are given the proper opportunity, as I was, you might discover that the neck of a drow snaps with surprising ease.

Escape

One day, well after I had lost count of how many days I'd been a captive, I was in a small outlying cavern with a few other slaves harvesting a mushroom patch. I was given leave to answer nature's call away from the mushrooms, and I lingered long enough in a side tunnel to force my watcher to come and find me. I took the first lash he offered me with his whip, then grabbed the weapon and pulled the skinny fool toward me before he could sound an alarm or get his blade out. It took me but a second to get both hands around his throat. When he lay dead at my feet, I took his sword and ran as fast and far as I could. I knew the gnomish city of Blingdenstone was nearby, and I came upon it eventually, but the journey took days as I wound through convoluted passageways and tried to avoid notice.

Blingdenstone

My initial joy at reaching Blingdenstone was quickly tempered. The deep gnomes don't seem to like visitors they can't recognize or identify, and being a half-orc didn't help matters in the least for me. After dodging arrows loosed from the high walls of the city, I gave up on going through the gate and snuck in through a small cart tunnel, emptying out part of a load of ore to make room for myself.

I managed to avoid conflict with the guards that discovered me in the cart. When they ordered me to stand, I did so with my weapon held at my side, and I turned to display my back to them. When they saw that it was covered in lashes and the scars of the priestesses' fanged whips, and they realized that my blade was of drow manufacture (though I clearly was not), they were willing to believe my story.

Though the gnomes kept me under watch, I was allowed to regain my strength for a few days, and I saw a bit of their community in the meantime. Once I was inside the city, I could tell that it's not much of a city at all. The svirfneblin all live in close contact with one another, and this togetherness can be disconcerting, especially for someone accustomed to small luxuries like shutters on windows and doors on privies. The homes are all smoothed-over natural stone, with little evidence of hard corners.

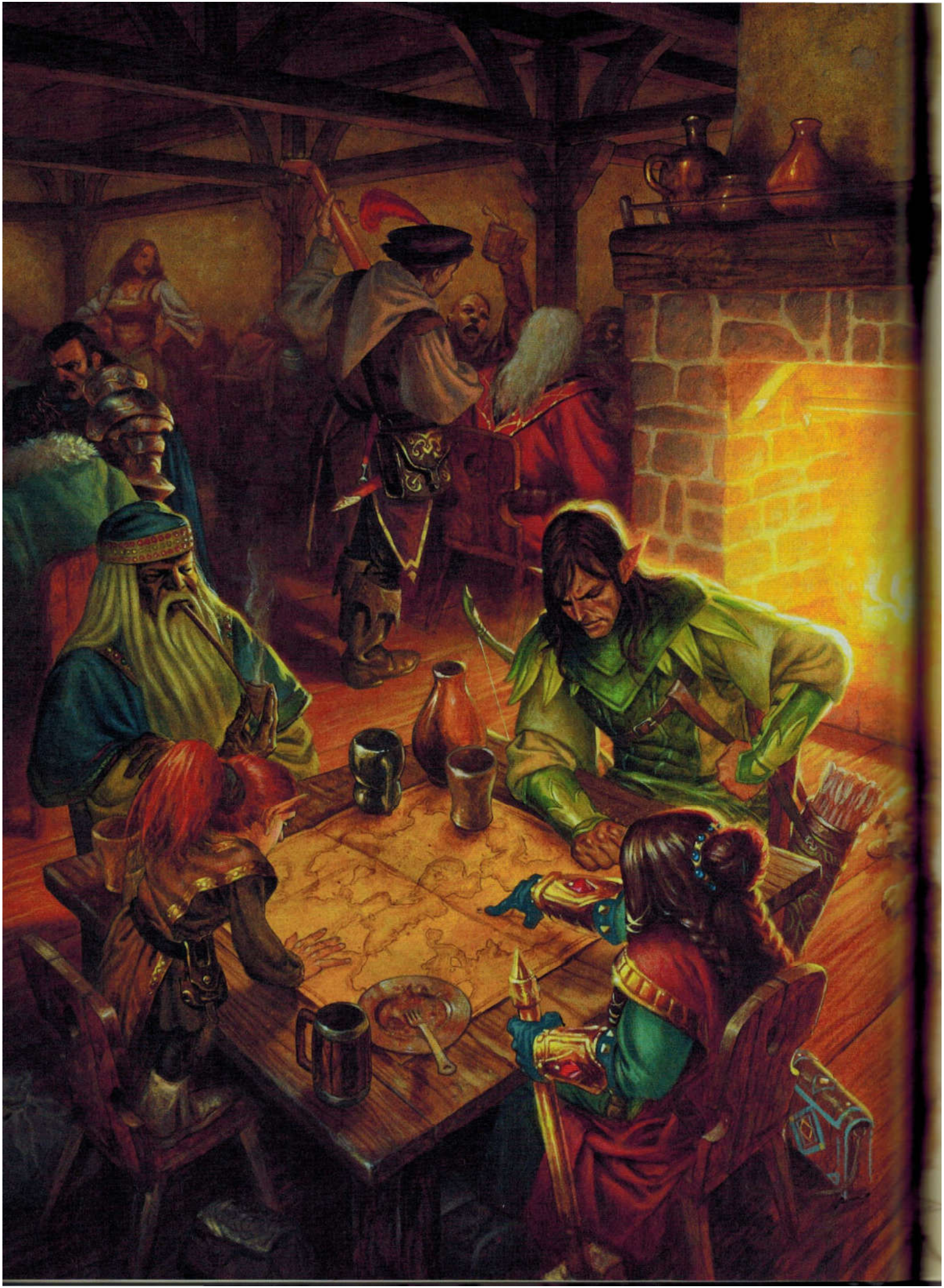
Each industry has a portion of the city to itself: trading, smithing, mining, and the growing of a special fungus crop. Still many of the old tunnels and caverns remain unclaimed and sealed off, whether to guard against invasion or perhaps because of what now dwells there, I don't know.

If you're welcomed long enough to the city, you can trade for fine goods and armor here; the gnomes' chain mail and mining picks seem most worth acquiring. Before sending me on my way, the gnomes were kind enough to give me a pick, a dagger, and some of their trillimac, an odd fungus that can be made into something like bread. It's a bit spongy, but it doesn't spoil quickly, and it got me to the surface before I starved to death.

The Cavern of Menzoberranzan

Menzoberranzan fills a large vault that was formerly a lair of giant spiders and beholders. The vault is known by its dwarven name, Araurilcaurak ("Great Pillar Cavern"), because of Narbondel, the giant rock pillar at the vault's center that joins floor and ceiling. The cavern is roughly shaped like an arrowhead, with the pool of Donigarten at its tip, and stretching two miles across at its widest point. The ceiling rises a thousand feet high, and the floor is studded with stalagmites.

Two areas rise above the rest of the city: Tier Breche, the side cavern occupied by the Academy where most drow citizens are trained for adulthood; and the larger Qu'ellarz'orl (or House-Loft), a plateau that is home to many of the city's mightiest noble houses, separated from the lower city by a forest of giant mushrooms. From either of these heights, a surveyor can view the city. The view shows rows of spired stone castles, their sculpted highlights lit by the soft, tinted flows of permanent *faerie fire* lights.



Chapter 3: Races of the Realms

Faerûn is home to many races, some of them immigrants from other worlds who found their way here in ancient times when gates and portals were more plentiful, and easier to traverse. Others are relative newcomers to the world, still finding a place for themselves among the long-established races. The civilizations of the elder races have declined, while those of the younger races are flourishing and spreading ever outward.

The character races described in the *Player's Handbook* are all found in the Realms, along with some subraces unique to Faerûn. Each character race has all the traits of the primary race, as given in the *Player's Handbook*, plus traits for each subrace that are unique to those individuals. This chapter provides racial traits for a subrace only when they differ from or replace those given in the *Player's Handbook*. The information in this chapter is specific to the Realms, so if something stated here differs from what's presented in the *Player's Handbook*, this material takes precedence.

Dwarves

The Stout Folk are deliberate and steadfast, with a proud history as great artisans, builders, and warriors. Although the glory of their empires faded long ago, the dwarves still hold to their ancient ways and traditions. They stubbornly defend what remains of their old domains beneath hill and mountain, and some seek to reclaim what they have lost to the depredations of orcs, goblins, and the inexorable march of time.

According to their own legends, dwarves were formed from iron, mithral, earth, and stone on the Soulforge of Moradin. After the All-Father breathed life into them in the heart of the world, dwarves found their way to the surface and, from there, spread across each continent.

Thousands of years of settlement and separation divided the dwarves into distinct subraces: the shield dwarves, most common in the North and the Sword Coast; the gold dwarves of the southern lands; and the gray dwarves, or duergar, of the Underdark.

The Dwarvish language of Faerûn uses a runic alphabet called Dethek, whose characters are easy to etch into stone and metal, as evidenced by the runestones and way-markers found in ancient dwarven tunnels and mines.

Shield Dwarves

The ancestral home of the shield dwarves is in northern Faerûn, where ancient dwarfholds exist in the North, Damara, Impiltur, Vaasa, the Vast, and the Western Heartlands. The most famous of the old shield dwarf cities is Citadel Adbar, north and east of Silverymoon. Many of these dwarfholds have changed hands over the centuries in a cycle of invasion by enemies, followed by reconquest by the dwarves.

Living in a near-constant state of war for generations, shield dwarves are a hardy people, slow to trust, with long memories and often an equally long list of grievances against their ancient enemies. The more conservative among them want to maintain the traditions and remaining holdings of their people, isolated from the influence of outsiders and safe from invaders behind thick walls of stone. Shield dwarves of a more adventurous bent are interested in exploring the world and seeing what lies beyond the bounds of their ancient dwarfholds.

Shield dwarves have the racial traits of mountain dwarves in the Player's Handbook. Their skin is usually fair, eyes green, hazel, or silver-blue, and they have brown, blond, or red hair. Full beards and mustaches are commonly seen on male shield dwarves.

Shield dwarves are renowned artisans, particularly in metal and stone. They tend to focus more on sturdiness in their craft than on the artistic flourishes and gilding favored by their gold dwarf cousins. Shield dwarf crafters build to last, and each one's signature mark placed upon an enduring masterpiece serves as a way of gaining immortality.

Gold Dwarves

Gold dwarves are common in the lands to the south and east. They are formidable warriors, proud of their long traditions, with strong ties to clan. They are gruff and haughty and have a love of fine craftsmanship and an eagerness to trade.

Significant settlements of gold dwarves exist in the Great Rift, the area surrounding the Dragon Coast, as well as in the Old Empires of eastern Faerûn. Smaller communities are found in the Smoking Mountains, in the Giant's Run Mountains, and the Western Heartlands.

Because they have not endured the same cycle of invasion and displacement, gold dwarves tend to be more optimistic than their shield dwarf cousins, but they're still standoffish and prideful as only a dwarf can be. They believe their race's stable history is the result of their attentiveness to tradition, and have little doubt that the future of the gold dwarves will be just as peaceful, if they remain true to their customs and principles.

Dwarf Clans of the North

All dwarves count their clan heritage as an important part of their lineage and identity. While in some cities a single clan dominates (or is the only one in residence), in other dwarven communities there is a complex relationship between family, clan, and the larger society.

Some of the dwarf clans in the North are Arnskull, Battlehammer, Blackbanner, Blackhammer, Bucklebar, Darkfell, Deepaxe, Deepdelve, Eaglecleft, Foehammer, Gallowglar, Hillsafar, Horn, Ironshield, Jundeth, Narlagh, Orothiar, Quarrymaster, Rockfist, Sstar, Stoneshaft, Stoneshield, Stoneshoulder, Trueforger, Watchever, Worldthrone, Wyrmslayer, and Yund.

Some dwarves hail from the family that founded or rules a given clan, and so they use the clan name as their family name. Others are simply "of" the clan, but bear the clan name with as much pride as their own surnames.

Gold dwarves have the racial traits of hill dwarves in the *Player's Handbook*. They are stocky and muscular, averaging about 4 feet tall, with brown skin, black or brown hair, and brown or hazel eyes, with green eyes rare (and considered lucky). Males grow full beards that they keep oiled and well groomed, and both genders wear their hair long and often elaborately braided.

Gold dwarves are best known for crafting beautiful objects. According to them, all the natural resources of the world exist for mortals to turn them into objects of great beauty. Gold dwarves don't want the most of everything; they want the best. Their artisans toil over items for years, getting their etchings and fine details just right before being satisfied with their efforts.

That deliberate, perfectionist approach is a reflection of gold dwarf culture, in which there is a right and proper way to do everything. Tradition dictates every aspect of a gold dwarf's life, from one's place in society, to prospects for marriage, to what careers are acceptable. Gold dwarves who take up a life of adventuring, away from the clan, rarely forsake their traditions when doing so. Even though they might have to live as outsiders for a time, they hope to ultimately improve their standing in their society.

Gray Dwarves (Duergar)

The gray dwarves, or duergar, live deep in the Underdark. After delving deeper than any other dwarves, they were enslaved by mind flayers for eons. Although they eventually won their freedom, these grim, ashen-skinned dwarves now take slaves of their own and are as tyrannical as their former masters.

Physically similar to other dwarves in some ways, duergar are wiry and lean, with black eyes and bald heads, with the males growing long, unkempt, gray beards.

Duergar value toil above all else. Showing emotions other than grim determination or wrath is frowned on in their culture, but they can sometimes seem joyful when at work. They have the typical dwarven appreciation for order, tradition, and impeccable craftsmanship, but their goods are purely utilitarian, disdaining aesthetic or artistic value.

Few duergar become adventurers, fewer still on the surface world, because they are a hidebound and suspicious race. Those who leave their subterranean cities are usually exiles. Check with your Dungeon Master to see if you can play a gray dwarf character.

Duergar Subrace Traits

The duergar subrace has the dwarf traits in the *Player's Handbook*, plus the subrace traits below.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.

Superior Darkvision. Your darkvision has a radius of 120 feet.

Extra Language. You can speak, read, and write Undercommon.

Duergar Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against illusions and against being charmed or paralyzed.

Duergar Magic. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *enlarge/reduce* spell on yourself once with this trait, using only the spell's enlarge option. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *invisibility* spell on yourself once with this trait. You don't need material components for either spell, and you can't cast them while you're in direct sunlight, although sunlight has no effect on them once cast. You regain the ability to cast these spells with this trait when you finish a long rest. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Sunlight Sensitivity. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when you, the target of your attack, or whatever you are trying to perceive is in direct sunlight.

Dwarven Deities

The gods of the dwarves are a pantheon, or clan, collectively known as the Morndinsamman.

Forge Father and Revered Mother

Moradin, the Soulforger, leads the dwarven gods. Known as Dwarf-father or All-Father, he is the god of the dwarf people as a whole, as well as the god of creation, "dwarf-crafts" (smithing and stonework), and protection. His wife is the Revered Mother, Berronar Truesilver, goddess of hearth and home, of honesty and faithfulness, and of oaths, loyalty, and honor.

Gods of Battle

Clangeddin Silverbeard is the dwarven god of war and valor. Gorm Gulthyn, also called Fire Eyes and the Lord of the Bronze Mask, is the god of defense and vigilance, the protector of dwarves. Haela Brightaxe is the goddess of luck in battle, and the patron of dwarf fighters.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	**O**	**P**	**Q**	**R**	**S**	**T**	**U**	**V**	**W**	**X**	**Y**	**Z**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**0**	**10**	**50**	**100**

Dethek, the Letters and Numerals of Dwarvish

Gods of Craft

Dumathoin, the Keeper of Secrets under the Mountain, is the patron of the shield dwarves, as well as the god of buried wealth, mining, gems, and exploration, and the guardian of the dead. Sharindlar, Lady of Life and Mercy, is the goddess of healing, romantic love, and fertility, often associated with the moon.

Gods of Far Places

The god of invention and discovery is Dugmaren Brightmantle, called the Wandering Tinker or the Gleam in the Eye. Marthammor Duin is the traveler's god, patron of expatriates and guides, and deity of lightning and roads.

Gods of Wealth

Vergadain, called the Merchant King, is the god of thieves (who commands his followers never to steal from other dwarves), luck, and chance, as well as commerce and negotiation. Abbathor is the god of greed, sometimes portrayed as a dragon filled with envy of the wealth of others, who jealously tends his own hoard.

Gods of Evil

Laduguer is the patron of the duergar, god of magic and those crafts not governed by Moradin. Also worshiped among the duergar is Deep Duerra, a goddess of conquest and of the powers of the mind.

Elves

Skilled in both magic and warfare, the *Tel'Quessir*—"the People," as they call themselves—came to Faerûn ages ago, building vast and powerful empires long before the rise of humans. The days of the great elven nations are now long past, and many elves have withdrawn from the world into isolated sylvan realms, or set sail across the Trackless Sea to the isle of Evermeet.

Unlike dwarves, who developed subraces in the world, elves brought their divisions with them, settling into separate kingdoms by type. Beings of immense power, the first elves explored and settled the world, bringing about a golden age of art, magic, and civilization. At the height of their power, the elves performed a High Magic ritual intended to create the ideal homeland. They succeeded, but the spell sundered the land in a terrible cataclysm at the same time that

it caused the distant isle of Evermeet to rise from beneath the sea.

Then came the Crown Wars, a series of conflicts between the great elven kingdoms lasting three thousand years. These battles devastated much of the world and resulted in the dark elves' flight into the Underdark.

Reeling from these calamities, the elven empires went into a long, slow decline, and many of their kind took part in the great Retreat to their refuge on Evermeet. As the elves increasingly withdrew from the world, other races and civilizations rose to prominence in Faerûn.

The Elvish language used across Faerûn—sometimes called the True Tongue by elves—is written in the graceful script of the Espruar alphabet. Seldruin, the ancient language of elven High Magic that uses the Hamarfae alphabet, is all but forgotten nowadays.

Moon Elves

Also called silver elves, or *Teu'Tel'Quessir*, moon elves are more tolerant and adventurous than elves of other sorts. In ancient times, the dissolution of their empires dispersed moon elves among other races, and since then they have traditionally gotten along well with their non-elf neighbors. They mingle with other people while their kin remain in hidden settlements and secluded strongholds.

Moon elves are sometimes seen as frivolous, especially by other elves. But it is the easygoing, fluid nature of their culture, philosophy, and personality that has enabled them to survive and flourish during and after tragic times in elven history. While communities of moon elves can be found in mainland Faerûn, many moon elves live in the settlements of other races, staying for a few seasons or several decades before moving on.

To a moon elf, home can be among the members of one's family, clan, or other friends and loved ones. Moon elves who temporarily take up residence in or near sun elf communities aren't shy about expressing the opinion that their kin need to be less serious. In turn, the sun elves pretend to be more annoyed by their moon elf neighbors than they truly are, provided that the moon elves' whims and adventuresome urges don't cause serious disruption. Given that the moon elves usually move on before wearing out their welcome, such unrest rarely occurs.

Moon elves have the racial traits of high elves in the *Player's Handbook*. They have pale skin with a bluish tint. Their hair runs the gamut of human colors, and some moon elves have hair of silvery white or various shades of blue. Their eyes are blue or green and have gold flecks.

Given the race's love of travel, exploration, and new experiences, many moon elves become adventurers, utilizing their talents for warfare, woodcraft, and wizardry in different measures.

Sun Elves

Sun elves, also known as gold elves, or *Ar'Tel'Quessir*, have a reputation for being arrogant and self-important. Many of them believe they are Corellon's chosen people and that other races—even other elves—are subordinate to them in skill, significance, and sophistication. They claim the title of "high elves" with pride, and indeed their race is responsible for great, and sometimes terrible, achievements.

Recalling and emphasizing the glorious aspects of their history, sun elves subscribe to the principle of "elven excellence"— no matter how interesting, exceptional, heroic, or noteworthy other races' accomplishments might be, there is an inherent superiority to all things elven. This attitude colors sun elves' relations with other elves, whom they see as diluted or diminished representatives of elven culture. Some sun elves reject this way of thinking, but it is common enough that when most folk of Faerûn see a sun elf, they see arrogance personified. Their haughty attitude can overshadow the fact that most sun elves are also tirelessly compassionate and thoughtful champions of good.

Sun elves have the racial traits of high elves in the *Player's Handbook*. Sun elves have bronze skin. Their eyes are black, metallic gold, or metallic silver, and their hair is black, metallic copper, or golden blond.

Sun elf culture and civilization is highly magical in nature, thanks to the race's many accomplished wizards, sages, and crafters. Not every sun elf is a skilled practitioner of the Art, but each one has at least a bit of inherent magic. Many sun elves mix magic with other art forms, which produces the complex dance of the bladesingers as well as the enchanting music of their bards and the meticulous craftwork of their artisans. Sun elf adventurers often bring a feeling of noblesse oblige to their profession: they venture out into the world to challenge its dangers because someone must, and who could be better suited?

Rare Elf Subraces

Other lines of descendants exist of the elves who originally came to Faerûn, but they are so rare as to be legendary, often considered mythical.

Avariel. The *Aril'Tel'Quessir*, or winged elves, were among the first to settle in Faerûn. They are famed for their feathered wings and ability to fly. Ancient conflicts with dragons nearly wiped them out, and today they are rarely, if ever, seen.

Lythari. The *Ly'Tel'Quessir* have the ability to polymorph into wolves. Unlike werewolves, lythari don't have a hybrid form and aren't afflicted by a curse. They dwell together in secretive packs, primarily in wolf form, living free in the deep wilds of the world.

Sea Elves. The *Alu'Tel'Quessir* ("water elves") are an aquatic subrace of elves found in the oceans of the world, especially off the shores of Faerûn and Evermeet. Sea elves live along the Sword Coast in close-knit nomadic clans, but elsewhere sea elves claim kingdoms in sunlit shallows. They have been at war with the sahuagin throughout their history.

Star Elves. The star elves, or *Ruar'Tel'Quessir*, look much like tall moon elves. They dwell on the demiplane of Sildëyuir near the Feywild. A conflict with the nilshai, a race of wormlike sorcerers from the Ethereal Plane, forced some star elves to leave their home and come to Faerûn.

Wild Elves. The *Sy'Tel'Quessir* are considered by many elves to be the most strange of their race, having abandoned or lost much of their ancient culture.

Wood Elves

Also called copper elves, or *Sy'Tel'Quessir*, wood elves are the most common elves remaining in Faerûn. Their ancestors left behind the strife of the Crown Wars millennia ago to found strongholds and settlements deep in the forests. Today, most wood elves stand guard over the ruins of the past, believing it their duty to preserve their fallen glory as an object lesson of the dangers of hubris.

Wood elves tend to be hardier than other elves, more solid and grounded than their cousins. This attitude is reflected in their culture and traditions; wood elves tend more toward physical pursuits than do other elves, and they view ancient elven history with a more critical eye. To the wood elves, the "great" elven kingdoms were responsible for many equally great mistakes. They look upon the Sundering, the Crown Wars, the descent of the drow, and other calamities as the result of acts of arrogance on the part of their ancestors. Living around and amid the reminders of this arrogance, and standing witness to the rise and fall of many elven empires, wood elves see the place of elves in the world differently than moon or sun elves do. Wood elves seek a quiet harmony, not domination, with the wider world.

Sylvan counterparts of the sun elves and moon elves, wood elves eschew the cities and strongholds of

their kin in favor of living close to nature. Wood elves have not claimed a large realm of their own since the kingdom of Eaerlann was destroyed millennia ago. Instead they maintain a number of smaller settlements, the better to keep those communities hidden or protected. Wood elves claim territory in the High Forest, the Great Dale, the Western Heartlands, and beyond. Some wood elves live in other elven communities and territories, where they serve as scouts, rangers, and hunters.

Despite seeing themselves as part of the world, wood elves don't commonly emerge from their homes to encounter non-elves. Likewise, in the deep woods and forests of the world, most wood elves don't come across members of other races. Adventurers, diplomats, couriers, and those who pursue similar professions are the exceptions, traveling far outside their sylvan domains and meeting a wide variety of folk.

Wood elves in Faerûn have the racial traits of wood elves in the *Player's Handbook*. They have tan or coppery skin, with hair of wood brown, golden blond, black, or a shining metallic copper, and eyes of green, brown, or hazel.

Skilled naturalists, wood elves often take up professions that allow them to remain close to the wild or to make use of their knowledge of woodcraft, wildlife, and forestry. Wood elves are more than capable in warfare, particularly archery. They are less magically inclined than their cousins, but have their fair share of practitioners of the Art, as well as clerics and many druids.

Dark Elves (Drow)

The drow are descended from the dark elves who retreated into the Underdark after the Crown Wars. They are infamous for their cruelty, evilness, and drive to dominate.

For much of history, many believed that all drow were beings of inherent and irredeemable evil. In truth, most drow do align with evil, engaging in torture, slavery, murder, and other nefarious activities in the name of their demon-goddess. Almost always, dark elves who reject the ways of their people are exiled, or executed for being rebels, heretics, and insurrectionists who have turned against drow culture and the will of Lolth. But the existence of noble and self-sacrificing drow such as Liriel Baenre and Drizzt Do'Urden suggests that the evil of the drow isn't innate and can be overcome. The actions of these few heroic drow have tempered some people's opinions toward the race, although the appearance of a dark elf on the surface remains a rare event and a cause for alarm.

Many drow in Faerûn hail from Menzoberranzan, the infamous City of Spiders, or one of the other drow city-states in the Underdark, such as Jhachalkhyn or Ched Nasad. Dark elves encountered on the surface are usually found near entrances to the Underdark, because they are harmed by the light of day, which weakens them and their magic. Drow who become adventurers often do so after fleeing the oppressive, cruel theocracy of the city-states. Most of these individuals live as outcasts and wanderers, though a rare few find new homes with another race or culture.

Drow have the racial traits of dark elves in the *Player's Handbook*. Drow characters can come from any background, though most have a history that links to one of the drow city-states of the Underdark.

Inherent magical abilities and a preference for dark places make drow naturally adept as assassins, thieves, and spies. Traditionally, male drow are warriors and wizards, and female drow occupy leadership roles as warriors or priestesses of Lolth. Drow exiles tend to follow their own path regardless of gender.

Elven Deities

The gods of the *Tel'Quessir*, collectively known as the Seldarine, have embodied the ideals of the elf people since time immemorial. They are believed to dwell in the realm of Arvandor on the plane of Arborea.

God of the Elves

Corellon Larethian is the wise leader of the Seldarine, the god of elves, magic, poetry, rulership, and warcraft. He is thought of as the father of the race, but he is depicted as female as often as he is depicted as male.

Goddess of Wisdom

Angharradh, triune goddess of wisdom and the fierce mother-protector of the elf people, is Corellon's consort. Her three aspects are: Aerdrie Faenya, wild goddess of the winds and weather, as well as patron of the avariel; Hanali Celanil, the Winsome Rose, goddess of love,

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1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**0**	**10**	**50**	**100**

Espruar, the Letters and Numerals of Elvish

beauty, art, and enchantment; and the Moonlit Mystery, silver Sehanine Moonbow, goddess of all life's mysteries, including mysticism, prophecy, death, and dreams. In legends, these goddesses are often separate entities from Angharradh, and frequently depicted as Correllon's daughters or consorts.

Gods of Nature

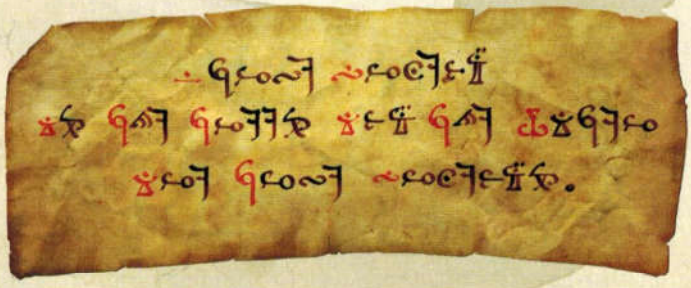
Deep Sashelas is a sea god, lord of the sea elves and of dolphins. Labelas Enoreth is the philosopher god, deity of time and history, whose gift of trance is crucial to elven identity and survival. Rillifane Rallathil is god of the woodlands and the wild places, the father of wood elves and protector of druids. Closely allied with him is Solonor Thelandira, the god of hunting, archery, and woodcraft.

Gods of Shadow

Of somewhat darker bent, Erevan Ilesere is a deity of mischief, a trickster-god; and Fenmarel Mestarine is the moody and sullen god of outcasts and solitude, who has little to do with the rest of the Seldarine (except for Erevan, who uses Fenmarel as a scapegoat in his plots and pranks). And then there is Shevarash, a god thought of as embittered and obsessive, to whom elves turn when they seek vengeance.

Faerûnian Gods

Many elves worship deities in the Faerûnian pantheon, including Mielikki (and the unicorn goddess Lurue), Silvanus, and Sune. In recent years, some elves have found delight in the worship of Lathander, as well.



Drow Deities

The gods of the drow are fractious and treacherous as their worshipers.

The Spider Queen. Lolth, the Demon Queen of Spiders, reigns supreme as goddess of the drow, ruthlessly eliminating all who would threaten her position. Her priestesses do likewise with the cults of rival gods among their people.

Other Dark Powers. Selvetarm is god of warriors, and therefore patron of male drow, although perhaps not so much as Vhaeraun, the rogue god of thievery and of drow males who rebel against the matriarchy. Kiaransalee, drow goddess of the undead, is served by secretive cults of necromancers. Ghaunadaur, known as That Which Lurks, is a subversive power, the mad god of oozes, rebels, and outcasts, occasionally revered by drow.

The Dark Maiden. Some drow exiles have heard the song of Eilistraee, urging them out onto the surface to behold the moon as it rises. The drow goddess of song, beauty, swordwork, hunting, and moonlight, she is the patron of drow who reject the evils of their society, offering them light and hope.

Halflings

Folk think of elves as aloof and graceful, dwarves as fierce and hardy, and of gnomes—if they think of them at all—as clever and shy. Halflings, in contrast, have the reputation of being deft and plucky.

Halflings, or *hin* as they call themselves, exhibit a natural adroitness that often surprises larger folk. This nimbleness regularly comes in handy when their courage outruns their common sense, and tales about halflings abound with lucky breaks and narrow escapes.

Beyond these typical elements of the halfling character, halflings can be divided into two major subraces. Many aspects of the two groups' cultures make them distinct, but even without such trappings they are distinct due to a divergence in what seems to be a primal drive: to go or to stay. Lightfoot halflings are travelers as a rule, with tongues and hearts as nimble as their feet. Whereas if strongheart halflings are on the move, it always seems driven by a desire to return to home or find and settle in a new one. As the saying goes, "Lightfoot, light hearted. Strongheart, strong footing."

Although there are many halfling communities, particularly in the lands in and around Luiren, halflings frequently fit themselves into dwarven, gnomish, elven, and human societies. Lightfoots breeze into communities as they travel, make friends easily, and then move on as the wind or whimsy takes them. Stronghearts settle in, make themselves at home, and weave themselves so deftly into the fabric of a community that it becomes hard for folk to think of a time without them.

Lightfoot Halflings

For lightfoot halflings, neither the journey nor the destination matters more; the important thing is to keep moving. The life of a lightfoot is one long exploration with each new horizon, new town, or new face a chance to find something delightful.

Lightfoot halflings typically travel in small bands, using whatever conveyance is convenient but just as easily striking out on foot. Bands consist of loosely related individuals, and when bands meet, membership frequently shifts. Lightfoot halflings typically excel at tasks related to travel—be it navigation, handling pack animals, foraging, sailing, and cartwright work—having tried their hand at all such things before or learned from other lightfoots met during their journeys.

Lightfoot halflings are highly social, often as curious about other people as they are about what might lie around the next bend. They characteristically possess an easygoing and open attitude, curious about others and willing to share of themselves, which enables them to make friends easily. Their facile friendships and ease with partings can make lightfoot halflings seem disingenuous to others. Lightfoot halflings get stereotyped as flighty, easily distracted, fickle, and unreliable. But their friendships and courtships, if brief, tend to be genuine. The staid and stable life that most other people desire just isn't part of their character.

Lightfoot halflings have all the racial traits of lightfoot halflings in the *Player's Handbook*. They share the skin, hair, and eye tones of humans, but most lightfoot halflings have hazel or brown eyes and brown hair. Lightfoot halflings don't grow facial hair except that males and females typically grow short sideburns.

Strongheart Halflings

Creatures of the earth who love a warm hearth and pleasant company, strongheart halflings are folks of few enemies and many friends. Stronghearts are sometimes referred to fondly by members of other races as "the good folk," for little upsets stronghearts or corrupts their spirit. To many of them, the greatest fear is to live in a world of poor company and mean intent, where one lacks freedom and the comfort of friendship.

When strongheart halflings settle into a place, they intend to stay. It's not unusual for a dynasty of stronghearts to live in the same place for a few centuries. Strongheart halflings don't develop these homes in seclusion. On the contrary, they do their best to fit into the local community and become an essential part of it. Their viewpoint stresses cooperation above all other

traits, and the ability to work well with others is the most valued behavior in their lands.

Pushed from their nests, strongheart haflings typically try to have as many comforts of home with them as possible. Non-stronghearts with a more practical bent can find strongheart travel habits maddening, but their lightfoot cousins typically enjoy the novelty of it—so long as the lightfoots don't have to carry any of the baggage.

While often stereotyped as fat and lazy due to their homebound mindset and obsession with fine food, strongheart halfings are typically quite industrious. Nimble hands, their patient mindset, and their emphasis on quality makes them excellent weavers, potters, wood carvers, basket makers, painters, and farmers.

Strongheart halflings have all the racial traits of stouts in the *Player's Handbook*. Strongheart halflings are shorter on average than their lightfoot kin, and tend to have rounder faces. They have the skin tones and hair colors of humans, with most having brown hair. Unlike their lightfoot cousins, strongheart halflings often have blond or black hair and blue or green eyes. Males don't grow beards or mustaches, but both males and females can grow sideburns down to mid-cheek, and both genders plait them into long braids.

Halfling Deities

The *hin* have a small but intimate pantheon of deities, which are honored primarily at household altars, roadside shrines, and wooded groves.

The Blessed Sisters

The *hin* mother-goddess and the head of the pantheon is Yondalla, the Blessed One, goddess of bounty and fertility, protector of hearth, home, and family. Sheela Peryroyl is the Green Sister of Yondalla. She is a nature goddess, the lady of fields, streams, and the wilds found in shire and glen, and the weather in such places. She is also a goddess of love, song, and dance.

Ghostwise Halflings

Ghostwise halflings trace their ancestry back to a war among halfling tribes that sent their ancestors into flight from Luiren. Ghostwise halflings are the rarest of the *hin*, found only in the Chondalwood and a few other isolated forests, clustered in tight-knit clans.

Many ghostwise clans select a natural landmark as the center of their territory, and members carry a piece of that landmark with them at all times. Clan warriors known as nightgliders bond with and ride giant owls as mounts.

Because these folk are clannish and mistrustful of outsiders, ghostwise halfling adventurers are rare. Ask your DM if you can play a member of this subrace, which has the halfling traits in the *Player's Handbook*, plus the subrace traits below.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Silent Speech. You can speak telepathically to any creature within 30 feet of you. The creature understands you only if the two of you share a language. You can speak telepathically in this way to one creature at a time.

Keepers of the Home

Cyrrollalee is goddess of the hearth and hospitality, as well as of trust and handicrafts. Arvoreen is a defender-god, a watchful protector who sacrifices personal comfort for the safety of others.

The Shadowed Gods

Brandobaris is the trickster-god of thievery and stealth, patron of many halfling adventurers. Urogalan is the silent, melancholy god of the earth and death. Accompanied everywhere by a great dark hound, he is saddened by his duties, and vigilant in ensuring that the dead are respected and protected.

Lady Luck

Many halflings have taken to regular worship of Tymora, seeing her as a helping hand in their fortunes and a patron of the luckiness associated with the *hin*.

Humans

Humans dwell in every corner of Toril and encompass a full range of cultures and ethnicities. Along the Sword Coast and across the North, humans are the most pervasive of the races and in many places the most dominant. Their cultural and societal makeup runs the gamut, from the cosmopolitan folk who reside in great cities such as Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep to the barbarians who rage throughout the Savage Frontier.

Humans are famous for their adaptability. No other race lives in so many diverse lands or environments, from lush jungles to burning deserts, from the eternal cold of the Great Glacier to the fertile shores along rivers and seas. Humans find ways to survive and to thrive almost anywhere. In locations where elves and dwarves have withdrawn, humans often move in and build anew alongside or on top of an earlier community.

It follows, then, that the most common feature of humans is their lack of commonality. This diversity has enabled human civilizations to grow faster than those of other races, making humans one of the dominant races in much of the world today. It has also led to conflicts between communities of humans because of their cultural and political differences. If not for their penchant for infighting, humans would be even more populous and predominant than they already are.

Human Ethnicities in Faerûn

Nine human ethnicities in Faerûn are detailed in the *Player's Handbook*. Several other noteworthy groups of humans are discussed here. Some are significant minorities in regions or nations that border the North, while others are prevalent in parts of the world far from the Sword Coast.

Arkaiun

Short in stature with tan skin and dark hair, the Arkaiuns dwell primarily in Dambrath as well as Halruaa and the Shar. Many Arkaiuns lived under the yoke of drow slavery centuries ago after a failed military campaign against the dark elves, which led to the eventual destruction of the Arkaiun kingdom in Dambrath.

Arkaiun Names: (Male) Houn, Rhivaun, Umbril, Xaemar, Zeltaebar; (female) Glouris, Maeve, Sevaera, Xaemarra, Zraela; (surnames) Lharaendo, Mristar, Wyndael

Bedine

Dark-skinned and dark-haired, the Bedine were warriors and nomads in southern Anauroch. Once divided into over a hundred tribes, the clannish Bedine mostly kept to their desert lands and interacted little with outsiders, except for trading. Over the generations, more

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Thorass, the Letters and Numerals of Common

Bedine have become city dwellers, leaving behind their nomadic ways, and reducing the number of tribes that still espouse their traditional way of life.

Bedine Names: (Male) Aali, Rashid, Tahnon, Tanzim, Whalide; (female) Aisha, Farah, Nura, Rashida, Zalebyeh; (tribe names) Alaii, Bordjia, Clelarra, Desai, Dakawa, Dursalai, Goldor, Iriphawa, Kellordrai, Lalajar, Qahtan, Yethtai, Zazalaar

Ffolk

The Ffolk of the Moonshae Isles are descended from Tethyrian settlers who came to the isles a thousand years ago. The Ffolk have a deep respect for nature, and are primarily farmers, worshiping the goddess they call the Earthmother and keeping to old druidic ways. Ffolk shipwrights are well regarded, having proven their ability to build sturdy ships that are capable of weathering the tumultuous seas around their home.

Ffolk Names: (Male) Artur, Bern, Colin, Manfred, Tristan; (female) Alicia, Gennifer, Meridith, Elaine, Olivia; (surnames) Archer, Gareth, Leed, Kendrick, Morgan, Waters

Gur

Related to the Rashemi, Gurs are stout, dusky-skinned, and dark-haired. They consider themselves "children of Selûne," and most of them revere the moon goddess. Gur communities live a nomadic existence wandering the Western Heartlands, leading others to refer to them as "the people of the highway."

Gur Names: (Male) Boriv, Gardar, Madevik, Vlad; (female) Varra, Ulmarra, Imza, Navarra, Yuldra; (surnames) Chergoba, Drazlad, Tazyara, Vargoba, Stayankina

Halruaan

The people of the mysterious and magical kingdom of Halruaa, the Halruaans are touched by magic, and many of them are talented in the Art. They and their land vanished during the Spellplague, but just as mysteriously returned after the second Sundering. Most Halruaans have blond or dark hair and olive complexions. Black, brown, and green eyes are the most common.

Halruaan Names: (Male) Aldym, Chand, Meleghost, Presmer, Sandrue, Uregaunt; (female) Aithe, Chalan, Oloma, Phaele, Sarade; (surnames) Avhoste, Darante, Maurmeril, Stamaraster

Imaskari

An uprising of Mulan slaves brought about the ruin of Imaskar and its ruling wizards thousands of years ago, but some Imaskari survived and fled into the Underdark. There they changed, developing the pale, smooth skin and whitish hair now common among them. The Imaskari who dominated the region of Mulhorand have been forced into exile by a second uprising of those they dominated.

Imaskari Names: (Male) Charva, Duma, Hukir, Jama, Pradir, Sikhil; (female) Apret, Bask, Fanul, Mokat, Nismet, Ril; (surnames) Datharathi, Melpurvatta, Nalambar, Tiliputakas

Nar

More than a thousand years ago, the dark priests of Narfell amassed great power by treating with demons, but their actions eventually brought about a war that destroyed their civilization. The Nars abandoned their ruined and accursed cities and became nomads and traders. Nars have tanned skin, brown or black eyes, and black hair, often worn long and tied in a tail or topknot.

Nar Names: (Male) Avan, Ostaram, Petro, Stor, Taman, Thalaman, Urth; (female) Anva, Dasha, Dima, Olga, Westra, Zlatara; (surnames) Dashkev, Hargroth, Laboda, Lackman, Stonar, Stormwind, Sulyma

Shaaran

Dark-haired and tan-skinned nomads from southern Faerûn, the Shaarans are skilled hunters, archers, and riders who revere various nature deities. They are organized into clans under the direction of elders and chieftains.

Shaaran Names: (Male) Awar, Cohis, Damota, Gewar, Hapah, Laskaw, Senesaw, Tokhis; (female) Anet, Bes, Idim, Lenet, Moqem, Neghet, Sihvet; (surnames) Cor Marak, Laumee Harr, Moq Qo Harr, Woraw Tarak

Tuigan

A nomadic horde from the vast plains between Faerûn and Kara-Tur, the Tuigans once nearly conquered Faerûn under the great leader Yamun Khahan before

Option: Human Languages

Many human ethnicities and nations in Faerûn have their own language, in addition to Common. Most human languages are written in Thorass, the alphabet of Old Common, derived from the Chondathan language that traders used as their common tongue. A few human languages use other alphabets, including Draconic, Dethek, and Espruar. The languages of the ethnicities described in the *Player's Handbook* and this book are as follows:

Arkaiun: Dambrathan (written in Espruar)
Bedine: Midani
Calishite: Alzhedo
Chondathan: Chondathan
Damaran: Damaran (written in Dethek)
Ffolk: Waelan
Gur: Guran (a patois of Roushoum and Rashemi)
Halruaan: Halruaan (written in Draconic)
Illuskan: Illuskan
Imaskari: Roushoum
Mulan: Chessentan, Mulhorandi, Untheric, or Thayan
Nar: Damaran
Rashemi: Rashemi
Shaaran: Shaaran (written in Dethek)
Shou: Shou
Tethyrian: Chondathan
Tuigan: Tuigan
Turami: Turmic
Ulutiun: Uluik

If your Dungeon Master allows this option, then any human from an ethnic group that has its own language is assumed to know that language as well as Common. This ethnic language is treated as a free additional language for such individuals.

being defeated by a coalition of armies. Since those days, Tuigans are sometimes seen on the Sword Coast and in other nearby regions, but not in great numbers.

The Tuigans resemble the Shou, with a bronze or golden cast to their skin and dark hair, but they tend to have darker skin and broader features. Each has only a single name (sometimes handed down from one's parent); Tuigans don't use surnames. No strangers to travel, Tuigan traders and adventurers are often familiar with many languages and cultures.

Tuigan Names: (Male) Atlan, Bayar, Chingis, Chinua, Mongke, Temur; (female) Bolormaa, Bortai, Erdene, Naran

Ulutiun

The Ulutiuns are short, dark-haired, golden-skinned people who originated in northern Kara-Tur and migrated westward to Icewind Dale and other cold lands near the Endless Ice Sea. Hunters and gatherers, Ulutiuns live in small tribes that have managed to survive in one of the harshest environments in the world. Each has only a single name (sometimes handed down from one's parent); Ulutiuns don't use surnames.

Ulutiun Names: (Male) Amak, Chu, Imnek, Kanut, Siku; (female) Akna, Chena, Kaya, Sedna, Ublereak

Humans' Deities

The breadth and variety of the human race in Faerûn is never more evident than in the diverse collection of deities that humans worship. The Faerûnian pantheon (detailed in chapter 1) includes gods of every stripe, and a number of deities whose spheres of influence overlap and compete, which seems to be just how humans like it.

Along the Sword Coast, most human communities have temples and shrines tended by priests who are devoted to various Faerûnian gods. In some of these places, the faithful of deities revered by rulers and other powerful individuals play a greater role in local politics than those not so favored. In the extreme, worship that is deemed heretical or dangerous is outlawed—for example, in a region where followers of Shar hold authority and power, the worship of her good twin and nemesis Selûne might be against the law.

Dragonborn

Draconic humanoids from another world, the dragonborn of Faerûn are proud, honorable, and relatively rare. Slaves to dragons on their world of origin, they are now a free people looking for a place and purpose in their new world.

Uncertain Origins

As with all stories of the ancient past, tales of the origins of the dragonborn are hazy and sometimes contradictory. Each reveals something about the dragonborn in its telling, however.

One story relates that the dragonborn were shaped by the ancient dragon-god Io at the same time that Io created the dragons. In the beginning of days, Io fused brilliant astral spirits with the unchecked fury of the elements. The greater spirits became dragons—creatures so powerful, proud, and willful that they were lords of the newborn world. The lesser spirits became the dragonborn. Although smaller in stature, they were no less draconic in nature. This tale stresses the close kinship between dragons and dragonborn, while reinforcing the natural order of things—dragons rule and dragonborn serve, at least according to the dragonborn's former masters.

Another legend asserts that Io created the dragons at the birth of the world, but dragonborn did not yet exist. Then, during the Dawn War, Io was killed by the primordial known as Erek-Hus, the King of Terror. With a rough-hewn axe of adamantine, the behemoth split Io from head to tail, cleaving the dragon-god into two equal halves, which rose up as new gods—Bahamut and Tiamat. Droplets of Io's blood, spattered across the world, became the first dragonborn. For some who believe it, this origin story supports the view that dragonborn are clearly inferior to the dragons that were made by Io's loving hand, while others emphasize that the dragonborn arose from Io's own blood—just as two draconic deities arose from the god's severed body. So are the dragonborn not, therefore, like the gods themselves?

A third origin story posits that dragonborn were the firstborn of the world, created by Io before the existence

of other humanoid races, which were pale imitations of dragonborn perfection. Io shaped the dragonborn and fired them with his breath, then spilled his own blood to give them life. The first dragonborn served Io as companions and allies, filling his astral court and singing his praises. The dragons he made only later, at the start of the Dawn War, to serve as engines of destruction. This view of dragonborn history is shared by those who believe that dragonborn are superior to other races and thus should be the masters of dragons and not the other way around.

Despite their differing conclusions, a common theme binds all these legends together: the dragonborn owe their existence to Io, the great dragon-god who created all of dragonkind. The dragonborn, all legends agree, are not the creations of Bahamut or Tiamat—and so they have no predetermined side in the conflict between those gods. Every individual dragonborn, regardless of one's particular draconic ancestry, makes a personal choice in matters of ethics and morality.

The Fight for Freedom

Dragonborn hail from Abeir, the primordial twin of Toril. On that world most of the dragonborn are slaves to their dragon masters, though many won their freedom and formed nations of free dragonborn. During the Spellplague, the two worlds intersected and one of those free dragonborn nations, Tymanchebar, was transported to Faerûn. It displaced the nation of Unther, and out of the ashes of these two kingdoms, the surviving dragonborn formed Tymanther, a new dragonborn nation in Faerûn.

For a time, the dragonborn of Tymanther sought to integrate with their new world while maintaining their own traditions and culture. These efforts gave the nation and its people a reputation for being honorable and worthy of respect. Only a few generations later, however, the events of the Sundering returned Unther to Faerûn, and the formerly displaced land sought to reclaim all it had lost to Tymanther. Reeling from this disaster, the remaining dragonborn in Faerûn now find they must work even harder and with fewer resources to find their place among the people the world.

Honor and Family

Every aspect of dragonborn life is dictated by the race's code of honor and strict adherence to tradition. Dragonborn society is highly ordered, with each member expected to do one's utmost for family and clan. This loyalty and sense of duty sustained the dragonborn during their long history of enslavement and also enabled them to form communities and nations of free dragonborn.

In dragonborn culture, the family is made up of one's direct relations, while a clan is a collection of families brought together by alliance, intermarriage, or shared history. Although they are rarely forced to choose one over the other, the clan's welfare is more important to most dragonborn than the family's. The promise of honor within the clan drives them to acts of heroism, daring, or excellence, all meant to bring glory to the clan first and the individual second.

The aftermath of the Sundering has tested these principles, leaving some clans fractured and decentralized. Some dragonborn in Faerûn seek to recapture the sort of connection they had with a now-lost clan or family by forging new relationships among their non-dragonborn allies and companions.

Dragonborn in Faerûn have the racial traits of dragonborn in the *Player's Handbook*.

Philosophy and Religion

Their code of honorable behavior and unswerving loyalty serves the dragonborn as a kind of faith, and, according to the traditionalists among them, that outlook is all the religion they need. Because they were forced to worship their draconic masters in times past, dragonborn are generally skeptical about religion, seeing it as a form of servitude. The skeptics believe that no matter how their original god, Io, brought them into being, that ancient deity is either long dead or uncaring about their fate, and the dragon gods that supplanted Io seem primarily interested in amassing soldiers for their ages-old conflict.

Still, some dragonborn do hear the call of the gods of Faerûn and choose to serve them, and are as loyal in this faith as they are to any other cause. Bahamut and Tiamat have dragonborn worshipers, and both Torm and Tyr appeal to the dragonborn sense of honor and

order. Similarly, Tempus and the Red Knight appeal to the warrior spirit in some dragonborn, and Kelemvor speaks to some of the inevitability of death and the need to live well in one's allotted time. Religious belief is an intensely personal thing the dragonborn who espouse it, some of whom are as devoted to their faith as they are to their family and clan.

Gnomes

Small of stature and dwelling in the corners of Faerûn away from prying eyes, gnomes are one of the least populous and influential races in the world, called the "Forgotten Folk" by some. This appellation doesn't bother the gnomes; they generally prefer their anonymity and the protection it affords them.

According to legend, the first gnomes in Faerûn sprang from mystic gems buried deep in the earth—an event that accounts for both the gnomes' love of gems and the cozy embrace of their underground warrens. It is said that mystic diamonds became the rock gnomes, emeralds birthed the forest gnomes, and rubies turned into the deep gnomes. Since the time of their creation, gnomes have settled in hidden places away from other races, concerned that their way of life couldn't survive wider exposure.

Gnomes gladly socialize and work with humans, elves, and dwarves, but they always keep in mind that, as a small and relatively insignificant race, their interests can become secondary even among their allies.

Indeed, members of other races sometimes thoughtlessly treat gnomes as second-class citizens, perhaps thinking highly of their gnome friends but rarely giving credit to gnomes as a people. Gnomes are regularly underestimated, and they use that lack of esteem as both a defense and an offense, when need be.

Like dwarves, gnomes have long battled for territory with kobolds, goblinoids, and orcs, but gnomes and kobolds share a special hatred for each other. Both races believe in a legend that, long ago, the deity Garl Glittergold tricked the kobold god Kurtulmak, collapsing the earth and trapping him in an endless underground maze and earning his everlasting enmity.

Forest Gnomes

The reclusive forest gnomes live simply in hillside dwellings deep in the woods. A neighbor could live only a few miles from a forest gnome settlement for a lifetime and never know it. In these communities, anonymity and stealth help to ensure protection, peace, and survival. If they are discovered and treated well, forest gnomes make fine neighbors, but they usually avoid contact even with civilizations that seem friendly.

Forest gnomes use their affinity with small animals and their knack for illusions to help them remain hidden. When necessary, a forest gnome community defends itself with all the resources at its disposal. Many settlements, however, simply vanish if they are discovered, retreating to some uncharted corner of the forest to begin anew.

The rare forest gnomes who leave their people to become adventurers often draw upon their closeness to nature and their magical gifts to serve as guides, scouts, or mystics. Living close to nature also makes forest gnomes likely to take up roles as druids, who serve various forest spirits and deities.

Forest gnomes in Faerûn have the racial traits of forest gnomes in the *Player's Handbook*.

Rock Gnomes

When most folk on the Sword Coast and in the North talk about gnomes, they mean rock gnomes. Unlike their shy forest cousins, the inquisitive and irrepressible rock gnomes interact regularly with individuals of other races, especially if those individuals have something to teach them. Rock gnomes prefer to live on the edges of other settlements in their own enclaves, though the occasional adventuresome rock gnome takes up residence in a human or dwarven city.

Ladies of the Golden Hills

A curious bit of gnomish lore is that the pantheon counts not a single female within its ranks. Legend has it that the mysterious Ladies of the Golden Hills went away together on some task in the most ancient days, and have not yet returned. The stories differ as to the Ladies' task, from seeking to gather examples of all of the beauty and riches of Toril, to a secret plan to thwart the evils of the world using their anonymity as a shield, causing the world to forget even their names and identities for a time. Gnomes who wander far from home are said to have "gone looking for the Ladies."

Rock gnome communities are most common in the Western Heartlands and along the coast of the Shining Sea, but gnome wanderers travel between communities across Faerûn in order to trade with or learn from outsiders, including members of other races.

Rock gnomes who leave their communities often find work by using their racial aptitudes to their advantage. Their heritage and their interest in precious stones leads many rock gnomes to become skilled gemcutters and jewelers. Rock gnomes also use their affinity with machines to work as tinkers, alchemists, and engineers. In human communities, gnome tutors and sages are popular, since their comparatively long life spans enable them to acquire and pass on knowledge for generations.

Rock gnomes in Faerûn have the racial traits of rock gnomes in the *Player's Handbook*.

Deep Gnomes (Svirfneblin)

Also known as svirfneblin, the deep gnomes of the Underdark are a stark contrast to their surface kin, dour and serious compared to the cheerful and generally optimistic rock gnomes and forest gnomes. They share their cousins' obsession with privacy, and their homes below the surface of Faerûn are well guarded and deeply hidden.

Owing to the hostility of their Underdark neighbors, particularly the drow, the settlements and kingdoms of svirfneblin are in constant danger of being relocated, conquered, or destroyed. Such was the fate of Blingdenstone, one of the grandest deep gnome strongholds, which existed for more than two thousand years until it was overrun a little more than a century ago by the dark elves of Menzoberranzan. The deep gnomes recently reclaimed their old home, and now struggle to rid it of malign influences that have crept into the tunnels and warrens in their absence.

Deep gnomes are lean with dark, earthen skin tones of gray. Males are bald and beardless, while females have hair on their heads. Both sexes have little or no body hair and a stone-like look to their skin.

Deep gnome adventurers are just as curious and daring as those of other races. Some find their purpose living among other subterranean races, and a few make their way to the surface. Those who study the arcane arts of illusion in particular often range far from home, seeking knowledge unavailable in their own lands.

Svirfneblin Subrace Traits

The svirfneblin subrace has the gnome traits in the *Player's Handbook*, plus the subrace traits below. Unlike other gnomes, svirfneblin tend to be neutral, they weigh 80 to 120 pounds, and they reach maturity at 25 and live 200 to 250 years.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Superior Darkvision. Your darkvision has a radius of 120 feet.

Stone Camouflage. You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in rocky terrain.

Extra Language. You can speak, read, and write Undercommon.

Deep Gnome Feat

If your DM allows the use of feats, your deep gnome character has the option of taking the following feat.

Svirfneblin Magic

Prerequisite: Gnome (deep gnome)

You have inherited the innate spellcasting ability of your ancestors. This ability allows you to cast *nondetection* on yourself at will, without needing a material component. You can also cast each of the following spells once with this ability: *blindness/deafness*, *blur*, and *disguise self*. You regain the ability to cast these spells when you finish a long rest. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Gnomish Deities

Gnomes honor a small pantheon of seven primary deities, known as the Lords of the Golden Hills, plus two other entities.

Wise Protectors

The Watchful Protector, Garl Glittergold, is the king of gnomish gods, a deity of humor, gemcutting, protection, and trickery. His pranks serve to protect gnomes and to teach his victims humility and wisdom. Garl's second, Gaerdal Ironhand, is the gnomes' war god, who espouses vigilance and defense.

Nature Gods

Baervan Wildwanderer is the gnomish god of forests and woodlands, accompanied by his companion Chiktikka Fastpaws, a great raccoon said to be the wiser of the two. Segojan Earthcaller is god of the wilds beneath the earth, rather than upon it, as well as god of burrows and the plants and animals found therein.

Shadow and Stone

Baravar Cloakshadow is the god of illusion and deception, given the respectful title of Sly One. Callarduran Smoothhands is the god of stone and the Underdark, patron of the svirfneblin.

Craft and Invention

Flandal Steelskin, the god of mining and smithcraft, is known as the Steelsmith. He is also the gnomes' god of physical improvement and good health. The fearless Nebelun the Meddler is the god of invention and luck, revered by many gnomes even though he isn't considered one of the Lords of the Golden Hills. "Nebelun's head!" is a common gnomish exclamation of discovery.

The Crawler Below

The last member of the gnomish pantheon is Urdlen, which appears not as a gnome, but an elephantine, blind, pale mole. Urdlen is the great-clawed god of bloodlust and evil, of greed and uncontrolled impulses. Young gnomes are warned to "never let Urdlen burrow into your heart," as a caution against giving in to wicked impulses.

Half-Elves

An elf who looks upon a half-elf sees a human, and a human who beholds the same person sees an elf. Though this characterization is simplistic, it gets to the heart of what it means to be a half-elf in Faerûn.

To elves who have an extreme viewpoint on the matter, half-elves are emblematic of the decline of elven civilization, a dilution of the race's heritage and culture that will lead to its eventual dissolution. To the humans at the other end of the spectrum, half-elves have an unfair advantage over their fully human peers, and are seen as privileged or favored regardless of the actual circumstances of their birth.

For most folk in Faerûn, the issue isn't so cut and dried. Half-elves are generally tolerated wherever they go, or wherever they take up residence—with the proviso that a society that doesn't look kindly on elves or humans is likely to feel the same way about someone who has the blood of both races. Conversely, a society that holds humans or elves in high esteem doesn't usually bestow the same status on half-elves (though such individuals are generally not ostracized).

Young Race, Old Roots

In the distant past, half-elves were scarce because humans and elves came into contact only infrequently. The ancient elven kingdoms of Cormanthyr and Myth Drannor had significant populations of half-elves. It is only in the past thousand years or so, as the races have intermingled more and more, that the number of half-elves has increased so that they are now found throughout Faerûn.

Not surprisingly, half-elves enjoy the company of others of their kind, such that where half-elves congregate, they are likely to be joined by others. Most of the half-elves in the North and along the Sword Coast are of moon elf heritage mixed with Illuskan or Tethyrian blood. In other parts of Faerûn, half-elves have significant communities in the Yuirwood and throughout Aglarond. Aquatic half-elves are found along the coasts, including near Aglarond, the Dragon Coast, Impiltur, Sembia, and the Vilhon Reach. Drow half-elves are most numerous in the nation of Dambrath, which was conquered by the dark elves years ago, and in the Underdark, where House Ousstyl of Menzoberranzan is particularly infamous for having mated with humans.

Mixed Heritage

Half-elves are a diverse lot, given the number of combinations of elf subraces and human ethnicities in their ranks. Most of them consider their dual nature a blessing more than a disadvantage, because it gives them a set of capabilities and a perspective on the world that full-blooded humans and elves can't hope to match.

At the same time, the mixed heritage of half-elves dictates that they make an effort to fit in with humans or elves when possible. For instance, half-elves born and raised in human settlements tend to have human names, while half-elves in elven communities generally have elven names. In some places half-elf children are named according to the "other" parent, or with a mix of human and elven names, as a way of setting half-elves apart from the rest of their community.

Half-elves speak both Common and Elvish. In addition, half-elves from the Yuirwood commonly speak Aglarondan.

Half-elves in Faerûn have the racial traits of half-elves in the *Player's Handbook*, although some variations are possible; see the "Half-Elf Variants" sidebar.

The Gods of Two Peoples

There are no half-elven gods, so half-elves follow elven or human deities of their choosing—although just as many religious half-elves believe that their gods choose them. Half-elves often revere the gods of the culture in which they were raised, although some rebel

Half-Elf Variants

Some half-elves in Faerûn have a racial trait in place of the Skill Versatility trait. If your DM allows it, your half-elf character can forgo Skill Versatility and instead take the elf trait Keen Senses or a trait based on your elf parentage:

- A half-elf of **wood elf** descent can choose the wood elf's Elf Weapon Training, Fleet of Foot, or Mask of the Wild.
- A half-elf of **moon elf** or **sun elf** descent can choose the high elf's Elf Weapon Training or Cantrip.
- A half-elf of **drow** descent can choose the drow's Drow Magic.
- A half-elf of **aquatic** heritage can choose a swimming speed of 30 feet.

against their upbringing, seeking out the gods of the other aspect of their heritage, or feeling a calling or need to do so.

As with any people, half-elves often choose a favored deity based on their calling or profession: Corellon Larethian, Azuth, or Mystra for wizards, Solonor Thelandira or Mielikki for rangers, Milil or Corellon for poets and bards, and so forth.

Many half-elves worship Sune or Hanali Celanil in appreciation for the love their parents felt for one another, and the two goddesses are seen as boon companions. Some half-elves are drawn to outsiders such as Auril, Eldath, Erevan Ilesere, and Ilmater, or to nature gods like Mielikki, Rillifane Rallathil, and Silvanus. Half-elves from Aglarond often choose Chauntea, Selûne, or one of the Seldarine as their patron.

Half-Orcs

Half-orcs have existed in the world since before the dawn of recorded history, when orcs and humans first came into contact. Yet, in all that time, they have found few places for themselves in Faerûnian civilization—or, perhaps more accurately, civilization has never made room for them.

Most of the common folk have an aversion to half-orcs based largely on their appearance: anyone who looks that much like an orc, they reason, must be like an orc and should be kept at a distance. Because half-orcs are typically stronger and hardier than their human peers, they can find employment in towns and cities, but their appearance marks them as outsiders . In response to being ostracized, half-orcs either embrace their otherness and take pride in their physical superiority, pull back and try not to draw too much attention to themselves, or give up trying to fit in anywhere and adopt a nomadic lifestyle.

Half-orcs in Faerûn have the racial traits of half-orcs in the *Player's Handbook*. They speak both Common and Orc. The rare written examples of the Orc language use the Dethek alphabet.

Blood Will Tell

Half-orcs ultimately owe their plight to the deity Gruumsh, the creator of the orcs. Legend has it that when Gruumsh discovered all the territories of the world had been claimed by other races, he swore the orcs would avenge themselves by taking what they wanted by force. The great orc hordes continue to do just that today, appearing periodically from out of the wilderness to raid and scavenge.

As a result, the word "orc" has no pleasant connotation in the minds of other Faerûnians. At the same time, the word "half" is a mark of derision among orcs. Some half-orcs raised among orcs react to this stigma by being more brutal than others of their tribe, which can put them in roles of leadership, but outsider half-orcs aren't welcomed into orc society because they aren't of pure orc blood. And they aren't accepted into other societies because of their orc heritage.

Half-orcs are seen as off-putting and intimidating by other people, which is both a blessing and a curse, because while they are often left alone by those who fear them, they also become targets of discrimination, or outright attacks, from those who feel threatened by them. This prejudice against the race makes half-orcs slow to trust even those who show them courtesy—because they all have stories of when they were tricked by such behavior. Their orc blood—the Mark of Gruumsh—makes them quick to anger and inclined to lash out at those who treat them unfairly.

Having grown up among orcs or under the shadow of their heritage, half-orcs rarely have experience with pleasant society, and they often come off as coarse, blunt, or rude in dealings with other people. With the directness of an orc, they speak their minds with no apparent concern for how their opinions are received. No matter where they live, half-orcs usually find themselves defined by others in terms of their usefulness as heavy laborers and soldiers. It is the rare and fortunate few who are judged by their character and their deeds rather than their ancestry.

Half-Orc Homelands

In lands far from the Sword Coast, such as Thesk and Chessenta, there are large communities of half-orcs, where generations of them have lived as a people in their own right. Yet there are few such places in the North. A small community was growing near the

Kingdom of Many Arrows, but the recent war with the orcs of that realm caused this burgeoning population to disperse.

Today no civilized place in the North has a significant population of half-orcs, although at least a few of them reside in or on the outskirts of any stable community. Ironically, it is among the largest and most civilized of these places that half-orcs are likely to find acceptance—in the great cities where people are often more cosmopolitan in their outlook.

In Waterdeep, for instance, half-orcs make up a tiny percentage of the population, yet even at that they still number in the hundreds. Half-orcs who call Waterdeep home appreciate the acceptance, or at least tolerance, they receive in the city, whether they were born there, arrived overland from elsewhere on the continent, or entered the city by way of ships bringing trade.

Half-Orc Deities

As befits their dual nature, many half-orcs revere deities from both the human and the orc pantheons. Alone or among themselves, half-orcs offer prayers to orc deities, particularly Ilneval, who is thought of as a patron of half-orcs and other orc crossbreeds.

Faerûnian Gods

Half-orcs trying to fit in with human society often adopt a human deity out of expediency (though rarely just for the sake of appearances). They favor Faerûnian deities of war and trickery, such as Bane, Mask, and Tempus.

First Family

The orc pantheon, known as the Tribe of He Who Watches, is a group of brutal and cruel gods, dominated by their father and chieftain, Gruumsh One-Eye. This god of conquest, strength, and survival is the hated rival of the elven deity Corellon Larethian. It is said that Gruumsh owes the loss of his eye to Corellon's aim with an arrow.

The mother-deity of the orcs is Luthic, mate of Gruumsh, and the goddess of fecundity, caverns, and witchery.

Bahgtru, the son of Gruumsh, is the god of pure, brute strength, renowned for his power but disdained by some for his oafishness.

Horde Leader

The patron deity of half-orcs is the war god Ilneval. He has the title of War Master in the pantheon, revered by those who believe in the wisdom of attacking with overwhelming numbers.

Black and White

The two most sinister members of the orc pantheon lie at opposite ends of the visual spectrum. One is Shargaas, the Night Lord, god of darkness, night, and stealth. The other is Yurtrus the White-Handed, Lord of Maggots, the fearsome deity of plagues and death.

Tieflings

Humans with the blood of fiends, most tieflings in Faerûn share a common connection due to the machinations of the archdevil Asmodeus a century ago.

The Mark of Asmodeus

During the Spellplague, Asmodeus consumed the divine spark of Azuth and thereby achieved godhood. Subsequently, Asmodeus and a coven of warlocks, the Toril Thirteen, performed a rite wherein the archdevil claimed all tieflings in the world as his own, cursing them to bear "the blood of Asmodeus." This act marked all tieflings as "descendants" of the Lord of the Nine Hells, regardless of their true heritage, and changed them into creatures that resembled their supposed progenitor. The other folk of Faerûn, unnerved by the appearance of these devil-beings, became suspicious of all tieflings and occasionally hostile to them.

In spite of what some people believe, however, Asmodeus exerts no power over his "children," and tieflings today are as free-willed—and willful—as they ever have been. Some do choose to serve the Lord of the Nine Hells and his schemes, while others align themselves with different fiendish factions, or none at all, doing their best to stay out of infernal politics.

Since the ritual that spread the curse of Asmodeus a century ago, tieflings have been born on Faerûn that belong to other infernal bloodlines, but those that bear the mark of the archdevil (and their descendants) remain the most numerous examples of their kind by far.

Tieflings in Faerûn generally have the racial traits of tieflings in the *Player's Handbook*, except that those not

Tiefling Variants

Since not all tieflings are of the blood of Asmodeus, some have traits that differ from those in the *Player's Handbook*. The Dungeon Master may permit the following variants for your tiefling character, although Devil's Tongue, Hellfire, and Winged are mutually exclusive.

Appearance. Your tiefling might not look like other tieflings. Rather than having the physical characteristics described in the *Player's Handbook*, choose 1d4 + 1 of the following features: small horns; fangs or sharp teeth; a forked tongue; catlike eyes; six fingers on each hand; goat-like legs; cloven hoofs; a forked tail; leathery or scaly skin; red or dark blue skin; cast no shadow or reflection; exude a smell of brimstone.

Feral. Your Intelligence score increases by 1, and your Dexterity score increases by 2. This trait replaces the Ability Score Increase trait.

Devil's Tongue. You know the *vicious mockery* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *charm person* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *enthrall* spell once with this trait. You must finish a long rest to cast these spells once again with this trait. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for them. This trait replaces the Infernal Legacy trait.

Hellfire. Once you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *burning hands* spell once per day as a 2nd-level spell. This trait replaces the *hellish rebuke* spell of the Infernal Legacy trait.

Winged. You have bat-like wings sprouting from your shoulder blades. You have a flying speed of 30 feet. This trait replaces the Infernal Legacy trait.

descended from Asmodeus might exhibit different qualities; see the "Tiefling Variants" sidebar.

A Race without a Home

As offspring of the infernal, tieflings call no place in Faerûn their own, although some places and nations are more tolerant of them than most.

In the North, the largest population of tieflings is found in Neverwinter. Since the Ashmadai, a violent cult dedicated to Asmodeus, is also active in the city, mistrust of tieflings isn't unusual even here, since folk never know if a tiefling is a member of the Ashmadai or was drawn to Neverwinter by the opportunity to blend in that a metropolis provides.

Small and scattered groups of tieflings are found elsewhere across Faerûn, particularly in cosmopolitan cities (where they can be anonymous to some degree) and in rough and poor settlements that welcome anyone who can help them survive and prosper.

Tieflings are common in Calimshan, to the south, where many of them fought for the djinn as mercenaries and now serve other masters with the coin to pay them. In the east, many tieflings dwell in Aglarond—escaped slaves from Thay or their descendants—and in Mulhorand, where tieflings are believed to carry the blood of the ancient Mulhorandi gods themselves.

Lone Faithful

Although many Faerûnian folk believe that all tieflings worship Asmodeus and the Lords of the Nine Hells, the truth is that only a fraction of them do so, but enough are devil- or demon-worshipers to lend the weight of truth to all the rumors and suspicion.

Tieflings who revere a god other than Asmodeus often worship deities who watch over and care for outsiders, including Ilmater, Mask, Selûne, Shar, and Tymora. Gods of knowledge, survival, cunning, and warfare are also common attractions for tieflings who value those qualities. Beshaba has tiefling worshipers who consider the accident of their birth as a kind of cruel joke they have chosen to embrace.

Equally intriguing and disturbing to followers of some faiths in Faerûn are stories spread by tieflings who claim to have visions in which the gods of Faerûn appear to them modeled in the tieflings' own image. One such is the entity they call the "pale horned goddess of the moon" (Selûne); another is the "dark, devilish lady of fortune" (Tymora)—an indication, tieflings say, that one's outward appearance and bloodline are less important to the gods than the heart and soul within.

Tiefling Names

A great many tiefling parents follow the naming conventions of the culture in which their offspring are born, such as using human names if they live in a human settlement (the better to seem like "normal" citizens). Others take names derived from the Infernal language that have been passed down since ancient times.

In addition, some Faerûnian tieflings have names drawn from the language of cultures where they are relatively common and generally accepted, such as Calishite and Mulhorandi, which are foreign-sounding to folk in the North and along the Sword Coast.

Al-Khem and Beni-Asmodai are two common Calishite tiefling surnames that proclaim the race's heritage, along with first names such as Haroun, Ishaq, and Nizam (male) or Hania, Rashaa, and Zaar (female).

Mulhorandi surnames that begin with "Sia" or "Zia" followed by a god's name indicate a bearer of that god's bloodline, such as Zianhur and Siasobek. First names commonly seen among Mulhorandi tieflings include Aybtep ("horned"), Bahati ("wise soul"), Het ("smoke"), Kamen ("dark"), Katsu ("star born"), and Kohl ("dark eyed").

Aasimar

The celestial opposites of the tieflings, aasimar are descended from humans of celestial heritage. Aasimar aren't as prevalent in the Realms as tieflings, but common enough that some become adventurers. Dungeon Masters who want to allow their players to create aasimar characters can find rules for doing so in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Chapter 4: Classes

THE TWELVE CLASSES PRESENTED IN THE *Player's Handbook* are all found in the Forgotten Realms. The material in this chapter describes the place of those classes in Faerûn, particularly on the Sword Coast and in the North. The chapter also includes new class-feature options for most of the classes, as well as some new spells.

Barbarians

CLOSEST TO THE DARK ELVES, PWENT LOWERED HIS *head, with its long helmet spike, and impaled one elf through the chest, blasting through the fine mesh of drow armor easily and brutally. The second drow managed to deflect the next battlerager's charge, turning the helmet spike aside with both his swords. But a mailed fist, the knuckles devilishly spiked with barbed points, caught the drow under the chin and tore a gaping hole in his throat. Fighting for breath, the drow managed to score two nasty hits on his opponent's back, but those two strikes did little in the face of the flurry launched by the wild-eyed dwarf.*

—R.A. Salvatore, *Siege of Darkness*

Many of the lands of the Sword Coast and the North are savage, where day-to-day survival is a struggle. Such lands breed hardy tribes and fierce warriors, such as the Reghed and Uthgardt barbarians of the North and the seafaring Northlanders of the Moonshae Isles and the northernmost reaches of the Sword Coast.

Barbarians of these lands are most often humans or half-orcs, occasionally half-elves born of contact between savage human tribes and the elves of the North or Western Heartlands, or tieflings from tribes known to consort with fiends. Dwarf barbarians are famed and feared warriors among the fiercely proud clans that have reclaimed territories like Mithril Hall and Gautlgrym. Barbarians of most other races hail from warmer southern lands, rather than the Savage North, although southern foundlings are sometimes adopted in the North and raised by tribes there.

Primal Paths

Barbarians in the Forgotten Realms have the following Primal Path options, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*. Reghed and Northlander barbarians tend to follow the Path of the Berserker, while Uthgardt barbarians are nearly always followers of the Path of the Totem Warrior.

Path of the Battlerager

Known as *Kuldjargh* (literally "axe idiot") in Dwarvish, battleragers are dwarf followers of the gods of war and take the Path of the Battlerager. They specialize in wearing bulky, spiked armor and throwing themselves into combat, striking with their body itself and giving themselves over to the fury of battle.

Restriction: Dwarves Only

Only dwarves can follow the Path of the Battlerager. The battlerager fills a particular niche in dwarven society and culture.

Your DM can lift this restriction to better suit the campaign. The restriction exists for the Forgotten Realms. It might not apply to your DM's setting or your DM's version of the Realms.

Battlerager Armor

When you choose this path at 3rd level, you gain the ability to use spiked armor (see the "Spiked Armor" sidebar) as a weapon.

While you are wearing spiked armor and are raging, you can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack with your armor spikes against a target within 5 feet of you. If the attack hits, the spikes deal 1d4 piercing damage. You use your Strength modifier for the attack and damage rolls.

Additionally, when you use the Attack action to grapple a creature, the target takes 3 piercing damage if your grapple check succeeds.

Reckless Abandon

Beginning at 6th level, when you use Reckless Attack while raging, you also gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1). They vanish if any of them are left when your rage ends.

Battlerager Charge

Beginning at 10th level, you can take the Dash action as a bonus action while you are raging.

Spiked Retribution

Starting at 14th level, when a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, the attacker takes 3 piercing damage if you are raging, aren't incapacitated, and are wearing spiked armor.

Path of the Totem Warrior

If you follow the Path of the Totem Warrior from the *Player's Handbook*, you have access to the options presented here.

Totem Spirit

These options are available to you when you choose a totem animal at 3rd level.

Spiked Armor

Spiked armor is a rare type of medium armor made by dwarves. It consists of a leather coat and leggings covered with spikes that are usually made of metal.

Cost: 75 gp
AC: 14 + Dexterity modifier (max 2)
Stealth: Disadvantage
Weight: 45 lb.

Uthgardt Totems

The totems of the Uthgardt barbarians of the North (described in chapter 5) correspond to the spirits of the Path of the Totem Warrior as shown in the following table.

Totem	Spirit
Black Lion	Tiger
Black Raven	Eagle
Blue Bear	Bear
Gray Wolf	Wolf
Great Worm	Wolf
Griffon	Eagle
Red Tiger	Tiger
Sky Pony	Eagle, with the Elk Aspect of the Beast
Thunderbeast	Bear, with the Tiger Totemic Attunement
Tree Ghost	Bear, with *speak with plants* in place of the normal rituals for the Spirit Seeker feature

As with the spirits in the *Player's Handbook*, the options here require a physical object incorporating some part of the totem beast, and you might acquire minor physical attributes associated with your totem spirit, such as a prominent nose if you have an elk totem spirit or catlike eyes if you have a tiger totem spirit.

Also, your totem spirit might be an animal similar to one listed here but more suitable to your homeland, such as a horse or stag, rather than an elk, or a lion, panther, or other big cat, rather than a tiger.

Elk. While you're raging and aren't wearing heavy armor, your walking speed increases by 15 feet. The spirit of the elk makes you extraordinarily swift.

Tiger. While raging, you can add 10 feet to your long jump distance and 3 feet to your high jump distance. The spirit of the tiger empowers your leaps.

Aspect of the Beast

These options are available to you when you choose a totem animal at 6th level.

Elk. Whether mounted or on foot, your travel pace is doubled, as is the travel pace of up to ten companions while they're within 60 feet of you and you're not incapacitated (see chapter 8 in the *Player's Handbook* for more information about travel pace). The elk spirit helps you roam far and fast.

Tiger. You gain proficiency in two skills from the following list: Athletics, Acrobatics, Stealth, and Survival. The cat spirit hones your survival instincts.

Totemic Attunement

These options are available to you when you choose a totem animal at 14th level.

Elk. While raging, you can use a bonus action during your move to pass through the space of a Large or smaller creature. That creature must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your Strength bonus + your proficiency bonus) or be knocked prone and take bludgeoning damage equal to 1d12 + your Strength modifier.

Tiger. While you're raging, if you move at least 20 feet in a straight line toward a Large or smaller target right before making a melee weapon attack against it, you can use a bonus action to make an additional melee weapon attack against it.

Bards

Bards hold a special place of responsibility and respect in the Forgotten Realms. They are bearers of news, gossip, and messages in their travels from place to place, in addition to being living storehouses of history and folklore. Bards know a great deal, and they tend to be willing to share what they know, or at least barter for it.

The arrival of a renowned bard is a special occasion, akin to the visit of a dignitary. A bard can reasonably expect at least a hot supper and a clean place to sleep from a local landlord or inn in exchange for a few songs or stories. A noble might host a bard in fine style—while also being careful to guard any secrets the noble's household doesn't want retold or sung across Faerûn.

Not all wandering performers are true bards, nor are all bards inclined to sing for their supper, although most will, given the need. Bards literally have magic to them, and the powers they command through their performance and lore earns them additional respect.

In the Savage North, singers and storytellers called skalds are keepers of the history and great legends of the Northlanders and the Reghed. These warrior-poets

are the singers of the songs and sagas that fire the blood of warriors in battle, and composers of the new songs and sagas relating the mighty deeds of heroes and villains. However, spellcasting is taboo among Reghed and Norhtlanders unless it is considered a gift of their gods. Characters with the bard class who rise to prominence among these folk must align themselves with their clan's priests and shamans or risk being outcast. Most skalds are members of the College of Valor, as described in the Bard College class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

The Harpers

Bards in the North and the Dalelands benefit from the existence of the Harpers, that legendary society recruiting bards and other independent agents to struggle against the forces of evil. Even though most bards in the region aren't Harpers (and many who are don't advertise that fact), common folk in the North often behave as if all bards are legendary wandering heroes, and are as likely to ask a bard for the solution to a problem troubling their community as they are a wandering fighter or wizard. This reputation cuts both ways, however, as some enemies of the Harpers suspiciously assume any humble minstrel might secretly be a Harper agent.

Bardic Colleges

In addition to the tradition of apprenticing with a master bard, the Sword Coast has some bardic colleges where masters teach students the bardic arts. They hark back to the great bardic colleges of the distant past, particularly the seven elder colleges: Fochlucan, Mac-Fuirmidh, Doss, Canaith, Cli, Anstruth, and Ollamh. These seven are said to be the origin of the *instrument of the bards*, each of which is named after one of the colleges. See chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the game statistics of these magic instruments.

Long ago, bards who sought the rank of master bard attended each of the elder colleges, seeking to learn its musical and magical secrets. Traditionally, the colleges were attended in the order given above, starting with Fochlucan. That tradition fell when the colleges went into decline, but some bards dream of restoring it.

College of Fochlucan

The original College of Fochlucan once stood on the northeastern edge of Silverymoon. Many years after it closed its doors, the site was reopened as Ultrumm's Music Conservatory. The conservatory later moved to Southbank, and the House of the Harp occupied the college's original location under the guidance of Master Bard Forell "Flamebeard" Luekuan, who sought to revive the ancient traditions and teachings of Fochlucan. Years of cultivation and support from Silverymoon, as well as the Harpers, yielded a faculty able to revive the college, and the House of the Harp adopted the Fochlucan name once again. Most of its bards study and practice the methods of the College of Lore, as described in the Bard College class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

The College of Fochlucan is naturally allied with the Harpers, although its master bards are careful to stress that its mission is separate from that of the Harpers.

College of New Olamn

Housed in two Cliffride villas overlooking the sea near Waterdeep, the College of New Olamn is a prestigious bardic college established in the Year of the Staff (1366 DR) by wealthy Waterdhavian patrons and named for the old College of Ollamh. Students of the college undergo training in their chosen instruments, along with rigorous practice in memorization and the study of ancient songs, sagas, and history. Most bards of New Olamn belong to the College of Lore, as described in the Bard College class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

The Cliffride, a gravel path up Mount Waterdeep's northern spur, is used to bring goods to the college, but most visitors and students use the Mount Melody Walk—a tunnel through the mountain itself—to reach it. The tunnel regularly resounds with music, thanks to the Neverending String of Pearls, an ongoing concert where bardic students perform in a small alcove in the tunnel, which carries and echoes their music.

College of the Herald

Based at the great lore-house of Herald's Holdfast, northwest of Silverymoon, the College of the Herald is dedicated to the preservation of ancient history and legends. The Heralds are charged with collecting and organizing bodies of lore, which they make available to all of good and peaceful intent. Established by the Harper Aliost Oskrunnar in 922 DR, the Heralds are allies of the Harpers but remain neutral in most conflicts, dedicated to preserving knowledge above all else.

The College of the Herald is less concerned with musical performance (although it contains a considerable library of songs) and more with history, heraldry, and folklore, making it a key center of learning for bards of the College of Lore, as described in the Bard College class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

Musical Instruments

In addition to the common musical instruments listed in chapter 5, "Equipment," of the *Player's Handbook*, bards in the Realms play the following instruments:

Birdpipes: Pan pipes or satyr pipes, also known as the shalm, these are sacred to Lliira and popular with wood elf and wild elf bards.

Glaur: Short, curved horns like a cornucopia. Played with valves, glaur sound like trumpets, while those without valves, known as gloon, have a more mournful sound.

Hand Drum: A double-headed skin drum fitted with handles along its side.

Longhorn: A Faerûnian flute of sophisticated make, found only in areas with skilled artisans, as in great cities or elven enclaves.

Shawm: A double-reed instrument similar to an oboe or a bassoon, popular with gnomes, who have developed some bellows-powered versions.

Songhorn: A recorder, a simple type of flute, usually carved from wood.

Tantan: A tambourine, a popular instrument with halflings and humans south of the Dalelands.

Thelarr: Also known as a whistlecane, a simple and easy-to-make wind instrument cut from a reed. They are so simple, in fact, that skilled bards frequently make and give them away to children—to the parents' delight or regret.

Tocken: A hanging set of carved oval bells, usually played with a pair of light wooden hammers (or open handed). They are most common in underground cultures, where the resonant tones can carry.

Wargong: A metal gong, traditionally made from a shield, particularly the shield of an enemy. Both goblins and dwarves make and play wargongs, their sound echoing through tunnels in the Underdark.

Yarting: A southern instrument from Amn and Calimshan that is a Faerûnian analog to the guitar. Numerous variations have spread across the continent.

Zulkoon: A complex pump organ that originated with the zulkirs of Thay, who use it in the casting of their spells. It is considered to have a dramatic, but sinister, sound.

The Moonstars

Over a century ago, the Harpers endured a schism. Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun was denounced by other Harper leaders for empowering Fzoul Chembryl, then the evil leader of the Zhentarim, with a powerful artifact. That Khelben did so in order that Fzoul destroy a dangerous lich mattered little. Khelben and Laeral Silverhand, his wife, left the Harpers then, taking with them certain agents and folding them into to a different organization, which Khelben had been secretly working to create for some time due to an old prophecy of the elves of Cormanthor. This group was the Moonstars, called Tel'Teukiira in Elvish. Although the Moonstars worked in concert at times with the Harpers, they also worked at cross purposes, and the Moonstars membership included many whom the Harpers considered too evil, such as a vampire. The Moonstars performed many good deeds, but their methods were often more brutal and pragmatic than the Harpers' lofty ideals allowed. When Khelben died, the Moonstars seemed to collapse, and for many years the organization was assumed defunct. Yet during the Sundering, Moonstar sleeper agents reactivated the organization on a surprisingly massive scale, with members active in Candlekeep, Waterdeep, and Myth Drannor. The organization has since gone underground again. Their relationship to the present-day Harpers, Laeral Silverhand, and the current Blackstaff of Waterdeep, Vajra, remains unclear.

Clerics

The gods are most active through their chosen clerics, who carry out the gods' work on the Material Plane. A typical cleric in Faerûn serves a single divine patron, but some individuals feel called to serve a group, such as the elemental gods Akadi, Grumbar, Kossuth, and Istishia, while others serve deities that are intertwined gods, such as the elves' Angharradh.

Some clerics in Faerûn belong to an established religious hierarchy, but many do not. The gods choose whomever they will, and sometimes a devoted worshiper is blessed with all the abilities of a cleric, despite not being a priest of any kind. That cleric might be a contemplative hermit, a wandering prophet, or simply a devout peasant. Religious orders often try to recruit such clerics and bring them into the fold, but not all of those clerics wish to be bound to a hierarchy.

Conversely, not everyone who pursues a religious vocation is a true cleric. Some acolytes discover a different path for their lives than the path of the cleric. They serve their faiths in other roles, such as priests, scholars, or artisans, while some go on to vocations that have nothing to do with religion. A few souls who are denied the path of the cleric become embittered and seek favor with sinister or forbidden gods or forge pacts with other powerful entities. Religious scholars in the Realms debate whether divine rejection led such a person to embrace a dark path or whether the person was rejected because the gods foresaw the potential for darkness in the person's future. The gods remain silent on the matter.

Some clerics are homebodies who serve a particular community of the faithful, but adventuring clerics tend to have a certain crusading zeal to do their deity's work in the wider world. This work may include ministering to far-flung communities, as well as seeking out and defeating threats to the civilized world.

Divine Domain

Clerics in the Forgotten Realms have the following Divine Domain option, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Arcana Domain

Magic is an energy that suffuses the multiverse and that fuels both destruction and creation. Gods of the Arcana domain know the secrets and potential of magic intimately. For some of these gods, magical knowledge is a great responsibility that comes with a special understanding of the nature of reality. Other gods of Arcana see magic as pure power, to be used as its wielder sees fit.

The gods of this domain are often associated with knowledge, as learning and arcane power tend to go hand-in-hand. In the Realms, deities of this domain include Azuth and Mystra, as well as Corellon Larethian of the elven pantheon. In other worlds, this domain includes Hecate, Math Mathonwy, and Isis; the triple moon gods of Solinari, Lunitari, and Nuitari of Krynn; and Boccob, Vecna, and Wee Jas of Greyhawk.

Arcana Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*detect magic, magic missile*
3rd	*magic weapon, Nystul's magic aura*
5th	*dispel magic, magic circle*
7th	*arcane eye, Leomund's secret chest*
9th	*planar binding, teleportation circle*

Arcane Initiate

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain proficiency in the Arcana skill, and you gain two cantrips of your choice from the wizard spell list. For you, these cantrips count as cleric cantrips.

Channel Divinity: Arcane Abjuration

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to abjure otherworldly creatures.

As an action, you present your holy symbol, and one celestial, elemental, fey, or fiend of your choice that is within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw, provided that the creature can see or hear you. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage.

A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly end its move in a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can only use the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

After you reach 5th level, when a creature fails its saving throw against your Arcane Abjuration feature, the creature is banished for 1 minute (as in the *banishment* spell, no concentration required) if it isn't on its plane of origin and its challenge rating is at or below a certain threshold, as shown on the Arcane Banishment table.

Arcane Banishment

Cleric Level	Banishes Creatures of CR ...
5th	1/2 or lower
8th	1 or lower
11th	2 or lower
14th	3 or lower
17th	4 or lower

Spell Breaker

Starting at 6th level, when you restore hit points to an ally with a spell of 1st level or higher, you can also end one spell of your choice on that creature. The level of the spell you end must be equal to or lower than the level of the spell slot you use to cast the healing spell.

Potent Spellcasting

Starting at 8th level, you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any cleric cantrip.

Arcane Mastery

At 17th level, you choose four spells from the wizard spell list, one from each of the following levels: 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th. You add them to your list of domain spells. Like your other domain spells, they are always prepared and count as cleric spells for you.

Druids

The druids of the Realms venerate nature in all its forms, as well as the gods of the First Circle, those deities closest to the power and majesty of the natural world. That group of gods includes Chauntea, Eldath, Mielikki, Silvanus, as well as Auril, Malar, Talos, and Umberlee, for nature is many-sided and not always kind.

Unlike clerics, who typically serve a single deity, druids revere all the gods of the First Circle in their turn, and see them as embodiments of the natural world, which moves in cycles: creation and destruction, waxing and withering, life and death. Thus, Grumbar isn't just god of the earth to a druid; he is the fertile soil and the rolling hills themselves. Malar isn't just the Beastlord, but the hunger and the hunting instinct of a predatory beast.

Although they are most strongly associated with sylvan forests, druids care for all aspects of the land, including frozen mountains, burning deserts, rolling hills, and rough coasts.

Druid Circles

Druidic ways are ancient and largely practiced in secret, away from the eyes of the uninitiated. In many lands, the Old Ways of the First Circle have given way to new churches and temples, but druids and their followers still gather to honor the cycles of nature and to ensure the natural balance isn't threatened. People who dwell in or near wild lands do well to learn if a druid circle operates nearby, seeking the circle's blessing before hunting or farming on the lands they protect.

The druid habit of gathering in clearings, wooded groves, or around sacred pools gave rise to the tradition of circles. In a circle, all are equal, and while respect is given to age and accomplishment, the circle reaches decisions as a whole. Those who disagree are free to argue their point, or even to leave the circle, if they wish, but the circle acts as one for the good of all. Druid circles often include non-druid allies, such as rangers, wood elves, and the fey creatures of the land where the circle meets, all given equal voice.

Numerous circles are found across Faerûn, usually made up of no more than a dozen or so druids, plus their allies. They include the High Dance, guarding the

Dancing Place in the high valleys of the Thunder Peaks, alongside their fey allies. The Watchers of Sevreld meet in Old Mushroom Grove in the High Forest, northeast of Secomber, and the Starwater Circle gathers around their namesake pool in the northern forest of Mir.

The Circle of Swords

Protectors of the Neverwinter Wood, the Circle of Swords drives destructive humanoids like hobgoblins, bugbears, and their kin from the wood, while also safeguarding it against exploitation at the hands of civilized folk and protecting the wood's ancient ruins and sacred sites from looters.

In the Druid Circle class feature in the *Player's Handbook*, the Circle of the Moon is common for Circle of Swords druids, although some belong to the Circle of the Land (Forest).

The Emerald Enclave

Less a druid circle and more a loose confederation of circles and their allies, the Emerald Enclave is devoted to protecting the redoubt of civilization in the North from destruction. Elsewhere in the world, the Emerald Enclave must pursue a more balanced path, but the vast wilderness of the North holds far more danger to people than they pose to it.

Founded in the Vilhon Reach over a thousand years ago, the Emerald Enclave has spread across much of Faerûn. Its members include druids, rangers, barbarians, and others who live in the wilderness and know and respect its ways. They wear an article of emerald green clothing as a symbol of their membership, often bearing the emblem of a stag's head.

In the Druid Circle class feature in the *Player's Handbook*, Emerald Enclave druids belong to the Circle of the Land and Circle of the Moon in equal measure.

The Moonshea Circles

The Ffolk of the Moonshea Isles venerate the land as the great goddess they call the Earthmother. Their circles gather around sacred pools known as moonwells, their link between the natural world and the goddess, ringed by standing stone circles, raised by their ancient ancestors.

In the Druid Circle class feature in the *Player's Handbook*, Moonshea druids most often belong to the Circle of the Land (Coast, Forest, and Mountain).

Moonwells

The water of a moonwell, drunk directly from cupped hands, restores 1d8 hit points, plus the drinker's Wisdom bonus, if any. If the drinker has threatened the balance of nature since the last full moon, the water instead deals 1d8 poison damage to the drinker. This damage is also dealt by a corrupted moonwell. Either effect occurs once only per day per drinker. On the nights of the full moon, drinking the water of a moonwell can, at the DM's discretion, have additional effects, such as conferring the benefits of a *lesser restoration* spell.

The Harpers and Druids

Druid circles in the North are often allied with the Harpers, as they have common purpose, with bards and rangers serving as go-betweens. Individual Harpers can usually expect a circle to at least grant them food and shelter, and an opportunity to attend a gathering and speak, if they wish.

Still, the Harpers aren't a druidic organization and, despite what some common folk might believe, not every druid or druid circle is allied with, or even friendly toward, the Harpers and their cause. Indeed, some druids consider the Harpers busybodies who threaten the natural balance almost as much as the evils that they fight against.

Moonwell water placed in a container or taken more than 30 feet away from the well no longer has any of these properties; it is simply water.

On the three nights of the full moon, three or more druids gathered around a moonwell can cast *commune* and *scrying* once each without expending spell slots and without material components, provided that one of the druids is at least 9th level and the rest are at least 4th level. At the DM's option, the druids can use a moonwell on such nights to cast different spells.

Fighters

"Slow to learn, aren't they?" a white-haired old *knight who'd lost his helm in the last fray drawled. "This is getting to be like a proper romp in the Dragonjaws, it is! I'll have to get my minstrel to write a ballad about this ..."*

"I hope he sings swiftly," a Purple Dragon armsman growled. "Here they are!"

The howling spilled over the bodies in another rushing tide of flapping leather, slashing swords, and beady goblin eyes. Men planted themselves—no running and leaping now—to hew steadily, like harvesters with scythes and many fields in front of them, in a rhythm of death.

—Troy Denning, *Death of the Dragon*

Whether doughty warriors, idealistic young soldiers, or hard-bitten mercenaries, fighters are found everywhere in the Forgotten Realms. Even the most peaceful lands have militia for protection against their enemies, and many great rulers in the Realms' past were fighters of some sort. There are always opportunities for those who know how to handle themselves in a fight.

Able-bodied folk in many parts of the Sword Coast and the North learn at least the rudiments of combat as part of a local militia, serving in times of need, while a few go on to become professional soldiers, guards, or the like. Officers tend to come from the nobility, although there are opportunities for capable leaders to demonstrate their skills and rise through the ranks.

Fighters who don't make a career of soldiering find other ways to demonstrate their prowess. Mercenaries find employment with those who need skilled warriors but who lack the time or means to train them. Such employers include adventuring companies, which are almost always in need of a reliable fighter.

Merchants and guilds hire guards to protect caravans, ships, and their warehouses and guildhalls. Such work affords the opportunity for frequent travel and danger.

A good deal of danger comes from fighters who abandon legitimate employment to become bandits—raiding caravans, robbing travelers, and pillaging isolated homesteads, manors, and villages. Out-of-luck fighters might also take part in gladiatorial fights or similar blood sports to make a living off their skills, although such matches are virtually unknown on the Sword Coast and in the North, as compared to southern nations like Amn and Calimshan.

Martial Archetype

Fighters in the Forgotten Realms have the following Martial Archetype option, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Purple Dragon Knight

Purple Dragon knights are warriors who hail from the kingdom of Cormyr. Pledged to protect the crown, they take the fight against evil beyond their kingdom's borders. They are tasked with wandering the land as knights errant, relying on their judgment, bravery, and fidelity to the code of chivalry to guide them in defeating evildoers.

A Purple Dragon knight inspires greatness in others by committing brave deeds in battle. The mere presence of a knight in a hamlet is enough to cause some orcs and bandits to seek easier prey. A lone knight is a skilled warrior, but a knight leading a band of allies can transform even the most poorly equipped militia into a ferocious war band.

A knight prefers to lead through deeds, not words. As a knight spearheads an attack, the knight's actions can awaken reserves of courage and conviction in allies that they never suspected they had.

Restriction: Knighthood

Purple Dragon knights are tied to a specific order of Cormyrean knighthood.

Banneret serves as the generic name for this archetype if you use it in other campaign settings or to model warlords other than Purple Dragon knights.

Rallying Cry

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn how to inspire your allies to fight on past their injuries.

When you use your Second Wind feature, you can choose up to three creatures within 60 feet of you that are allied with you. Each one regains hit points equal to your fighter level, provided that the creature can see or hear you.

Royal Envoy

A Purple Dragon knight serves as an envoy of the Cormyrean crown. Knights of high standing are expected to conduct themselves with grace.

At 7th level, you gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. If you are already proficient in it, you gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, Insight, Intimidation, or Performance.

Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses Persuasion. You receive this benefit regardless of the skill proficiency you gain from this feature.

Inspiring Surge

Starting at 10th level, when you use your Action Surge feature, you can choose one creature within 60 feet of you that is allied with you. That creature can make one melee or ranged weapon attack with its reaction, provided that it can see or hear you.

Starting at 17th level, you can choose two allies within 60 feet of you, rather than one.

Bulwark

Beginning at 15th level, you can extend the benefit of your Indomitable feature to an ally. When you decide to use Indomitable to reroll an Intelligence, a Wisdom, or a Charisma saving throw and you aren't incapacitated, you can choose one ally within 60 feet of you that also failed its saving throw against the same effect. If that creature can see or hear you, it can reroll its saving throw and must use the new roll.

Monks

THE FAT MAN STRAIGHTENED HIS BLACK-AND-GOLD *vest, lowered his round head, and charged.*

Danica waited until he was right in front of her, and to the onlookers it appeared as if the woman would be buried beneath mounds of flesh. At the last moment, she dipped her head under the fat man's lunging arm, caught his hand, and casually stepped behind him as he lumbered past. A subtle twist of her wrist stopped him dead in his tracks, and before he even realized what was happening, Danica kicked the back of both his knees, dropping him to a kneel.

—R.A. Salvatore, *Canticle*

Some of the earliest monastic orders in Faerûn arose in the southern lands of Amn and Calimshan, their practices migrating north and east at the same time similar practices filtered westward from distant Kara-Tur.

The oldest orders have branched or fractured into smaller offshoots over time, such that there are now dozens of them. Most are no more than a few dozen members living in an isolated community in the wilderness. Some monastic communities have members numbering in the hundreds, with a presence closer to civilization, and often with correspondingly greater influence, for those orders concern themselves with worldly affairs.

As most monastic orders in Faerûn arose from human nations, the majority of monks in those communities tend to be human. Monasteries have long been sanctuaries for foundlings and outcasts of various sorts, so nonhuman monks are not unheard of.

Monastic Orders

The following orders can be found in various parts of the Forgotten Realms.

The Dark Moon

A monastic order devoted to Shar, the Dark Moon works openly in lands where her worship is accepted and in secret wilderness and underground hideaways where it isn't. Its followers seek "knowledge and conversation with the shadow," believing true wisdom is found in darkness and loss, both literally and spiritually. Its adherents most often follow the Way of Shadow, as described in the Monastic Tradition class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

The Hin Fist

A halfling monastic order from Luiren, adherents of the Hin Fist turn their people's natural confidence into a spiritual path for mastering themselves and their potential. A few Hin Fist masters have established monasteries in lands outside Luiren, where the teachings available only to halflings have been opened to students of other races who are willing to follow the path laid out by Yondalla. Hin Fist monks generally follow the Way of the Open Hand, as described in the Monastic Tradition class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

Order of the Yellow Rose

Also known as the Disciples of Saint Sollars the Twice-Martyred, the Order of the Yellow Rose is a solitary monastery of Ilmater worshipers in the Earthspur Mountains of Damara. It is known for loyalty to its allies and destruction to its enemies. Greatly respected on matters of truth and diplomacy, the monks work hard to survive in their remote sanctuary. The monks of the Monastery of the Yellow Rose use the remorhaz to test their disciples. Young monks must prove the power of their mind to overcome fear and pain by riding the beasts.

The faith of Ilmater fosters far more orders of monks that other gods. Other Ilmatari monastic orders include the Followers of the Unhindered Path, the Disciples of St. Morgan the Taciturn, and the Sisters of St. Jasper of the Rocks.

Monks of Ilmater often travel as wanderers, begging for alms, seeking enlightenment, and relieving the suffering of others. They tend to follow the Way of the Open Hand, as described in the Monastic Tradition class feature in the *Player's Handbook*.

The Sun Souls

The Sun Soul monks follow a monastic tradition that they believe has its roots in the ancient empire of Netheril. In their philosophy, living things harbor a fragment of the sun's mystic essence within them. Just as the body has a shadow, so too does the spirit have a light. That light is called the sun soul. Brothers and sisters of the Order of the Sun Soul train to tap into the "spiritual light within" and manifest it as supernatural feats of prowess and endurance. Members of this order follow the Way of the Sun Soul, which is described in the "Monastic Traditions" section below.

To get in touch with their internal light, Sun Soul monks follow a strict code of ascetic conduct called the Precepts of Incandescence. It emphasizes three pillars:

Seek physical perfection. To open the way for the sun soul to manifest, one should strive to make the body beautiful. Fitness, cleanliness, and well-honed physicality create a clearer window through which the light can shine.

Seek spiritual virtue. Recognize the light in others, not just the darkness. Grant and take each new chance to be virtuous.

Shine light into darkness. Share the soul's light with the world. Light up dark places with your presence and banish shadow.

Due to the precepts' similarity to the teachings of some faiths, the Order of the Sun Soul has long had associations with temples and the faithful of three particular deities: Sune, Selûne, and Lathander. The dictate to seek physical perfection and recognize hidden virtue has similarity to Sune's teachings about physical and spiritual beauty. Followers of Selûne recognize their goddess's exhortation to battle darkness and seek virtue. And of course, Lathander's association with the sun links to the Sun Soul philosophy, but more critically for worshipers of Lathander, they see the idea of granting and taking new chances as similar to Lathander's emphasis on new beginnings.

Long Death Monks

Followers of the Way of the Long Death worship the principle of death more so than any deity of death. These monks seek the secrets of life by studying death itself. It is the condition of being dead that concerns them most, and not what lies beyond; the afterlife holds little interest for them. Their monasteries are full of decaying, dying, and dead animal and plant specimens, which they study with detached interest. They frequently purchase rare specimens from adventurers and merchants that they can't obtain easily themselves. But such studies are only part of the monks' daily life: They seek to understand death as it pertains especially to intelligent living beings, and to this end they eagerly welcome the diseased and the dying so that they might watch and record their deaths. If such unfortunates seek release from pain through death, the monks provide it. They view death as a gift that they bestow on those who are ready for it. Their means of determining readiness vary from one sect (or even one monk) to another.

The monks suffer no moral qualms about these deeds, for death is the most natural thing in the world, from their perspective, and to expire in service to its principle is one of the most profoundly holy experiences a living being can hope to enjoy. It is for this reason that the monks themselves do not fear death.

Most of the order's members are either scholars who share mutual fascination with death and dying or clergy who worship one of the deities concerned with death. Some of the monks consider themselves to be nothing less than visionaries whose work will pave the way for a better future for all Faerûn. When death is truly understood, it can be harnessed and used as a tool for the betterment of all, or so they rationalize to themselves.

Monks of this tradition follow the Way of the Long Death, which is described in the "Monastic Traditions" section below.

The Yielding Way

The monastic order of Eldath is the Disciples of the Yielding Way, sometimes known as the Brothers and Sisters of the Open Palm. These monks guard sacred sites where many priests dwell, and they travel the countryside gathering information for isolated groves and fastnesses. They don't ever seek to provoke violence, but are quite deadly when defending themselves, their charges, and their holy sites.

Monastic Traditions

Monks in the Forgotten Realms have the following Monastic Tradition options, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Way of the Long Death

Monks of the Way of the Long Death are obsessed with the meaning and mechanics of dying. They capture creatures and prepare elaborate experiments to capture, record, and understand the moments of their demise. They then use this knowledge to guide their understanding of martial arts, yielding a deadly fighting style.

Touch of Death

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, your study of death allows you to extract vitality from another creature as it nears its demise. When you reduce a creature within 5 feet of you to 0 hit points, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier + your monk level (minimum of 1 temporary hit point).

Hour of Reaping

At 6th level, you gain the ability to unsettle or terrify those around you as an action, for your soul has been touched by the shadow of death. When you take this action, each creature within 30 feet of you that can see you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

Mastery of Death

Beginning at 11th level, you use your familiarity with death to escape its grasp. When you are reduced to 0 hit points, you can expend 1 ki point (no action required) to have 1 hit point instead.

Touch of the Long Death

Starting at 17th level, your touch can channel the energy of death into a creature. As an action, you touch one creature within 5 feet of you, and you expend 1 to 10 ki points. The target must make a Constitution saving throw, and it takes 2d10 necrotic damage per ki point spent on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Way of the Sun Soul

Monks of the Way of the Sun Soul learn to channel their own life energy into searing bolts of light. They teach that meditation can unlock the ability to unleash the indomitable light shed by the soul of every living creature.

Radiant Sun Bolt

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you can hurl searing bolts of magical radiance.

You gain a ranged spell attack that you can use with the Attack action. The attack has a range of 30 feet. You are proficient with it, and you add your Dexterity modifier to its attack and damage rolls. Its damage is radiant, and its damage die is a d4. This die changes as you gain monk levels, as shown in the Martial Arts column of the Monk table.

When you use the Attack action on your turn to use this special attack, you can spend 1 ki point to make two additional attacks with it as a bonus action.

Searing Arc Strike

At 6th level, you gain the ability to channel your ki into searing waves of energy. Immediately after you take the Attack action on your turn, you can spend 2 ki points to cast the 1st-level spell *burning hands* as a bonus action.

You can spend additional ki points to cast *burning hands* as a higher level spell. Each additional ki point you spend increases the spell's level by 1. The maximum number of ki points (2 plus any additional points) that you can spend on the spell equals half your monk level (round down).

Searing Sunburst

At 11th level, you gain the ability to create an orb of light that erupts into a devastating explosion. As an action, you create an orb and hurl it at a point you choose within 150 feet, where it erupts into a sphere of radiant light for a brief but deadly instant.

Each creature in that 20-foot-radius sphere must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 radiant damage. A creature doesn't need to make the save if the creature is behind total cover that is opaque.

You can increase the sphere's damage by spending ki points. Each point you spend, up to a maximum of 3, increases the damage by 2d6.

Sun Shield

At 17th level, you become wreathed in a luminous aura. You shed bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. You can extinguish or restore the light as a bonus action.

If a creature hits you with a melee attack while this light shines, you can use your reaction to deal radiant damage to the creature. The radiant damage equals 5 + your Wisdom modifier.

Paladins

Some people are warriors of superior virtue. They exemplify a host of traits that folk consider honorable, just, and good. These warriors aspire to be the best people they can. When such a warrior also has great devotion to a particular deity, that god can reward the faithful with a measure of divine power, making that person a paladin.

Different paladin orders in the Forgotten Realms emphasize different elements of righteous behavior, but all paladins are expected to hold true to a common set of virtues:

Liberality. Be generous and tolerant.
Good faith. Be honest and keep promises.

Courtesy. Treat others with respect despite how they treat you. Give honor to those above your station. Earn the respect of those below your station.

Lawfulness. Laws exist to bring prosperity to those under them. Unjust laws must be overturned or changed in a reasonable fashion.

Bravery. Gain glory through battle. Defend any charge unto death.

Pride in one's actions. Lead by example. Let your deeds speak your intentions.

Humility in one's deeds. Do not boast or accept rewards undue to you.

Unselfishness. Share resources, especially with those who have the most need.

Good-temperedness. Render service cheerfully and without disdain.

Wisdom. Cause the most good through the least harm.

Piety. Be faithful to the precepts of your god.

Kindness. Protect the weak. Grant mercy to those who seek redemption.

Honor. Hold true to the code. Death before dishonor.

Every paladin grades and emphasizes these virtues based on his or her own personal ethos and religious background. A paladin of Sune would emphasize aspects of courtly love and courtesy, whereas a paladin of Tyr would be more concerned with justice and fair treatment of foes.

Most paladins in the Forgotten Realms, like clerics, are devoted to a particular deity. The most common paladin deities are those that embody action, decision, watchfulness, and wisdom. Torm and Tyr are both popular deities for paladins, as is Ilmater, who stresses self-sacrifice and the alleviation of suffering. Although less common, there are paladins of the following deities: Helm, Hoar, Lathander, Sune, Corellon Larethian, the Red Knight, Clangeddin Silverbeard, Arvoreen, and Mystra.

Their devotion to a higher ideal makes paladins popular folk heroes in the Realms. Many tales are woven about noble knights and oath-sworn champions, although pragmatists note that the tales often end with a tremendous sacrifice on the part of said champions.

The most common patrons of paladins of the Oath of Devotion and the Oath of the Crown (which is described below) are Helm, Torm, and Tyr—protection, courage, and justice—although Ilmater has his share of devoted champions. Those green knights sworn to the Oath of the Ancients might honor Arvoreen or Corellon, while avengers of the Oath of Vengeance follow patrons like Hoar, although there are also avengers of Helm and Tyr, meting out harsh justice.

Paladin Orders

The following orders can be found in various parts of the Forgotten Realms.

Order of the Companion

Based in Elturgard in the Western Heartlands, the Order of the Companion is sworn to guard that nation. It formed in the wake of the Spellplague and helped to create Elturgard, centered on the city of Elturel, overlooking the River Chionthar. The Companions safeguard civilization against dangerous and wild forces, particularly unnatural creatures. Of the options in the Sacred Oath class feature, the Oath of the Crown (described below) and the Oath of Devotion (described in the *Player's Handbook*) are equally represented among their ranks.

Order of the Gilded Eye

The monastery and cathedral of Helm's Hold stands on the edge of the Neverwinter Wood in the North as a safe haven for travelers. The Order of the Gilded Eye safeguards the hold and serves the surrounding community, but their mission has a much broader focus: to guard the world from dangers originating on other planes of existence, especially on the Lower Planes. Many paladins and non-paladins have joined the order in response to its call to cast fiendish incursions out of the world. In recent years, many have ventured forth from Helm's Hold to do the order's work in the wider world.

Of the options in the Sacred Oath class feature in the *Player's Handbook*, paladins of the Gilded Eye most often follow the Oath of Devotion, although a few zealots are followers of the Oath of Vengeance.

Order of Samular

The Holy Order of Samular, also known as the Knights of Samular, is made up of warriors in the service of Tyr. The order is based at Summit Hall, while also maintaining a chapter house in Waterdeep. Legendary paladin Samular Caradoon founded the order in 952 DR after the Second Troll War and the deaths of his brothers Renwick "Snowcloak" and Amphail the Just during the war. When Tyr fell silent and the paladins in his service lost their powers, many turned to other gods such as Torm, but the Kights of Samular stayed true to Tyr. Their patience was recently rewarded when, upon Tyr's return to the world, many of their dwindling number were invested with the powers of a paladin. Known for their support of the law, many paladins of the order follow the Oath of the Crown, which is described below.

Sacred Oath

Paladins in the Forgotten Realms have the following Sacred Oath option, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Oath of the Crown

The Oath of the Crown is sworn to the ideals of civilization, be it the spirit of a nation, fealty to a sovereign, or service to a deity of law and rulership. The paladins who swear this oath dedicate themselves to serving society and, in particular, the just laws that hold society together. These paladins are the watchful guardians on the walls, standing against the chaotic tides of barbarism that threaten to tear down all that civilization has built, and are commonly known as guardians, exemplars, or sentinels. Often, paladins who swear this oath are members of an order of knighthood in service to a nation or a sovereign, and undergo their oath as part of their admission to the order's ranks.

Tenets of the Crown

The tenets of the Oath of the Crown are often set by the sovereign to which their oath is sworn, but generally emphasize the following tenets.

Law. The law is paramount. It is the mortar that holds the stones of civilization together, and it must be respected.

Loyalty. Your word is your bond. Without loyalty, oaths and laws are meaningless.

Courage. You must be willing to do what needs to be done for the sake of order, even in the face of overwhelming odds. If you don't act, then who will?

Responsibility. You must deal with the consequences of your actions, and you are responsible for fulfilling your duties and obligations.

Oath Spells

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Oath of the Crown Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*command, compelled duel*
5th	*warding bond, zone of truth*
9th	*aura of vitality, spirit guardians*
13th	*banishment, guardian of faith*
17th	*circle of power, geas*

Channel Divinity

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following Channel Divinity options.

Champion Challenge. You issue a challenge that compels other creatures to do battle with you. Each creature of your choice that you can see within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature can't willingly move more than 30 feet away from you. This effect ends on the creature if you are incapacitated or die or if the creature is moved more than 30 feet away from you.

Turn the Tide. As a bonus action, you can bolster injured creatures with your Channel Divinity. Each creature of your choice that can hear you within 30 feet of you regains hit points equal to 1d6 + your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) if it has no more than half of its hit points.

Divine Allegiance

Starting at 7th level, when a creature within 5 feet of you takes damage, you can use your reaction to magically substitute your own health for that of the target creature, causing that creature not to take the damage. Instead, you take the damage. This damage to you can't be reduced or prevented in any way.

Unyielding Spirit

Starting at 15th level, you have advantage on saving throws to avoid becoming paralyzed or stunned.

Exalted Champion

At 20th level, your presence on the field of battle is an inspiration to those dedicated to your cause. You can use your action to gain the following benefits for 1 hour:

- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.
- Your allies have advantage on death saving throws while within 30 feet of you.
- You have advantage on Wisdom saving throws, as do your allies within 30 feet of you.

This effect ends early if you are incapacitated or die. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Rangers

Montolio held out his arm, and the great owl *promptly hopped onto it, carefully finding its footing on the man's heavy leather sleeve.*

"You have seen the drow?" Montolio asked.

The owl responded with a whoo, then went off into a complicated series of chattering hoots and whoos. Montolio took it all in, weighing every detail. With the help of his friends, particularly this rather talkative owl, the ranger had monitored the drow for several days, curious as to why a dark elf had wandered into the valley. At first, Montolio had assumed that the drow was somehow connected to Graul, the chief orc of the region, but as time went on, the ranger began to suspect differently.

—R.A. Salvatore, *Sojourn*

Long have rangers walked the wilds of the Sword Coast and the Savage Frontier. Like druids, their practices date back to the earliest days of humanity. And long before humans set foot in the North, elf rangers strode through its forests and climbed its mountains. The traditions and outlook of these people are now shared by members of many races. In particular, lightfoot halflings frequently hear the call of the wild and become rangers, often acting as guides and protectors of roving halfling bands, and shield dwarves forced to wander far from old clanholds sometimes follow the ranger's path.

Not every prospector wandering far hills or trapper hunting through uninhabited lands becomes a ranger. True rangers go out into nature and find it holy, and like paladins, they are touched by something divine. Their gods and creeds might differ, but rangers share similar values about the sanctity of nature. While by no means always aligned with one another, rangers are bound into a loose community of sorts—one that often connects with circles of druids.

In the North and throughout much of the Heartlands, rangers use special marks to indicate campsites, dangerous areas, evil creatures, foul magic, goblinoid activity, hidden caches of supplies, safe passage, shelter, and graves or tombs. Many of these symbols were derived from elven lore or borrowed from groups like the Harpers. While by no means a secret language, these trail marks are often obtuse to non-rangers, and even druids might not understand them.

As a whole, rangers serve to help societies survive and thrive in the wilderness. Much of the Sword Coast and

the North are unsettled. Rangers are driven to explore these lands, searching for fertile soil in which the seeds of civilization might grow, seeking resources (such as metals) that will benefit settled lands, or rooting out evil before it can spread. Other rangers spy on enemy troops or hunt down dangerous beasts or criminals. Given that so much of the North is frontier, rangers play a critical role in keeping communities safe and are often admired within them.

Human Rangers

Human rangers of the Moonshaes are devoted to the Earthmother, and those that work closely with druid circles on the mainland often honor the gods of the First Circle, but most rangers among humans favor the goddess Mielikki. However, they consider the goddess too wild and primal for them to pray to directly. Instead, they pray to Gwaeron Windstrom to bring their words to the goddess. Gwaeron is said to sleep in a grove of trees west of the town of Triboar, and most of his followers travel to that place at least once in their lives as a holy pilgrimage. Evil human rangers usually honor Malar for his ferocity and hunting skill.

Elf Rangers

Elf rangers are usually associated with a particular community such as Evereska or the tribes in the Misty Forest. Rather than being wandering explorers, elf rangers typically act as scouts and guardians of elven realms. Such elves usually devote themselves to Rillifane Rallathil or Solonor Thelandria. Elf rangers driven to roam might instead favor Fenmarel Mestarine, god of lone wanderers, or Shevarash, elven god of vengeance.

Halfling Rangers

Most halflings who revere nature and its raw beauty come from lightfoot stock. Their bands spend at least as much time on the road and river as in village and town, and the role of a ranger is a natural fit with the lifestyle of most lightfoots. Lightfoot rangers tend to favor the god Brandobaris in his aspect as patron of exploration. Halflings more inclined toward nature itself typically prefer Sheela Peryroyl. Those who devote themselves more to the protection of settlements or travelers honor Arvoreen. The few strongheart halflings who become rangers tend to favor those latter two deities.

Dwarf Rangers

Most dwarves prefer to hunker down under a mountain, rather than roam the wilderness of the surface or the Underdark. Most often, a dwarf ranger is either a shield dwarf cast out of a clanhold or a clanless dwarf seeking a place in the world. Sometimes dwarf rangers are prospectors who explore the world seeking new veins of ore. In any case, there are two deities who appeal to such dwarves: Marthammor Duin and Dumathoin.

Rogues

There are those whose abilities lie not with sword or the Art, but with quiet motion, dexterous action, and stealth. Such talents often lead to illegal endeavors, which plague most major cities, but can be placed to good use in dealing with dangerous monsters and lost treasure.

Most large cities in the Realms have a number of thieves' dens that compete with one another. A few places, such as Baldur's Gate, have an organized group of rogues that controls all such activity. Most thieves' dens are secret gathering spots, often beneath the city, and move after they're discovered.

The city of Waterdeep had once been home to the most powerful guild of thieves in the North: the Shadow Thieves. The Lords of Waterdeep smashed that guild, forcing its leaders to flee the city (the group still operates out of Amn). There are still thieves and even assassins in Waterdeep, but they are broken into innumerable small groups or operate alone.

The most common respite for such robbers is what they call the Honest Trade—adventuring, where roguish abilities may be used without censure and are later lionized in song and legend. Many thieves take to this life, adhering to a code that keeps them out of trouble in civilized areas but still keeps them rich; they vow to burglarize ancient tombs and monstrous lairs instead of the homes and businesses of the wealthy in civilized lands.

Some rogues have learned it is easier to pick someone's pocket when you have a royal writ, which is to say many rogues are diplomats, courtiers, influence-peddlers, and information-brokers, in addition to the better-known thieves and assassins. Such rogues blend more easily into civilized society, more often acting as grease in the wheels than a wrench in the works.

Roguish Archetypes

Rogues in the Forgotten Realms have the following Roguish Archetype options, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Mastermind

Your focus is on people and on the influence and secrets they have. Many spies, courtiers, and schemers follow this archetype, leading lives of intrigue. Words are your weapons as often as knives or poison, and secrets and favors are some of your favorite treasures.

Master of Intrigue

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with the disguise kit, the forgery kit, and one gaming set of your choice. You also learn two languages of your choice.

Additionally, you can unerringly mimic the speech patterns and accent of a creature that you hear speak for at least 1 minute, allowing you to pass yourself off as a native speaker of a particular land, provided that you know the language.

Master of Tactics

Starting at 3rd level, you can use the Help action as a bonus action. Additionally, when you use the Help action to aid an ally in attacking a creature, the target of that attack can be within 30 feet of you, rather than 5 feet of you, if the target can see or hear you.

Insightful Manipulator

Starting at 9th level, if you spend at least 1 minute observing or interacting with another creature outside combat, you can learn certain information about its capabilities compared to your own. The DM tells you if the creature is your equal, superior, or inferior in regard to two of the following characteristics of your choice:

- Intelligence score
- Wisdom score
- Charisma score
- Class levels (if any)

At the DM's option, you might also realize you know a piece of the creature's history or one of its personality traits, if it has any.

Misdirection

Beginning at 13th level, you can sometimes cause another creature to suffer an attack meant for you. When you are targeted by an attack while a creature within 5 feet of you is granting you cover against that attack, you can use your reaction to have the attack target that creature instead of you.

Soul of Deceit

Starting at 17th level, your thoughts can't be read by telepathy or other means, unless you allow it. You can present false thoughts by making a Charisma (Deception) check contested by the mind reader's Wisdom (Insight) check.

Additionally, no matter what you say, magic that would determine if you are telling the truth indicates you are being truthful, if you so choose, and you can't be compelled to tell the truth by magic.

Swashbuckler

You focus your training on the art of the blade, relying on speed, elegance, and charm in equal parts. While some warriors are brutes clad in heavy armor, your method of fighting looks almost like a performance. Duelists and pirates typically belong to this archetype.

A Swashbuckler excels in single combat, and can fight with two weapons while safely darting away from an opponent.

Fancy Footwork

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn how to land a strike and then slip away without reprisal. During your turn, if you make a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against you for the rest of your turn.

Swashbucklers and Two-Weapon Fighting

The Swashbuckler relies on a good understanding of the D&D rules to realize its potential, specifically when it comes to fighting with two weapons. Other characters must use an action to Disengage if they want to escape a melee, but the Fancy Footwork feature of the Swashbuckler bundles a more limited version of Disengage within your attack. This allows you to use your bonus action to fight with two weapons, and then safely evade each foe you attacked.

Rakish Audacity

Starting at 3rd level, your unmistakable confidence propels you into battle. You can add your Charisma modifier to your initiative rolls.

In addition, you don't need advantage on your attack roll to use your Sneak Attack if no creature other than your target is within 5 feet of you. All the other rules for the Sneak Attack class feature still apply to you.

Panache

At 9th level, your charm becomes extraordinarily beguiling. As an action, you can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by a creature's Wisdom (Insight) check. The creature must be able to hear you, and the two of you must share a language.

If you succeed on the check and the creature is hostile to you, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you and can't make opportunity attacks against targets other than you. This effect lasts for 1 minute, until one of your companions attacks the target or affects it with a spell, or until you and the target are more than 60 feet apart.

If you succeed on the check and the creature isn't hostile to you, it is charmed by you for 1 minute. While charmed, it regards you as a friendly acquaintance. This effect ends immediately if you or your companions do anything harmful to it.

Elegant Maneuver

Starting at 13th level, you can use a bonus action on your turn to gain advantage on the next Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check you make during the same turn.

Master Duelist

Beginning at 17th level, your mastery of the blade lets you turn failure into success in combat. If you miss with an attack roll, you can roll it again with advantage. Once you do so, you can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.

Sorcerers

The Weave of magic infuses every part of the Realms, and some people have the natural ability to perceive, touch, and shape the Weave. Some inherit this ability from a magical ancestor such as a dragon or an angel, others gain it by accident from exposure to wild magical power, and others manifest this power by chance or the hand of fate, perhaps portended by events at their conception or birth.

Due to their varied origins and delayed manifestation of powers, sorcerers can be found almost anywhere and among almost any people. Larger cities on the Sword Coast—including Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep—all have a few sorcerers, since people with magic gravitate to places where their abilities are valued. Sorcerers are slightly more common among cultures steeped in magic, such as among the elves of Evermeet and the humans of Halruua. The witches of Rashemen are sorcerers who lead that country's society, but their Thayan neighbors often persecute the sorcerers who appear in Thay, seeing sorcery as a threat to the nation's power structure, which is based on the study of wizardry. Magic-hating cultures, such as the Northlanders and Uthgardt, exile or kill the sorcerers who manifest among them.

Wild Magic

The Forgotten Realms has a long history of magical disasters and uncontrolled surges of power that alter creatures or the land itself. Whether caused by a Netherese wizard trying to become god of magic, deities being forced to walk the earth during the Time of Troubles, or the chaos of the Spellplague, the magical chaos unleashed by such events has created a legacy of wild magic sorcerers. This legacy often lies dormant for generations, then suddenly manifests under the right (or wrong) circumstances. These wild mages are more common recently in lands directly affected by the Spellplague, including Halruaa, Mulhorand, and pockets of Cormyr and the Sword Coast.

Draconic Magic

Dragons are known to take humanoid form and live among lesser creatures for decades. Some of these dragons have liaisons with humanoids, or invest their allies or minions with dragon magic. These invested creatures might become draconic bloodline sorcerers, or pass their abilities on to their descendants. Draconic bloodline sorcerers have appeared in most parts of the world due to the actions of individual dragons or experimentation by dragon cults, but they are significantly more common around Chessenta, which was once ruled by a dragon, and the land of Murghôm near Thay, where dragon princes have ruled for the last eighty years.

Magic of the Storm

During the Sundering, a constant storm called the Great Rain covered the Sea of Fallen Stars, darkening the skies and causing massive floods. Thousands of people died from drowning, lightning strikes, or bursts of wind that hit like fists and capsized ships. A few survivors of these events found themselves blessed or cursed with innate magic—storm sorcerers able to bend lightning, thunder, and wind to their will. Most of these new mages appeared near the Inner Sea, but clouds from the Great Rain sometimes traveled much farther away. Although not all storm sorcerers gained their powers from the Great Rain, most common folk associate them with its destructive weather and treat them with caution.

Sorcerous Origin

Sorcerers in the Forgotten Realms have the following Sorcerous Origin option, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Storm Sorcery

Your innate magic comes from the power of elemental air. Many with this power can trace their magic back to a near-death experience caused by the Great Rain, but perhaps you were born during a howling gale so powerful that folk still tell stories of it, or your lineage might include the influence of potent air creatures such as vaati or djinn. Whatever the case, the magic of the storm permeates your being.

Storm sorcerers are invaluable members of a ship's crew. Their magic allows them to exert control over wind and weather in their immediate area. Their abilities also prove useful in repelling attacks by sahuagin, pirates, and other waterborne threats.

Wind Speaker

The arcane magic you command is infused with elemental air. You can speak, read, and write Primordial. (Knowing this language allows you to understand and be understood by those who speak its dialects: Aquan, Auran, Ignan, and Terran.)

Tempestuous Magic

Starting at 1st level, you can use a bonus action on your turn to cause whirling gusts of elemental air to briefly surround you, immediately before or after you cast a spell of 1st level or higher. Doing so allows you to fly up to 10 feet without provoking opportunity attacks.

Heart of the Storm

At 6th level, you gain resistance to lightning and thunder damage. In addition, whenever you start casting a spell of 1st level or higher that deals lightning or thunder damage, stormy magic erupts from you. This eruption causes creatures of your choice that you can see within 10 feet of you to take lightning or thunder damage (choose each time this ability activates) equal to half your sorcerer level.

Storm Guide

At 6th level, you gain the ability to subtly control the weather around you.

If it is raining, you can use an action to cause the rain to stop falling in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on you. You can end this effect as a bonus action.

If it is windy, you can use a bonus action each round to choose the direction that the wind blows in a 100-foot-radius sphere centered on you. The wind blows in that direction until the end of your next turn. This feature doesn't alter the speed of the wind.

Storm's Fury

Starting at 14th level, when you are hit by a melee attack, you can use your reaction to deal lightning damage to the attacker. The damage equals your sorcerer level. The attacker must also make a Strength saving throw against your sorcerer spell save DC. On a failed save, the attacker is pushed in a straight line up to 20 feet away from you.

Arcane Spellcasters

The common folk of Faerûn often make little distinction between sorcerers, warlocks, and wizards. Most mages see little point in kindling rivalries with other types of arcane spellcasters—magic is magic, regardless of the means—and for the most part, sorcerers, wizards, and warlocks respect each other as fellow practitioners of the Art, understanding the power it represents.

Wind Soul

At 18th level, you gain immunity to lightning and thunder damage.

You also gain a magical flying speed of 60 feet. As an action, you can reduce your flying speed to 30 feet for 1 hour and choose a number of creatures within 30 feet of you equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. The chosen creatures gain a magical flying speed of 30 feet for 1 hour. Once you reduce your flying speed in this way, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

Warlocks

Given their dealings with often sinister otherworldly patrons in exchange for power, warlocks don't have a sterling reputation in the Realms. Even well-meaning warlocks are viewed with suspicion and justifiable caution. Some wizards feel the very existence of warlocks taints the view of their noble Art and causes the common folk to view all practitioners of magic with doubt.

Some warlocks, particularly those of fey or fiendish bloodlines, are born with a propensity for their power, drawing the attention of potential patrons even from childhood. Others seek out a pact, sometimes because they can't find the power they desire elsewhere. Some warlocks forge multiple pacts, although they must eventually come to favor one over the others, as their patrons are jealous and possessive beings.

Patrons in the Realms

The gods are far from the only forces at work in the Realms, and ambitious warlocks have many potential patrons able to offer them arcane power.

The Archfey

In the vast wilderness of the Realms one can still find connections to the Feywild. These are fey crossings, places of mysterious natural beauty in the world that have a near-perfect mirror in the Feywild. You can pass through a fey crossing by entering a clearing, passing through the surface of a pool, stepping into a circle of mushrooms, or crawling under the trunk of a tree. A few warlocks seek out such places to bargain with the Archfey of that realm for power. Noteworthy Archfey patrons include the following:

Titania, the Summer Queen, is perhaps the mightiest of the archfey. With a smile, she can ripen a crop, and with a frown, summon wildfires. She rules the seelie of the Summer Court.

Oberon, the Green Lord, an unrivaled hunter and woodland warrior, is Titania's lover and frequently her foe. Oberon is attuned to every bough of each tree and each branch of every stream in the forests of the Feywild. If Oberon has a weakness, it is the wild nature of his heart. His mood swings like a weather vane in a wind storm.

Hyrsam, the Prince of Fools, is thought to be the first satyr. He can sing the shine off gold, and his jokes and antics can cause stones to cry with laughter. Yet Hyrsam is also the soul of savagery and the wild. Hyrsam the Fool is a prankster and prone to mischief, but when such jokes turn vicious and deadly, Hyrsam the Savage is at play.

The Queen of Air and Darkness rules the unseelie of the Gloaming Court from an onyx throne that sits empty except for the hovering Night Diamond, a black gem the size of a human head that dully glimmers with captured stars. The Queen of Air and Darkness is an invisible presence around it, her voice thundering from the Night Diamond or whispering secrets directly in the ears of her courtiers, and sometimes both at once.

The Prince of Frost was once known as the Sun Prince, but his heart grew cold when his betrothed betrayed him and escaped, her soul becoming one of the stars. Ever since, the wrathful prince has sought to reunite with his betrothed whenever she is reincarnated in mortal form.

The Fiend

Numerous fiends forge pacts with mortal warlocks in the Realms—so many that warlocks are almost synonymous with infernal power in Faerûn. These fiends include the Archdevils of the Nine Hells and their most powerful dukes, the Demon Lords of the Abyss, and the ultroloths who rule over yugoloth armies. Such deals need not be struck directly with the power in question, however. Often a weaker fiend serves as an intermediary, and the warlock might not know whom he or she serves. Notable fiendish patrons peculiar to the Forgotten Realms include the following:

Baazka is the pit fiend behind the most recent incursion of infernal forces from Dragonspear Castle. Its plans for the Sword Coast were thwarted along with those of allied Red Wizards, but its ambitions in the region remain.

Belaphoss is a demon that serves Demogorgon. It considers itself the greatest servitor of the Prince of Demons and thus a rival for Demogorgon's power.

Eltab was once bound beneath the city of Eltabbar in Thay, caged even by the layout of the city's streets and canals, which formed a glyph of imprisonment. The demon is now loose in the world, seeking revenge.

Errtu the balor has plagued Drizzt Do'Urden for more than a century, largely over possession of an artifact called the Crenshinibon. Having lost the last battle and been banished from the world, the balor now seeks indirect means of revenge.

Gargauth is a mysterious infernal power who seeks godhood while trapped in the world within a magical shield.

Lorcan is a cambion who collects warlocks like one might collect butterflies. His favorite collection, the Troil Thirteen, includes warlocks of blood descent from the thirteen who first made a pact with Asmodeus.

Malkizid is a solar who fell from grace when he betrayed the Seldarine. Ever since then, Malkizid has delighted in every wrong he can do to elves, but he gains the greatest pleasure when he manipulates the elves into harming each other.

Wendonai is the balor lord who first tempted the dark elves to summon demons in the ancient wars between the elf peoples. It also turned them to the worship of Lolth and continued to advise and tutor them for long after the Descent.

The Great Old One

Beyond the planes known to great wizards and sages lies the Far Realm of the Great Old Ones, beings outside time, space, and sanity. That realm is reachable by profane rituals and in the dreams of some of those drawn to those entities' power. Some of the blasphemous names associated with that place and its madness include the following:

Dendar the Night Serpent, Eater of the World, is said to be the spawn of the first nightmare, devourer of foul visions, and harbinger of the end of the world. Her warlocks frequently dream of Dendar's hiss and the dry rasp of her scales when they first realize their potential.

Ghaunadaur, That Which Lurks, Underdark god of aberrations, also known as the Elder Eye. It is worshiped (if such a word can be used) by slimes, oozes, and similar creatures.

Kezef the Chaos Hound is a black, skeletal mastiff covered in swarming maggots, its blood a black acid. The gods imprisoned Kezef in an unbreakable leash forged by Gond and a glowing ward conjured by Mystra, for which the Chaos Hound bit off Tyr's hand.

Moander is a dark power of corruption and decay. Those touched by its influence first receive a dream, the "seed of Moander," wherein the following words are heard: "Question not the words of Moander, lest you be stricken by the Eating From Within. Go forth and possess beings of power and influence for me. Slay, and let the rot cover all. Fear me, and obey."

Tyranthraxus, also called the Possessing Spirit and the Flamed One, seeks to rule the world through the bodies of others. Similar to the Earthmother, it uses magical pools as windows into the world to spread its influence.

Zargon, the Returner, also called the Invincible Tyrant, is said to be an undying and unkillable evil. Some stories claim Zargon was the original master of the Nine Hells. Others claim him to be a powerful Demon Prince exiled from the Abyss. Perhaps neither of these stories are true, but it can surely be said that Zargon is a power that inspires madness and terror.

Otherworldly Patron

Warlocks in the Forgotten Realms have the following Otherworldly Patron option, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

The Undying

Death holds no sway over your patron, who has unlocked the secrets of everlasting life, although such a prize—like all power—comes at a price. Once mortal, the Undying has seen mortal lifetimes pass like the seasons, like the flicker of endless days and nights. It has the secrets of the ages to share, secrets of life and death. Beings of this sort include Vecna, Lord of the Hand and the Eye; the dread Iuz; the lich-queen Vol; the Undying Court of Aerenal; Vlaakith, lich-queen of the githyanki; and the deathless wizard Fistandantalus.

In the Realms, Undying patrons include Larloch the Shadow King, legendary master of Warlock's Crypt, and Gilgeam, the God-King of Unther.

Expanded Spell List

The Undying lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Undying Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*false life, ray of sickness*
2nd	*blindness/deafness, silence*
3rd	*feign death, speak with dead*
4th	*aura of life, death ward*
5th	*contagion, legend lore*

Among the Dead

Starting at 1st level, you learn the *spare the dying* cantrip, which counts as a warlock cantrip for you. You also have advantage on saving throws against any disease.

Additionally, undead have difficulty harming you. If an undead targets you directly with an attack or a harmful spell, that creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC (an undead needn't make the save when it includes you in an area effect, such as the explosion of *fireball*). On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or forfeit targeting someone instead of you, potentially wasting the attack or spell. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for 24

hours. An undead is also immune to this effect for 24 hours if you target it with an attack or a harmful spell.

Defy Death

Starting at 6th level, you can give yourself vitality when you cheat death or when you help someone else cheat it. You can regain hit points equal to 1d8 + your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 hit point) when you succeed on a death saving throw or when you stabilize a creature with *spare the dying*.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Undying Nature

Beginning at 10th level, you can hold your breath indefinitely, and you don't require food, water, or sleep, although you still require rest to reduce exhaustion and still benefit from finishing short and long rests.

In addition, you age at a slower rate. For every 10 years that pass, your body ages only 1 year, and you are immune to being magically aged.

Indestructible Life

When you reach 14th level, you partake of some of the true secrets of the Undying. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d8 + your warlock level. Additionally, if you put a severed body part of yours back in place when you use this feature, the part reattaches.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Wizards

The First Hilt parried a clumsy axe swing and *caught the rhythm of the wizard's spell. It was one with which he was well familiar. Using his free hand, the bladesinger mirrored his opponent's casting then sent his considerable power out to surround the overmatched wizard, binding it to himself. Argent energy flew from the human's outstretched hand only to fizzle into nothingness as the bladesinger quenched the spell.*

—Keith Francis Strohm, *Bladesinger*

Scholars and practitioners of what they call "the Art" (see chapter 1 for details), wizards are the most disciplined spellcasters in the Forgotten Realms. They need to be, as their powers come from years of careful study and practice. Some wizards apprentice and study with an experienced master, while others attend formal academies or universities of wizardry, such as those in Evermeet or Halruaa, or in the great cities of the North like Waterdeep or Silverymoon.

With the intensity of their study and practice, wizards tend to become increasingly solitary as they advance in their Art, having fewer peers with whom they can share their insights, if they choose to share them with anyone at all. Thus great wizards often take up residence in isolated towers or strongholds, exhibiting ever more eccentric behavior as time goes on. Some say this is a mark of madness brought on by delving too deeply into arcane lore, but they never say it too loudly anywhere a wizard might overhear.

The greatest wizards of the Realms find means of extending their lives far beyond the span of any race except the elves. Archwizards may be centuries old, having seen civilizations rise and fall across Faerûn. Other wizards seeking this longevity turn to lichdom, dwelling in isolated tombs and strongholds as they withdraw from the world in body as well as mind.

Wizardly Groups

Many wizardly groups exist in the Forgotten Realms, but two, in particular, stand out.

The Red Wizards

The most infamous group of wizards in the Realms are the Red Wizards of Thay. Garbed in their distinctive red robes, the Red Wizards have sought to expand their power and to extend Thay's influence across the Realms, particularly in lands in the East. They shave their heads and wear complex tattoos reflecting their ambitions and achievements and their favored school of magic.

In Thay, the Red Wizards have ultimate power, although they give governance of day-to-day affairs to those without skill in the Art. Every Red Wizard devotes study to one of the eight schools of magic and serves that school's zulkir, the leader and ultimate master of that style of magic. The zulkirs and their underlings constantly vie with one another for power and influence, and this competition frequently sends Red Wizards far from Thay to seek new spells, recover lost artifacts, and create wealth that can flow back to Thay. The power the Red Wizards hold in Thay gives them a measure of diplomatic legitimacy in the lands of the Sword Coast and the North, but their presence is rarely welcome and is universally viewed with suspicion.

War Wizards

The potential for wizards to influence the outcome of battle is something no ruler in Faerûn can afford to ignore, and most great armies seek to recruit and include wizards among their ranks. Evokers are the most common, simply for the potential their spells have of inflicting the most damage to the greatest number of enemies. Still, all schools of magic find their applications in warfare.

The War Wizards of Cormyr are perhaps the best known application of the Art to the field of battle. As much soldiers as they are scholars, many of them were members of the Purple Dragons before they began their training in the Art. In addition to field duty in times of war, the War Wizards also protect the royalty of Cormyr, and each one swears a magic oath of service to the Crown. In this role, War Wizards serve as bodyguards, advisors, and even spies. Members of the royal family, Purple Dragon Knights, and officers of the Purple Dragons frequently wear magic rings that allow a War Wizards to know where they've gone and to scry upon them. Removing such a ring, even for innocent reasons, can call a cadre of battle-ready War Wizards to teleport nearby with attack spells already in the midst of being cast.

Mage Sigils

Wizards and many other arcane spellcasters develop a signature rune, which they use to identify their belongings, sign as their name, and warn others. As a mage gains in power, more individuals recognize the sigil and connect it with a mighty spellcaster, not to be trifled with. Some mage sigils are used in conjunction with spells such as *glyph of warding*, which enforces the tendency of ordinary people to shy away from items marked by such sigils. There are folktales, in fact, about the gods themselves punishing a person who misuse's a wizard's sigil—preposterous tales that were most likely started by wizards themselves. There is no set penalty for violating another mage's signature sigil or using it without permission. Powerful mages tend to punish such activity themselves to discourage further use.

Apprentice wizards in Faerûn are reminded of the dangers of misusing another spellcaster's sigil by a rhyme: "Whenever magic one doth weave / 'Tis never, ever, wise to deceive."

Arcane Tradition

Wizards in the Forgotten Realms have the following Arcane Tradition option, in addition to those in the *Player's Handbook*.

Bladesinging

Bladesingers are elves who bravely defend their people and lands. They are elf wizards who master a school of sword fighting grounded in a tradition of arcane magic. In combat, a bladesinger uses a series of intricate, elegant maneuvers that fend off harm and allow the bladesinger to channel magic into devastating attacks and a cunning defense.

Restriction: Elves Only

Only elves and half-elves can choose the bladesinger arcane tradition. In the world of Faerûn, elves closely guard the secrets of bladesinging.

Your DM can lift this restriction to better suit the campaign. The restriction reflects the story of bladesingers in the Forgotten Realms, but it might not apply to your DM's setting or your DM's version of the Realms.

Bladesinger Styles

From its inception as a martial and magical art, Bladesinging has been tied to the sword, more specifically the longsword. Yet many generations of study gave rise to various styles of Bladesinging based on the melee weapon employed. The techniques of these styles are passed from master to students in small schools, some of which have a building dedicated to instruction. Even the newest styles are hundreds of years old, but are still taught by their original creators due to the long lives of elves. Most schools of Bladesinging are in Evermeet or Evereska. One was started in Myth Drannor, but the city's destruction has scattered those students who survived.

Styles of Bladesinging are broadly categorized based on the type of weapon employed, and each is associated with a category of animal. Within that style are specializations named after specific animal types, based on the types of spells employed, the techniques of the master, and the particular weapon used. Bladesingers who apprentice to a master typically get a tattoo of their chosen style's animal. Some bladesingers learn multiple styles and bear many tattoos, wearing a warning on their skin of their deadly skills.

Cat. Styles that employ a sword belong to this family. The lion style, the eldest, trains practitioners in the use of the longsword and doesn't favor any particular type of spells. Leopard style focuses on the shortsword and spells of illusion and stealth. Red tiger, a style just three centuries old, has its bladesingers using the scimitar in a whirling dance of defense from which they launch into sudden leaps and attacks.

Bird. Styles that focus on the use of a hafted weapon, such as an axe or hammer, have been grouped together as bird styles, yet they vary wildly. All relatively new styles, they use weapons not typically favored by elves. Eagle-style bladesingers use small handaxes, and many maneuvers in the style focus on fluid ways to throw the weapon and draw a new one. Raven style uses a pick, and spells associated with it grant the bladesinger more agility in combat.

Snake. Practitioners of these styles use a flail, chain, or whip. Viper style uses a whip, despite its inelegance as a weapon, and has almost as long a history as the lion style. Its masters punctuate their bladesong with a stunningly rapid rhythm of whip cracks, which can keep many foes at bay and allow the bladesinger space to cast the cruel spells of poison and disease favored by the style.

Training in War and Song

When you adopt this tradition at 2nd level, you gain proficiency with light armor, and you gain proficiency with one type of one-handed melee weapon of your choice.

You also gain proficiency in the Performance skill if you don't already have it.

Bladesong

Starting at 2nd level, you can invoke a secret elven magic called the Bladesong, provided that you aren't wearing medium or heavy armor or using a shield. It graces you with supernatural speed, agility, and focus.

You can use a bonus action to start the Bladesong, which lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if you are incapacitated, if you don medium or heavy armor or a shield, or if you use two hands to make an attack with a weapon. You can also dismiss the Bladesong at any time you choose (no action required).

While your Bladesong is active, you gain the following benefits:

- You gain a bonus to your AC equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of +1).
- Your walking speed increases by 10 feet.
- You have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks.
- You gain a bonus to any Constitution saving throw you make to maintain your concentration on a spell. The bonus equals your Intelligence modifier (minimum of +1).

You can use this feature twice. You regain all expended uses of it when you finish a short or long rest.

Extra Attack

Starting at 6th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Song of Defense

Beginning at 10th level, you can direct your magic to absorb damage while your Bladesong is active. When you take damage, you can use your reaction to expend one spell slot and reduce that damage to you by an amount equal to five times the spell slot's level.

Song of Victory

Starting at 14th level, you add your Intelligence modifier (minimum of +1) to the damage of your melee weapon attacks while your Bladesong is active.

Cantrips for Sorcerers, Warlocks, and Wizards

Practitioners of the Art have developed the following cantrips for those who favor casting spells in melee. War Wizards of Cormyr, bladesingers, and warlocks of the Pact of the Blade are especially fond of these spells.

These cantrips are on the sorcerer, warlock, and wizard spell lists.

Booming Blade

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 5 feet
Components: V, M (a weapon)
Duration: 1 round

As part of the action used to cast this spell, you must make a melee attack with a weapon against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, the target suffers the attack's normal effects, and it becomes sheathed in booming energy until the start of your next turn. If the target willingly moves before then, it immediately takes 1d8 thunder damage, and the spell ends.

This spell's damage increases when you reach higher levels. At 5th level, the melee attack deals an extra 1d8 thunder damage to the target, and the damage the target takes for moving increases to 2d8. Both damage rolls increase by 1d8 at 11th level and 17th level.

Green-Flame Blade
Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 5 feet
Components: V, M (a weapon)
Duration: Instantaneous

As part of the action used to cast this spell, you must make a melee attack with a weapon against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, the target suffers the attack's normal effects, and green fire leaps from the target to a different creature of your choice that you can see within 5 feet of it. The second creature takes fire damage equal to your spellcasting ability modifier.

This spell's damage increases when you reach higher levels. At 5th level, the melee attack deals an extra 1d8 fire damage to the target, and the fire damage to the second creature increases to 1d8 + your spellcasting ability modifier. Both damage rolls increase by 1d8 at 11th level and 17th level.

Lightning Lure
Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 15 feet
Components: V
Duration: Instantaneous

You create a lash of lightning energy that strikes at one creature of your choice that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 10 feet in a straight line toward you and then take 1d8 lightning damage if it is within 5 feet of you.

This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

Sword Burst
Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 5 feet
Components: V
Duration: Instantaneous

You create a momentary circle of spectral blades that sweep around you. Each creature within range, other than you, must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 force damage.

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

Chapter 5: Backgrounds

THE BACKGROUNDS DESCRIBED IN THE *Player's Handbook* are all found in Faerûn's various societies, in some form or another. This chapter offers additional backgrounds for characters in a Forgotten Realms campaign, many of them specific to Faerûn or to the Sword Coast and the North in particular.

As in the *Player's Handbook*, each of the backgrounds presented here provides proficiencies, languages, and equipment, as well as a background feature and sometimes a variant form. For personality traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws, most of the backgrounds in this chapter use a thematically similar background in the *Player's Handbook* as their foundation.

City Watch

You have served the community where you grew up, standing as its first line of defense against crime. You aren't a soldier, directing your gaze outward at possible enemies. Instead, your service to your hometown was to help police its populace, protecting the citizenry from lawbreakers and malefactors of every stripe.

You might have been part of the City Watch of Waterdeep, the baton-wielding police force of the City of Splendors, protecting the common folk from thieves and rowdy nobility alike. Or you might have been one of the valiant defenders of Silverymoon, a member of the Silverwatch or even one of the magic-wielding Spellguard.

Perhaps you hail from Neverwinter and have served as one of its Wintershield watchmen, the newly founded branch of guards who vow to keep safe the City of Skilled Hands.

Even if you're not city-born or city-bred, this background can describe your early years as a member of law enforcement. Most settlements of any size have their own constables and police forces, and even smaller communities have sheriffs and bailiffs who stand ready to protect their community.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Insight
Languages: Two of your choice
Equipment: A uniform in the style of your unit and indicative of your rank, a horn with which to summon help, a set of manacles, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Watcher's Eye

Your experience in enforcing the law, and dealing with lawbreakers, gives you a feel for local laws and criminals. You can easily find the local outpost of the watch or a similar organization, and just as easily pick out the dens of criminal activity in a community, although you're more likely to be welcome in the former locations rather than the latter.

Variant: Investigator

Rarer than watch or patrol members are a community's investigators, who are responsible for solving crimes after the fact. Though such folk are seldom found in rural areas, nearly every settlement of decent size has at least one or two watch members who have the skill to investigate crime scenes and track down criminals. If your prior experience is as an investigator, you have proficiency in Investigation rather than Athletics.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the soldier background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a member of the city watch.

Your bond is likely associated with your fellow watch members or the watch organization itself and almost certainly concerns your community. Your ideal probably involves the fostering of peace and safety. An investigator is likely to have an ideal connected to achieving justice by successfully solving crimes.

Clan Crafter

The Stout Folk are well known for their artisanship and the worth of their handiworks, and you have been trained in that ancient tradition. For years you labored under a dwarf master of the craft, enduring long hours and dismissive, sour-tempered treatment in order to gain the fine skills you possess today.

You are most likely a dwarf, but not necessarily—particularly in the North, the shield dwarf clans learned long ago that only proud fools who are more concerned for their egos than their craft turn away promising apprentices, even those of other races. If you aren't a dwarf, however, you have taken a solemn oath never to take on an apprentice in the craft: it is not for non-dwarves to pass on the skills of Moradin's favored children. You would have no difficulty, however, finding a dwarf master who was willing to receive potential apprentices who came with your recommendation.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Insight
Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools
Languages: Dwarvish or one other of your choice if you already speak Dwarvish
Equipment: A set of artisan's tools with which you are proficient, a maker's mark chisel used to mark your handiwork with the symbol of the clan of crafters you learned your skill from, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp and a gem worth 10 gp

Feature: Respect of the Stout Folk

As well respected as clan crafters are among outsiders, no one esteems them quite so highly as dwarves do. You always have free room and board in any place where shield dwarves or gold dwarves dwell, and the individuals in such a settlement might vie among themselves to determine who can offer you (and possibly your compatriots) the finest accommodations and assistance.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the guild artisan background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit

your identity as a clan crafter. (For instance, consider the words "guild" and "clan" to be interchangeable.)

Your bond is almost certainly related to the master or the clan that taught you, or else to the work that you produce. Your ideal might have to do with maintaining the high quality of your work or preserving the dwarven traditions of craftsmanship.

Cloistered Scholar

As a child, you were inquisitive when your playmates were possessive or raucous. In your formative years, you found your way to one of Faerûn's great institutes of learning , where you were apprenticed and taught that knowledge is a more valuable treasure than gold or gems. Now you are ready to leave your home—not to abandon it, but to quest for new lore to add to its storehouse of knowledge.

The most well known of Faerûn's fonts of knowledge is Candlekeep. The great library is always in need of workers and attendants, some of whom rise through the ranks to assume roles of greater responsibility and prominence. You might be one of Candlekeep's own, dedicated to the curatorship of what is likely the most complete body of lore and history in all the world.

Perhaps instead you were taken in by the scholars of the Vault of the Sages or the Map House in Silverymoon, and now you have struck out to increase your knowledge and to make yourself available to help those in other places who seek your expertise. You might be one of the few who aid Herald's Holdfast, helping to catalogue and maintain records of the information that arrives daily from across Faerûn.

Skill Proficiencies: History, plus your choice of one from among Arcana, Nature, and Religion
Languages: Two of your choice
Equipment: The scholar's robes of your cloister, a writing kit (small pouch with a quill, ink, folded parchment, and a small penknife), a borrowed book on the subject of your current study, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Library Access

Though others must often endure extensive interviews and significant fees to gain access to even the most common archives in your library, you have free and easy access to the majority of the library, though it might also have repositories of lore that are too valuable, magical, or secret to permit anyone immediate access.

You have a working knowledge of your cloister's personnel and bureaucracy, and you know how to navigate those connections with some ease.

Additionally, you are likely to gain preferential treatment at other libraries across the Realms, as professional courtesy shown to a fellow scholar.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the sage background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a cloistered scholar.

Your bond is almost certainly associated either with the place where you grew up or with the knowledge you hope to acquire through adventuring. Your ideal is no doubt related to how you view the quest for knowledge and truth—perhaps as a worthy goal in itself, or maybe as a means to a desirable end.

Courtier

In your earlier days, you were a personage of some significance in a noble court or a bureaucratic organization. You might or might not come from an upper-class family; your talents, rather than the circumstances of your birth, could have secured you this position.

You might have been one of the many functionaries, attendants, and other hangers-on in the Court of Silverymoon, or perhaps you traveled in Waterdeep's baroque and sometimes cutthroat conglomeration of guilds, nobles, adventurers, and secret societies. You might have been one of the behind-the-scenes law-keepers or functionaries in Baldur's Gate or Neverwinter, or you might have grown up in and around the castle of Daggerford.

Even if you are no longer a full-fledged member of the group that gave you your start in life, your relationships with your former fellows can be an advantage for you and your adventuring comrades. You might undertake missions with your new companions that further the interest of the organization that gave you your start in life. In any event, the abilities that you honed while

serving as a courtier will stand you in good stead as an adventurer.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion
Languages: Two of your choice
Equipment: A set of fine clothes and a pouch containing 5 gp

Feature: Court Functionary

Your knowledge of how bureaucracies function lets you gain access to the records and inner workings of any noble court or government you encounter. You know who the movers and shakers are, whom to go to for the favors you seek, and what the current intrigues of interest in the group are.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the guild artisan background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a courtier.

The noble court or bureaucratic organization where you got your start is directly or indirectly associated with your bond (which could pertain to certain individuals in the group, such as your sponsor or mentor). Your ideal might be concerned with the prevailing philosophy of your court or organization.

Faction Agent

Many organizations active in the North and across the face of Faerûn aren't bound by strictures of geography. These factions pursue their agendas without regard for political boundaries, and their members operate anywhere the organization deems necessary. These groups employ listeners, rumormongers, smugglers, sellswords, cache-holders (people who guard caches of wealth or magic for use by the faction's operatives), haven keepers, and message drop minders, to name a few. At the core of every faction are those who don't merely fulfill a small function for that organization, but who serve as its hands, head, and heart.

As a prelude to your adventuring career (and in preparation for it), you served as an agent of a particular faction in Faerûn. You might have operated openly or secretly, depending on the faction and its goals, as well as how those goals mesh with your own. Becoming an adventurer doesn't necessarily require you to relinquish membership in your faction (though you can choose to do so), and it might enhance your status in the faction.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight and one Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma skill of your choice, as appropriate to your faction
Languages: Two of your choice
Equipment: Badge or emblem of your faction, a copy of a seminal faction text (or a code-book for a covert faction), a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp

Factions of the Sword Coast

The lack of large, centralized governments in the North and along the Sword Coast is likely directly responsible for the proliferation of secret societies and conspiracies in those lands. If your background is as an agent for one of the main factions of the North and Sword Coast, here are some possibilities.

The Harpers. Founded more than a millennium ago, disbanded and reorganized several times, the Harpers remain a powerful, behind-the-scenes agency, which acts to thwart evil and promote fairness through knowledge, rather than brute force. Harper agents are often proficient in Investigation, enabling them to be adept at snooping and spying. They often seek aid from other Harpers, sympathetic bards and innkeepers, rangers, and the clergy of gods that are aligned with the Harpers' ideals.

The Order of the Gauntlet. One of the newest power groups in Faerûn, the Order of the Gauntlet has an agenda similar to that of the Harpers. Its methods are vastly different, however: bearers of the gauntlet are holy warriors on a righteous quest to crush evil and promote justice, and they never hide in the shadows. Order agents tend to be proficient in Religion, and frequently seek aid from law enforcement friendly to the order's ideals, and the clergy of the order's patron gods.

The Emerald Enclave. Maintaining balance in the natural order and combating the forces that threaten that balance is the twofold goal of the Emerald Enclave. Those who serve the faction are masters of survival and living off the land. They are often proficient in Nature, and can seek assistance from woodsmen, hunters, rangers, barbarian tribes, druid circles, and priests who revere the gods of nature.

The Lords' Alliance. On one level, the agents of the Lords' Alliance are representatives of the cities and other governments that constitute the alliance. But, as a faction with interests and concerns that transcend local politics and geography, the Alliance has its own cadre of individuals who work on behalf of the organizations, wider agenda. Alliance agents are required to be knowledgeable in History, and can always rely on the aid of the governments that are part of the Alliance, plus other leaders and groups who uphold the Alliance's ideals.

The Zhentarim. In recent years, the Zhentarim have become more visible in the world at large, as the group works to improve its reputation among the common people. The faction draws employees and associates from many walks of life, setting them to tasks that serve the goals of the Black Network but aren't necessarily criminal in nature. Agents of the Black Network must often work in secret, and are frequently proficient in Deception. They seek aid from the wizards, mercenaries, merchants and priesthoods allied with the Zhentarim.

Feature: Safe Haven

As a faction agent, you have access to a secret network of supporters and operatives who can provide assistance on your adventures. You know a set of secret signs and passwords you can use to identify such operatives, who can provide you with access to a hidden safe house, free room and board, or assistance in finding information. These agents never risk their lives for you or risk revealing their true identities.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the acolyte background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a faction agent. (For instance, consider the words "faith" and "faction" to be interchangeable.)

Your bond might be associated with other members of your faction, or a location or an object that is important to your faction. The ideal you strive for is probably in keeping with the tenets and principles of your faction, but might be more personal in nature.

Far Traveler

Almost all of the common people and other folk that one might encounter along the Sword Coast or in the North have one thing in common: they live out their lives without ever traveling more than a few miles from where they were born.

You aren't one of those folk.

You are from a distant place, one so remote that few of the common folk in the North realize that it exists, and chances are good that even if some people you meet have heard of your homeland, they know merely the name and perhaps a few outrageous stories. You have come to this part of Faerûn for your own reasons, which you might or might not choose to share.

Although you will undoubtedly find some of this land's ways to be strange and discomfiting, you can also be sure that some things its people take for granted will be to you new wonders that you've never laid eyes on before. By the same token, you're a person of interest, for good or ill, to those around you almost anywhere you go.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Any one musical instrument or gaming set of your choice, likely something native to your homeland

Languages: Any one of your choice

Equipment: One set of traveler's clothes, any one musical instrument or gaming set you are proficient with, poorly wrought maps from your homeland that depict where you are in Faerûn, a small piece of jewelry worth 10 gp in the style of your homeland's craftsmanship, and a pouch containing 5 gp

Why Are You Here?

A far traveler might have set out on a journey for one of a number of reasons, and the departure from his or her homeland could have been voluntary or involuntary. To determine why you are so far from home, roll on the table below or choose from the options provided. The following section, discussing possible homelands, includes some suggested reasons that are appropriate for each location.

Why Are You Here?

d6	Reason	d6	Reason
1	Emissary	4	Pilgrim
2	Exile	5	Sightseer
3	Fugitive	6	Wanderer

Where Are You From?

The most important decision in creating a far traveler background is determining your homeland. The places discussed here are all sufficiently distant from the North and the Sword Coast to justify the use of this background.

Evermeet. The fabled elven islands far to the west are home to elves who have never been to Faerûn. They often find it a harsher place than they expected when they do make the trip. If you are an elf, Evermeet is a logical (though not mandatory) choice for your homeland.

Most of those who emigrate from Evermeet are either exiles, forced out for committing some infraction of elven law, or emissaries who come to Faerûn for a purpose that benefits elven culture or society.

Halruaa. Located on the southern edges of the Shining South, and hemmed in by mountains all around, the magocracy of Halruaa is a bizarre land to most in Faerûn who know about it. Many folk have heard of the strange skyships the Halruaans sail, and a few know of the tales that even the least of their people can work magic.

Halruaans usually make their journeys into Faerûn for personal reasons, since their government has a strict

stance against unauthorized involvement with other nations and organizations. You might have been exiled for breaking one of Halruaa's many byzantine laws, or you could be a pilgrim who seeks the shrines of the gods of magic.

Kara-Tur. The continent of Kara-Tur, far to the east of Faerûn, is home to people whose customs are unfamiliar to the folk of the Sword Coast. If you come from Kara-Tur, the people of Faerûn likely refer to you as Shou, even if that isn't your true ethnicity, because that's the blanket term they use for everyone who shares your origin.

The folk of Kara-Tur occasionally travel to Faerûn as diplomats or to forge trade relations with prosperous merchant cartels. You might have come here as part of some such delegation, then decided to stay when the mission was over.

Mulhorand. From the terrain to the architecture to the god-kings who rule over these lands, nearly everything about Mulhorand is alien to someone from the Sword Coast. You likely experienced the same sort of culture shock when you left your desert home and traveled to the unfamiliar climes of northern Faerûn. Recent events in your homeland have led to the abolition of slavery, and a corresponding increase in the traffic between Mulhorand and the distant parts of Faerûn.

Those who leave behind Mulhorand's sweltering deserts and ancient pyramids for a glimpse at a different life do so for many reasons. You might be in the North simply to see the strangeness this wet land has to offer, or because you have made too many enemies among the desert communities of your home.

Sossal. Few have heard of your homeland, but many have questions about it upon seeing you. Humans from Sossal seem crafted from snow, with alabaster skin and white hair, and typically dressed in white.

Sossal exists far to the northeast, hard up against the endless ice to the north and bounded on its other sides by hundreds of miles of the Great Glacier and the Great Ice Sea. No one from your nation makes the effort to cross such colossal barriers without a convincing reason. You must fear something truly terrible or seek something incredibly important.

Zakhara. As the saying goes among those in Faerûn who know of the place, "To get to Zakhara, go south. Then go south some more." Of course, you followed an equally long route when you came north from your place of birth. Though it isn't unusual for Zakharans to visit the southern extremes of Faerûn for trading purposes, few of them stray as far from home as you have.

You might be traveling to discover what wonders are to be found outside the deserts and sword-like mountains of your homeland, or perhaps you are on a pilgrimage to understand the gods that others worship, so that you might better appreciate your own deities.

The Underdark. Though your home is physically closer to the Sword Coast than the other locations discussed here, it is far more unnatural. You hail from one of the settlements in the Underdark, each of which has its own strange customs and laws. If you are a native of one of the great subterranean cities or settlements, you are probably a member of the race that occupies the place—but you might also have grown up there after being captured and brought below when you were a child.

If you are a true Underdark native, you might have come to the surface as an emissary of your people, or perhaps to escape accusations of criminal behavior (whether warranted or not). If you aren't a native, your reason for leaving "home" probably has something to do with getting away from a bad situation.

Feature: All Eyes on You

Your accent, mannerisms, figures of speech, and perhaps even your appearance all mark you as foreign. Curious glances are directed your way wherever you go, which can be a nuisance, but you also gain the friendly interest of scholars and others intrigued by far-off lands, to say nothing of everyday folk who are eager to hear stories of your homeland.

You can parley this attention into access to people and places you might not otherwise have, for you and your traveling companions. Noble lords, scholars, and merchant princes, to name a few, might be interested in hearing about your distant homeland and people.

Suggested Characteristics

Personality Trait

d6	Personality Trait
1	I have different assumptions from those around me concerning personal space, blithely invading others' space in innocence, or reacting to ignorant invasion of my own.
2	I have my own ideas about what is and is not food, and I find the eating habits of those around me fascinating, confusing, or revolting.
3	I have a strong code of honor or sense of propriety that others don't comprehend.
4	I express affection or contempt in ways that are unfamiliar to others.
5	I honor my deities through practices that are foreign to this land.
6	I begin or end my day with small traditional rituals that are unfamiliar to those around me.

Ideals

d6	Ideal
1	**Open.** I have much to learn from the kindly folk I meet along my way. (Good)
2	**Reserved.** As someone new to these strange lands, I am cautious and respectful in my dealings. (Lawful)
3	**Adventure.** I'm far from home, and everything is strange and wonderful! (Chaotic)
4	**Cunning.** Though I may not know their ways, neither do they know mine, which can be to my advantage. (Evil)
5	**Inquisitive.** Everything is new, but I have a thirst to learn. (Neutral)
6	**Suspicious.** I must be careful, for I have no way of telling friend from foe here. (Any)

Bonds

d6	Bond
1	So long as I have this token from my homeland, I can face any adversity in this strange land.
2	The gods of my people are a comfort to me so far from home.
3	I hold no greater cause than my service to my people.
4	My freedom is my most precious possession. I'll never let anyone take it from me again.
5	I'm fascinated by the beauty and wonder of this new land.
6	Though I had no choice, I lament having to leave my loved one(s) behind. I hope to see them again one day.

Flaws

d6	Flaw
1	I am secretly (or not so secretly) convinced of the superiority of my own culture over that of this foreign land.
2	I pretend not to understand the local language in order to avoid interactions I would rather not have.
3	I have a weakness for the new intoxicants and other pleasures of this land.
4	I don't take kindly to some of the actions and motivations of the people of this land, because these folk are different from me.
5	I consider the adherents of other gods to be deluded innocents at best, or ignorant fools at worst.
6	I have a weakness for the exotic beauty of the people of these lands.

Inheritor

You are the heir to something of great value—not mere coin or wealth, but an object that has been entrusted to you and you alone. Your inheritance might have come directly to you from a member of your family, by right of birth, or it could have been left to you by a friend, a mentor, a teacher, or someone else important in your life. The revelation of your inheritance changed your life, and might have set you on the path to adventure, but it could also come with many dangers, including those who covet your gift and want to take it from you—by force, if need be.

Skill Proficiencies: Survival, plus one from among Arcana, History, and Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of a gaming set or a musical instrument

Languages: Any one of your choice

Equipment: Your inheritance, a set of traveler's clothes, any items with which you are proficient, and a pouch containing 15 gp

Feature: Inheritance

Choose or randomly determine your inheritance from among the possibilities in the table below. Work with your Dungeon Master to come up with details: Why is your inheritance so important, and what is its full story? You might prefer for the DM to invent these details as part of the game, allowing you to learn more about your inheritance as your character does.

The Dungeon Master is free to use your inheritance as a story hook, sending you on quests to learn more about its history or true nature, or confronting you with foes who want to claim it for themselves or prevent you from learning what you seek. The DM also determines the properties of your inheritance and how they figure into the item's history and importance. For instance, the object might be a minor magic item, or one that begins with a modest ability and increases in potency with the passage of time. Or, the true nature of your inheritance might not be apparent at first and is revealed only when certain conditions are met.

When you begin your adventuring career, you can decide whether to tell your companions about your in-

heritance right away. Rather than attracting attention to yourself, you might want to keep your inheritance a secret until you learn more about what it means to you and what it can do for you.

Inheritance

d8	Object or Item
1	A document such as a map, a letter, or a journal
2–3	A trinket (see "Trinkets" in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*)
4	An article of clothing
5	A piece of jewelry
6	An arcane book or formulary
7	A written story, song, poem, or secret
8	A tattoo or other body marking

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the folk hero background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as an inheritor.

Your bond might be directly related to your inheritance, or to the person from whom you received it. Your ideal might be influenced by what you know about your inheritance, or by what you intend to do with your gift once you realize what it is capable of.

Knight of the Order

You belong to an order of knights who have sworn oaths to achieve a certain goal. The nature of this goal depends on the order you serve, but in your eyes it is without question a vital and honorable endeavor. Faerûn has a wide variety of knightly orders, all of which have a similar outlook concerning their actions and responsibilities.

Though the term "knight" conjures ideas of mounted, heavily armored warriors of noble blood, most knightly orders in Faerûn don't restrict their membership to such individuals. The goals and philosophies of the order are more important than the gear and fighting style of its members, and so most of these orders aren't limited to fighting types, but are open to all sorts of folk who are willing to battle and die for the order's cause.

The "Knightly Orders of Faerûn" sidebar details several of the orders that are active at present and is designed to help inform your decision about which group you owe allegiance to.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, plus one from among Arcana, History, Nature, and Religion, as appropriate for your order

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set or musical instrument

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: One set of traveler's clothes, a signet, banner or seal representing your place or rank in the order, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Knightly Regard

You receive shelter and succor from members of your knightly order and those who are sympathetic to its aims. If your order is a religious one, you can gain aid from temples and other religious communities of your deity. Knights of civic orders can get help from the community—whether a lone settlement or a great nation—that they serve, and knights of philosophical orders can find help from those they have aided in pursuit of their ideals, and those who share those ideals.

This help comes in the form of shelter and meals, and healing when appropriate, as well as occasionally risky assistance, such as a band of local citizens rallying to

Knightly Orders of Faerûn

Many who rightfully call themselves "knight" earn that title as part of an order in service to a deity, such as Kelemvor's Eternal Order or Mystra's Knights of the Mystic Fire. Other knightly orders serve a government, royal family, or are the elite military of a feudal state, such as the brutal Warlock Knights of Vaasa. Other knighthoods are secular and nongovernmental organizations of warriors who follow a particular philosophy, or consider themselves a kind of extended family, similar to an order of monks. Although there are organizations, such as the Knights of the Shield, that use the trappings of knighthood without necessarily being warriors, most folk of Faerûn who hear the word "knight" think of a mounted warrior in armor beholden to a code. Below are a few knightly organizations.

Knights of the Unicorn. The Knights of the Unicorn began as a fad of romantically minded sons and daughters of patriar families in Baldur's Gate. On a lark, they took the unicorn goddess Lurue as their mascot and went on various adventures for fun. The reality of the dangers they faced eventually sank in, as did Lurue's tenets. Over time the small group grew and spread, gaining a following in places as far as Cormyr. The Knights of the Unicorn are chivalric adventurers who follow romantic ideals: life is to be relished and lived with laughter, quests should be taken on a dare, impossible dreams should be pursued for the sheer wonder of their completion, and everyone should be praised for their strengths and comforted in their weaknesses.

Knights of Myth Drannor. Long ago, the Knights of Myth Drannor were a famous adventuring band, and Dove Falconhand, one of the famous Seven Sisters, was one of them. The band took its name to honor the great but fallen city, just as the new Knights of Myth Drannor do today. With the city once again in ruins, Dove Falconhand decided to reform the group with the primary goal of building alliances and friendship between the civilized races of the world and goodly people in order to combat evil. The Knights of Myth Drannor once again ride the roads of the Dalelands, and they've begun to spread to the lands beyond. Their members, each accepted by Dove herself, are above all valiant and honest.

Knights of the Silver Chalice. The Knights of the Silver Chalice was formed by edict of the demigod Siamorphe in Waterdeep a century ago. Siamorphe's ethos is the nobility's right and responsibility to rule, and the demigod is incarnated as a different noble mortal in each generation. By the decree of the Siamorphe at that time, the Knights of the Silver Chalice took it upon themselves to put a proper heir on the throne of Tethyr and reestablish order in that kingdom. Since then they have grown to be the most popular knighthood in Tethyr, a nation that has hosted many knighthoods in fealty to the crown.

aid a sorely pressed knight in a fight, or those who support the order helping to smuggle a knight out of town when he or she is being hunted unjustly.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the soldier background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a knight of your order.

Your bond almost always involves the order to which you belong (or at least key members of it), and it is highly unusual for a knight's ideal not to reflect the agenda, sentiment, or philosophy of one's order.

Mercenary Veteran

As a sell-sword who fought battles for coin, you're well acquainted with risking life and limb for a chance at a share of treasure. Now, you look forward to fighting foes and reaping even greater rewards as an adventurer. Your experience makes you familiar with the ins and outs of mercenary life, and you likely have harrowing stories of events on the battlefield. You might have served with a large outfit such as the Zhentarim or the soldiers of Mintarn, or a smaller band of sell-swords, maybe even more than one. (See the "Mercenaries of the North" sidebar for a collection of possibilities.)

Now you're looking for something else, perhaps greater reward for the risks you take, or the freedom to choose your own activities. For whatever reason, you're leaving behind the life of a soldier for hire, but your skills are undeniably suited for battle, so now you fight on in a different way.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Persuasion
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set, vehicles (land)
Equipment: A uniform of your company (traveler's clothes in quality), an insignia of your rank, a gaming set of your choice, and a pouch containing the remainder of your last wages (10 gp)

Feature: Mercenary Life

You know the mercenary life as only someone who has experienced it can. You are able to identify mercenary companies by their emblems, and you know a little about any such company, including the names and reputations of its commanders and leaders, and who has hired them recently. You can find the taverns and festhalls where mercenaries abide in any area, as long as you speak the language. You can find mercenary work between adventures sufficient to maintain a comfortable lifestyle (see "Practicing a Profession" under "Downtime Activities" in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the soldier background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a mercenary.

Mercenaries of the North

Countless mercenary companies operate up and down the Sword Coast and throughout the North. Most are small-scale operations that employ a dozen to a hundred folk who offer security services, hunt monsters and brigands, or go to war in exchange for gold. Some organizations, such as the Zhentarim, Flaming Fist, and the nation of Mintarn have hundreds or thousands of members and can provide private armies to those with enough funds. A few organizations operating in the North are described below.

The Chill. The cold and mysterious Lurkwood serves as the home of numerous groups of goblinoids that have banded together into one tribe called the Chill. Unlike most of their kind, the Chill refrains from raiding the people of the North and maintains relatively good relations so that they can hire themselves out as warriors. Few city-states in the North are willing to field an army alongside the Chill, but several are happy to quietly pay the Chill to battle the Uthgardt, orcs, trolls of the Evermoors, and other threats to civilization.

Silent Rain. Consisting solely of elves, Silent Rain is a legendary mercenary company operating out of Evereska. Caring little for gold or fame, Silent Rain agrees only to jobs that either promote elven causes or involve destroying orcs, gnolls, and the like. Prospective employers must leave written word (in Elvish) near Evereska, and the Silent Rain sends a representative if interested.

The Bloodaxes. Founded in Sundabar nearly two centuries ago, the Bloodaxes were originally a group of dwarves outcast from their clans for crimes against the teachings of Moradin Soulforger. They began hiring out as mercenaries to whoever in the North would pay them. Since then the mercenary company has broadened its membership to other races, but every member is an exile, criminal, or misfit of some sort looking for a fresh start and a new family among the bold Bloodaxes.

Your bond could be associated with the company you traveled with previously, or with some of the comrades you served with. The ideal you embrace largely depends on your worldview and your motivation for fighting.

Urban Bounty Hunter

Before you became an adventurer, your life was already full of conflict and excitement, because you made a living tracking down people for pay. Unlike some people who collect bounties, though, you aren't a savage who follows quarry into or through the wilderness. You're involved in a lucrative trade, in the place where you live, that routinely tests your skills and survival instincts. What's more, you aren't alone, as a bounty hunter in the wild would be: you routinely interact with both the criminal subculture and other bounty hunters, maintaining contacts in both areas to help you succeed.

You might be a cunning thief-catcher, prowling the rooftops to catch one of the myriad burglars of the city. Perhaps you are someone who has your ear to the street, aware of the doings of thieves' guilds and street gangs. You might be a "velvet mask" bounty hunter, one who blends in with high society and noble circles in order to catch the criminals that prey on the rich, whether pickpockets or con artists. The community where you plied your trade might have been one of Faerûn's great metropolises, such as Waterdeep or Baldur's Gate, or a less populous location, perhaps Luskan or Yartar—any place that's large enough to have a steady supply of potential quarries.

As a member of an adventuring party, you might find it more difficult to pursue a personal agenda that doesn't fit with the group's objectives—but on the other hand, you can take down much more formidable targets with the help of your companions.

Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from among Deception, Insight, Persuasion, and Stealth
Tool Proficiencies: Choose two from among one type of gaming set, one musical instrument, and thieves' tools
Equipment: A set of clothes appropriate to your duties and a pouch containing 20 gp

Feature: Ear to the Ground

You are in frequent contact with people in the segment of society that your chosen quarries move through. These people might be associated with the criminal underworld, the rough-and-tumble folk of the streets, or members of high society. This connection comes in the form of a contact in any city you visit, a person who provides information about the people and places of the local area.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the criminal background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your bounty hunter's traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a bounty hunter.

For instance, your bond might involve other bounty hunters or the organizations or individuals that employ you. Your ideal could be associated with your determination always to catch your quarry or your desire to maintain your reputation for being dependable.

Uthgardt Tribe Member

Though you might have only recently arrived in civilized lands, you are no stranger to the values of cooperation and group effort when striving for supremacy. You learned these principles, and much more, as a member of an Uthgardt tribe.

Your people have always tried to hold to the old ways. Tradition and taboo have kept the Uthgardt strong while the kingdoms of others have collapsed into chaos and ruin. But for the last few generations, some bands among the tribes were tempted to settle, make peace, trade, and even to build towns. Perhaps this is why Uthgar chose to raise up the totems among the people as living embodiments of his power. Perhaps they needed a reminder of who they were and from whence they came. The Chosen of Uthgar led bands back to the old ways, and most of your people abandoned the soft ways of civilization.

Barbarian Tribes of Faerûn

Though this section details the Uthgardt specifically, either it or the outlander background from the *Player's Handbook* can be used for a character whose origin lies with one of the other barbarian tribes in Faerûn.

You might be a fair-haired barbarian of the Reghed, dwelling in the shadow of the Reghed Glacier in the far North near Icewind Dale. You might also be of the nomadic Rashemi, noted for their savage berserkers and their masked witches. Perhaps you hail from one of the wood elf tribes in the Chondalwood, or the magic-hating human tribes of the sweltering jungles of Chult.

You might have grown up in one of the tribes that had decided to settle down, and now that they have abandoned that path, you find yourself adrift. Or you might come from a segment of the Uthgardt that adheres to tradition, but you seek to bring glory to your tribe by achieving great things as a formidable adventurer.

See the "Uthgardt Lands" section of chapter 2 for details on each tribe's territory and its activities that will help you choose your affiliation.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival
Tool Proficiencies: One type of musical instrument or artisan's tools
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A hunting trap, a totemic token or set of tattoos marking your loyalty to Uthgar and your tribal totem, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Uthgardt Heritage

You have an excellent knowledge of not only your tribe's territory, but also the terrain and natural resources of the rest of the North. You are familiar enough with any wilderness area that you find twice as much food and water as you normally would when you forage there.

Additionally, you can call upon the hospitality of your people, and those folk allied with your tribe, often including members of druid circles, tribes of nomadic elves, the Harpers, and the priesthoods devoted to the gods of the First Circle.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the outlander background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a member of an Uthgardt tribe.

Even if you have left your tribe behind (at least for now), you hold to the traditions of your people. You will never cut down a still-living tree, and you may not countenance such an act being done in your presence. The Uthgardt ancestral mounds—great hills where the totem spirits were defeated by Uthgar and where the heroes of the tribes are interred—are sacred to you.

Your bond is undoubtedly associated with your tribe or some aspect of Uthgardt philosophy or culture (perhaps even Uthgar himself). Your ideal is a personal choice that probably hews closely to the ethos of your people and certainly doesn't contradict or compromise what being an Uthgardt stands for.

Waterdhavian Noble

You are a scion of one of the great noble families of Waterdeep. Human families who jealously guard their privilege and place in the City of Splendors, Waterdhavian nobles have a reputation across Faerûn for being eccentric, spoiled, venal, and, above all else, rich.

Whether you are a shining example of the reason for this reputation or one who proves the rule by being an exception, people expect things of you when they know your surname and what it means. Your reasons for taking up adventuring likely involve your family in some way: Are you the family rebel, who prefers delving in filthy dungeons to sipping *zzar* at a ball? Or have you taken up sword or spell on your family's behalf, ensuring that they have someone of renown to see to their legacy?

Work with your DM to come up with the family you are part of—there are around seventy-five lineages in Waterdeep, each with its own financial interests, specialties, and schemes. You might be part of the main line of your family, possibly in line to become its leader one day. Or you might be one of any number of cousins, with less prestige but also less responsibility.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Persuasion
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set or one musical instrument
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a signet ring or brooch, a scroll of pedigree, a skin of fine *zzar* or wine, and a purse containing 20 gp

Feature: Kept in Style

While you are in Waterdeep or elsewhere in the North, your house sees to your everyday needs. Your name and signet are sufficient to cover most of your expenses; the inns, taverns, and festhalls you frequent are glad to record your debt and send an accounting to your family's estate in Waterdeep to settle what you owe.

This advantage enables you to live a comfortable lifestyle without having to pay 2 gp a day for it, or reduces the cost of a wealthy or aristocratic lifestyle by that amount. You may not maintain a less affluent lifestyle and use the difference as income—the benefit is a line of credit, not an actual monetary reward.

Suggested Characteristics

Use the tables for the noble background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as a member of a Waterdhavian family.

Like other nobles, you were born and raised in a different world from the one that most folk know—one that grants you privilege but also calls you to fulfill a duty befitting your station. Your bond might be associated with your family alone, or it could be concerned with another noble house that sides with or opposes your own. Your ideal depends to some extent on how you view your role in the family, and how you intend to conduct yourself in the world at large as a representative of your house.

Appendix: Class Options in Other Worlds

THE CLASS OPTIONS IN THIS BOOK ARE designed for the Forgotten Realms, but they can be easily transported to other official D&D worlds or to a world of your own creation. This appendix offers suggestions for modifying names and other elements of the character options in chapter 4.

None of the statements here should be treated as canonical for the D&D settings discussed. Instead, take them in the spirit of advice given from one DM to another on how to integrate these new character options into your campaign.

Dragonlance

Use the following guidelines to adapt this book's class options to a campaign set on Krynn.

Barbarian

Barbarians are most common among Kagonesti elves and human nomad tribes. Both groups have a healthy respect for the land and its creatures, and the tiger and elk totems both have devotees among them. While the folk of Ansalon know of elk, the griffon replaces the tiger as an object of respect.

The battlerager has no equivalent in the Dragonlance saga. A character opting for the Path of the Battlerager might be part of a gnomish attempt at inventing a new sort of armor, an effort that yielded a dangerous but effective fighting style. It's up to the player whether the barbarian's rage stems from a set of tactics developed for use with the gnome-created spiked armor or from sheer frustration at having to turn to the mad tinker gnomes for help.

Cleric

The Arcana Domain has no established place in Dragonlance. The gods of magic are patrons of the Wizards of High Sorcery. Spellcasters revere the deity appropriate to their order through the study and mastery of arcane magic, rather than through divine power. However, clerics devoted to the neutral gods Gilean (god of knowledge) and Zivilyn (god of wisdom) might have the Arcana Domain.

Fighter

The Purple Dragon Knight is an ideal match for the Knights of Solamnia, specifically a Knight of the Rose. As leaders of their order, Knights of the Rose are expected to provide wisdom, inspiration, and guidance to the knights in all situations.

Monk

Few monks are found on Krynn, but those active in the world fall into two camps.

The Way of the Long Death provides a good match for those evil monks who worship Sargonnas. The minotaurs who follow Sargas sometimes follow this path, but most prefer the martial aspect of the Way of the Open Hand.

The Way of the Sun Soul could be used to represent followers of Sirrion, god of creativity, passion, fighters, and fire. Sirrion is said to sculpt the fire of the soul, and these monks seek to sculpt their minds and bodies so that all three act in unison, making instinct and action one and the same.

Paladin

The Oath of the Crown is a perfect match for any paladin who is a member of the Knights of the Sword or Knights of the Skull. Both orders swear fealty to an organization and combine spellcasting and martial skill.

Rogue

The Mastermind matches well with any character of cunning, intelligence, and insight who might be involved in court intrigue. But it also serves as a good way to portray a cunning pirate captain from the Blood Sea Isles.

The Swashbuckler provides another option for characters who hail from that region. Serving as pirates or mariners plying the Blood Sea, a Swashbuckler's emphasis on speed and light armor is ideal for an environment where heavy armor is little more than a deadly anchor.

Warlock

The warlock character class has yet to be depicted in the Dragonlance setting. That said, warlocks of various types might be individuals who make promises to the gods in return for power, and the Undying patron is a good match for a character who seeks to follow in the footsteps of a long dead but mighty wizard.

Wizard

Bladesinging is a good option for elf warriors of the Qualinesti or Silvanesti. Like the heroic Gilthanas, a bladesinger combines a study of arcane magic with a mastery of the blade.

Eberron

Use the following guidelines to adapt this book's class options to a campaign set on Eberron.

Barbarian

The Path of the Battlerager is a great fit for a warforged barbarian trained for close quarters battle and with a chassis modified to incorporate spikes, blades, and other weapons. These warforged made ideal shock troops during the Last War. The few that survive have little choice but to continue martial pursuits, as their frames are suited for little else.

The new totem warrior options are an obvious choice for barbarians with an affinity for a tiger or an elk. The option can also reflect an Argonnessen barbarian's ties

to a specific dragon type. Use the tiger totem for a red dragon totem and the elk for a silver dragon totem.

Cleric

The Arcana Domain maps to the portfolios overseen by Aureon of the Sovereign Host and the Shadow from the Dark Six. Blood of Vol cultists who are clerics can also take this domain.

Fighter

With the Last War in the recent past, the Purple Dragon Knight's role as a combat leader can apply to any fighter who served in one of Khorvaire's militaries as an officer. Soldiers from Karrnath, with its strong martial tradition, are especially likely to choose this option.

Monk

The Way of the Long Death captures the cruel and sinister nature of monks devoted to the Mockery. In contrast, the Way of the Sun Soul is the perfect option for monks dedicated to the Silver Flame, especially those who also take levels in the paladin class.

Paladin

The Oath of the Crown represents paladins who place loyalty to their sovereign ruler above all other concerns. The military tradition of Karrnath produces paladins who take this oath, especially those whose fanaticism leads them to join the Order of the Emerald Claw.

Rogue

Both the Mastermind and the Swashbuckler are perfectly at home in the city of Sharn. In addition, the ranks of the dragonmarked houses are filled with scheming, adventurous entrepreneurs best captured by the Mastermind's abilities.

While the Mastermind lacks a specific ability in investigation, pairing it with the right skill selections and ability scores (a high Wisdom is a must) yields a good model for an inquisitive.

Sorcerer

Storm Sorcery is a natural match for House Lyrandar. Drawing on the power conferred by that house's dragonmark, a Lyrandar storm sorcerer can help guide ships through the air and across the sea. Such sorcerers are likely elite members of the house, since they can guarantee safe passage through dangerous weather.

Warlock

The elves of Aerenal are an ideal match for the Undying. Some of these elves enter pacts with their deathless ancestors, pledging service and obedience in return for ancient secrets of the elves that unlock magical powers, as well as mastery over the undead.

Wizard

Bladesingers can be found in Aundair, serving as specially trained agents of the Arcane Congress. Bladesingers are specifically tasked with protecting the congress's secrets and ensuring that they never fall into the wrong hands. At times, they are dispatched to distant lands in search of magic items long thought lost or to deal with nascent, magical threats before they grow too dangerous.

Greyhawk

Use the following guidelines to adapt this book's class options to a campaign set on Oerth.

Barbarian

Barbarians are common throughout the northern reaches of Oerik. From the lands of the Wolf Nomads to the enclaves of the Ice Barbarians, these characters venture south in search of loot, glory, and power. Others are exiles, forced to leave their homeland under penalty of death.

The Path of the Battlerager lacks a direct analog on Oerth. Most likely, a battlerager could be of any race and formerly trained as a pit fighter by the vicious Slave Lords. The Slave Lords are a much-feared cabal who direct raids on seaside communities, carrying off prisoners to a wretched life of servitude. A battlerager might be one such unfortunate victim. A prisoner who shows signs of martial aptitude might be trained in an exotic fighting style sure to fetch a high price from a bloodthirsty buyer.

The tiger totem is an easy match for barbarians who hail from the realm of the Tiger Nomads. The elk totem is most common among the Rovers of the Barrens, preserving an ancient Flan tradition.

Cleric

The Arcana Domain is a perfect match for clerics of Boccob. They are charged with using their abilities to seek out lost magic items and to help counter the slow but relentless disappearance of magic from Oerth.

Fighter

The Purple Dragon Knight's focus on combat leadership makes it the ideal model for the Knights of the Watch. Charged with protecting the lands of Bissel, Gran March, Geoff, and Keoland from Baklunish incursions, these knights combine strict discipline, a near-monastic way of life, and ample study of battle tactics and strategy to remain vigilant against attack.

Monk

Monks are relatively rare on Oerth, with the notable exception of the sinister Scarlet Brotherhood.

Among the Scarlet Brotherhood, the Way of the Long Death is a secretive technique taught to those who combine the brotherhood's expertise in unarmed fighting with its preference for assassination to remove troublesome enemies.

The Way of the Sun Soul is a perfect fit for monks who worship Pholtus or Pelor. The monastic orders among the Baklunish lands could easily yield an order of monks dedicated to Al'Akbar.

Paladin

The Oath of the Crown can represent a wide variety of paladins associated with various knightly orders across the Flanaess. The Knights of the Hart are the perfect faction for this type of paladin. In addition, paladins associated with the Great Kingdom likely take this oath.

Rogue

The City of Greyhawk is known as the City of Thieves for good reason. Its thieves' guild exerts power across the world. Nestled at the center of the Flanaess's economic network, the guild and the city it rules has a hand in almost every business deal across the region.

The Mastermind archetype is the perfect way to represent an ambitious member of Greyhawk's thieves' guild. Willing to take a personal risk on a job but more comfortable directing muscle, this flavor of rogue is a great match for a character who wants to follow in the footsteps of Nerof Gasgol and rise to political and economic power.

Rakes and bravos are common throughout the cities of the Flanaess. A Swashbuckler can thus originate from almost any city, but among the Rhennee in particular, Swashbucklers are common. As travelers along waterways, they have learned that a quick, mobile approach to combat works best.

Warlock

Warlocks are relatively rare in Greyhawk, but as Iuz has ascended to power, he has begun to offer power directly to those who choose to serve him. Some of the other mysterious powers of Oerth, most notably Vecna and Tharizdun, also offer pacts to warlocks who dare contact them.

Both Iuz and Vecna fit the Undying patron's role. Iuz, in particular, uses offers of power to corrupt and subvert folk among his enemies. He offers easy bargains and great power to those in the realms of Furyondy and Veluna who are willing to subvert those states from within. Some warlocks relish their role as turncoats, a few others turn against Iuz, and still others take his power and use it to their own ends.

Wizard

Bladesingers form an elite cadre of warrior-mages in the kingdom of Celene. Some of these agents work beyond Celene's borders, wielding blade and magic against the queen's enemies. The art of the blade song is unknown beyond that kingdom; no non-elf has learned its secrets.

Homemade Worlds

Running your campaign in a world of your own creation? Here are tips for introducing some of this book's character options to your world, skipping options that have obvious applications in a world.

Barbarian

The Path of the Battlerager is somewhat difficult to incorporate into a setting because of its idiosyncratic nature. It provides a good match for pit fighters, berserkers, and gladiators. Its reliance on armor provides a good cultural touchstone for dwarf characters, as befits its role in the Realms. Alternatively, you could use the battlerager as the basis for a militant religious order in your world, especially one focused on cruelty or fury.

For the tiger and elk totems, conversion is simply a matter of replacing them with more suitable animals (if necessary).

Cleric

The concept of a goddess of magic is important to the Realms. If your campaign lacks a deity concerned with magic, the Arcana Domain works well for religious orders charged with hunting down or policing arcane spellcasters. If your world strikes a conflict between arcane and divine magic, this domain provides the divine faction's mage hunters.

Fighter

The Purple Dragon Knight captures the essence of a bold battlefield strategist. It provides a framework for a mercenary captain, a member of an elite order of warriors, or a noble charged with leading vassals into battle.

Monk

You've probably noticed that the Way of the Long Death and the Way of the Sun Soul are both handy tools for modeling monastic orders at opposite ends of the alignment spectrum. A particularly sinister order is a good match for the Long Death, while a heroic order follows the Way of the Sun Soul.

Paladin

The Oath of the Crown's utility for your campaign comes from its ability to capture neutral paladins, those whose code of conduct is focused on the law rather than on moral principles. Its divine spellcasting makes it tricky to use as a tool for every knightly order, but it's a great option for a theocracy. You could also decide that the spells a paladin casts aren't divine in origin, but arcane.

Sorcerer

Storm Sorcery is a good match for an arcane order supported by a powerful seagoing culture. These sorcerers might form an elite cadre of sea captains, helping a kingdom dominate the sea through trade or raiding.

Warlock

The Undying patron is a great option for the agents of a powerful lich king, necromancer, or other undead ruler. These warlocks are also useful for portraying any cult or organization focused on a powerful, undead figure from your campaign's past.

Wizard

The bladesinger's flavor makes it more than just a warrior/mage in the Forgotten Realms. In your campaign, consider using it to model an order of elf knights or an elite group of warriors trained to protect the rulers of a magocracy.

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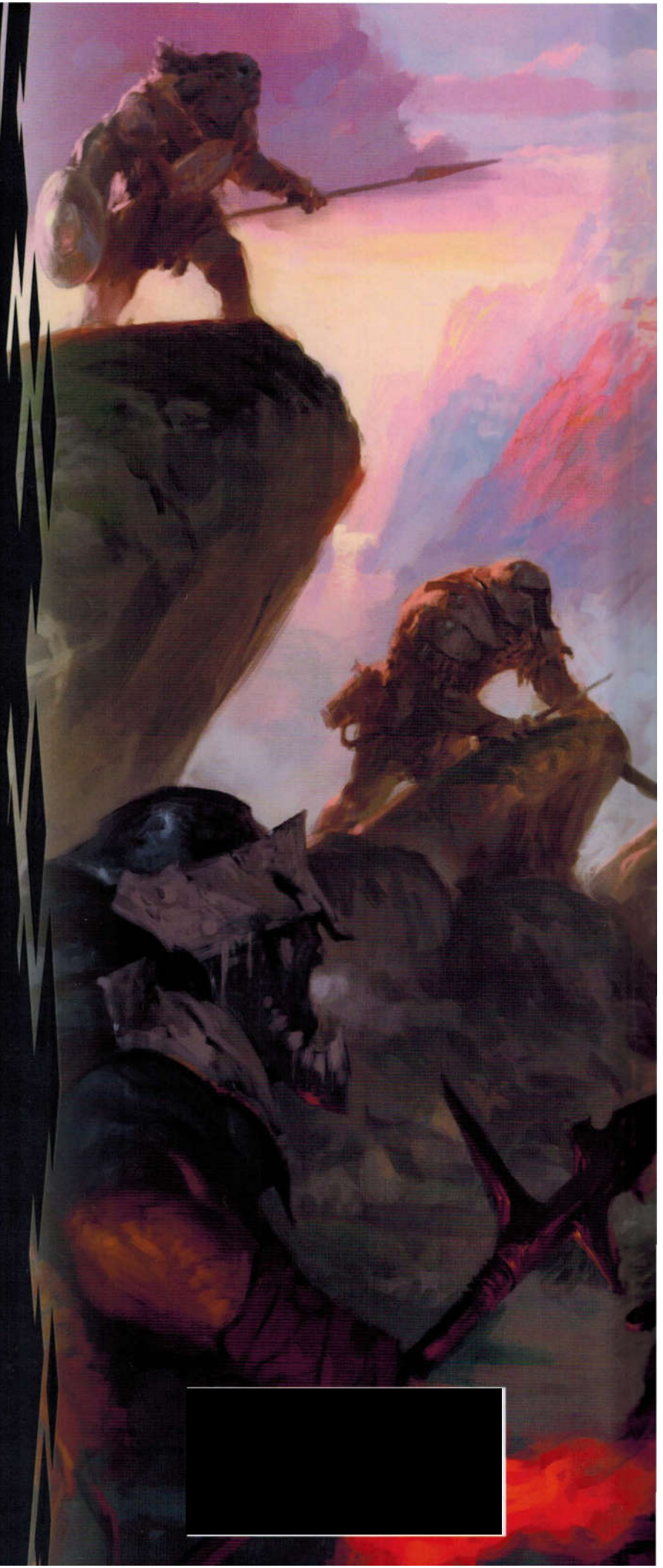

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