

Desna

Let each dream be a bright star in the night sky of your mind, and let it light your path in the day.

SONG OF THE SPHERES

Goddess of dreams, stars, travelers, and luck

Alignment CG

Domains Chaos, Good, Liberation, Luck, Protection

Favored Weapon Starknife

Centers of Worship Kyonin, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Nidal, Numeria, River Kingdoms, Ustalav, Varisia

Nationality: Varisian

While the other gods created the world, legend holds that Desna was busy placing stars in the heavens above, content to allow the other deities to forge a world full of wonders for her and her faithful to explore. Since that day, all those who look up to the stars find themselves captivated by the endless mysteries of the sky. Trailblazers, scouts, adventurers, and sailors praise her name, as do caravaneers and those who travel for business, and her luck makes her a favorite of gamblers and thieves. Desna is depicted as a comely elven woman, clad in billowing gowns with brightly colored butterfly wings on her back, usually surrounded by clouds of butterflies.

Desna is an impulsive and aloof goddess who delights in freedom, discovery, and mystery. Her aloofness stems not from arrogance but from confidence in her own abilities and her desire to be unburdened by troubles. She is a collection of contrasts—an ancient goddess who dislikes predicting the future, a traveler who cares nothing for her destination, a carefree creature of instinct haunted by a past stretching back eons, and a peaceful deity forced to battle with old enemies, eternally young despite the weight of ages and stars upon her.

Some believe Desna is flighty, frivolous, and easily distracted, but she has a hard, cold side that few see, born of loss, tragedy, and battle. As a luck goddess, she always believes there is a chance for success. She knows that people fear the unknown, that dreams can turn to nightmares, and a bright destiny can become a dark fate; these opposites in her own nature define her and give her things to strive against. She challenges those who would corrupt her domain or have wronged her friends or followers.

Desna prefers to intervene in the form of dreams, sending simple impressions, visions, or even prophecies that the sleeper clearly remembers upon awakening. Rarely, a follower in need might awaken with the benefit

of a minor helpful spell that persists throughout the day. When dreams are unsuitable or time is short, she indicates her favor with flights of swallowtail butterflies, sparrows, dragonflies, geese flying in a four-pointed star shape, or the timely arrival of messenger birds. She shows her disfavor with a dreamless sleep that fails to refresh the sleeper (as if the person had not slept at all), sore feet, messenger animals losing their messages, and minor travel accidents.

Desna's avatar is a beautiful but coy female elven acolyte of her faith. When she wishes to reveal her true nature, her clothing becomes a billowing silken gown and she grows brightly colored butterfly wings on her back, although in somber situations her wing colors are pale and moth-like. Her herald is the Night Monarch, a butterfly-like outsider the size of a dragon. Notable outsiders who serve her are Nightspear (a fierce avoral), the Prince of the Night Sky (an arrogant djinn), and Sorrowbrand (a dramatic lillend).

Desna remains cautious about leaving herself vulnerable to others, though she encourages even godly paramours to explore and discover new things while they try to court her. Cayden Cailean has made attempts to woo Desna, a flirtation she finds endearing and that reminds her of her own youth. She battles Zon-Kuthon because she wants the night to remain a time of wonder rather than of fear and oppression, Rovagug contests for the void of space where her stars reside, and her battles with Ghlaunder and Lamashtu are ongoing. Desna's only sources of comfort among the deities are Sarenrae, who tends to her wounds after battling the evils of the night, and Shelyn, who ever reinvigorates her spirits and creates new wonders to be explored.

Priests, Temples, and the Church

Priests of Desna—cleric, bard, ranger, or the rare druid—go where they please, earning money by telling fortunes, providing entertainment, and interpreting dreams as messages from the goddess. They help people where they can, preferring to make their acts seem like luck, coincidence, or the blessings of their goddess. Many caravan masters like to hire a priest of Desna to accompany their wagons (as they believe it brings good luck, especially in regard to warding off attacks from beasts), and this gives the priest an excuse to travel when she has no other pressing matters. Many of Desna's faithful are talented artists, writers, and entertainers, and the church expects all priests to at least be familiar with contemporary music, theater, and literature.

Some Desnans are skilled fortune-tellers and dream-interpreters. They oppose the use of divination to create fear or despair, and brush off unhappy requests such as when someone might die. Her diviners challenge any speaker who prophesies ill, misfortune, or doom, and when