

Erastil

The first gift you ever receive is your family.

OLD DEADEYE

God of farming, hunting, trade, and family

Alignment LG

Domains Animal, Community, Good, Law, Plant

Favored Weapon Longbow

Centers of Worship Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Isger, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Molthune, Nirmathas, River Kingdoms, Varisia

Nationality Ulfen

Worship of Erastil dates back to before the Age of Darkness, when early man began to domesticate and dominate his natural surroundings. Pastoral legends claim that Old Deadeye crafted the first bow as a gift to mortals so that they might learn to hunt and survive in the dangerous world. Though cities have sprung up over the world and roads connect them, Erastil still watches over the rural territories and wild lands where people live much as they did a thousand years ago. In many cases, art depicts him fighting off wild animals and other beasts.

Erastil is a fatherly mentor-figure, not one who spouts philosophy but instead gives practical advice and hands-on teaching. Stern but loving toward his mortal children, Erastil is a protector and a provider. He believes it is man's duty to help others, cooperation leads to friendship and safety, and if man respect the gifts of nature she will sustain him. He loves old customs that encourage strong family bonds, no matter how quaint they are by modern standards, and enjoys hunting for sustenance but not for sport. Happy weddings and new babies make him smile.

Most of his worshipers have never set foot in a city, instead living in rustic villages, lonely shacks, or quiet towns on the border of untamed land, content to lead lives of simplicity. Erastil's followers often mount carved wooden placards depicting their god's image above their fireplaces, not as a worshiped icon of their patron but as a reminder of his presence; in some places a stuffed elk's head or even a pair of elk horns serves this purpose.

Old Deadeye shows his approval through bountiful hunts and harvests, but he prefers to limit his direct intervention to helping needy people in lean times, as he does not want to encourage laziness. A hungry family might find their tiny garden provides bushels of vegetables, an old cow might start giving milk again, a weary hunter's prey might stumble or become entangled,

and so on. Any hooved animal may be a channel for his power. His anger is reserved for followers who betray his principles, and he usually punishes them by changing them into something more useful to their community, such as a pig or fruit tree.

Erastil's avatar is an upright old trapper with weathered skin, clad in well-used leathers, and carrying a simple bow (halflings and humans view him as a member of their own race, but otherwise his appearance is always the same). Sometimes he has the head of an elk, usually when he is angry or must battle.

His herald is the Grim White Stag, a moon-pale stag 30 feet tall at the shoulder, with saplings instead of antlers and legs wrapped in green vines. Erastil's legendary companions are the truffle-hunting boar Proudsnout, the reckless treant Scorchbark, and the shapechanging eagle-archer Blackfeather.

Erastil can be gruff and reserved, but he is still on good terms with most of the non-evil deities of Golarion. He understands Abadar's drive but believes the "golden boy" has lost his moral compass in the pursuit of civilization and wealth. Some stories describe Sarenrae as his daughter, others as his wife or sister. He has found a balance with Gozreh, dislikes Gorum for his war mongering, and keeps the unstable Nethys at arm's length.

Priests, Temples, and the Church

Most priests of Erastil are clerics, with a few druids and paladins in the mix. Druids are more common in lands where natural hazards make life difficult, paladins in lands where monsters and active evil threaten survival. Many rangers serve Erastil, but their relative lack of healing magic means they rarely take a priest-like role in the community. Explorers have reported primitive villages in very remote areas led by adepts of Erastil, but these settlements are no more than two or three families of hunter-gatherers, usually lacking even basic skills in metalworking. Priests administer to the people less through sermons and more by deed, always willing to share their knowledge for the betterment of the community. Though the god is sometimes shown with an elk's head, his people have no taboos about hunting elk, for the animals are good source of food and leather and can thrive in most areas.

Erastil's church has changed little from the early centuries of its existence, partly because of the attention of his druids who existed long before there were ever priests of the faith. Though they are a minority among the clergy, all priests respect the druids for maintaining the traditions that have allowed humans and halflings to survive wars, natural disasters, and supernatural cataclysms. They also