

# Class Chronicles

## Beguilers and Dragon Shamans

Eytan Bernstein



The classes found in *Player's Handbook II*, as well in the Complete Books, *Miniatures Handbook*, and other sources, can add depth, variety, and freshness to a game. Many people already use these classes in their *Forgotten Realms* games but wish more information was available about how the classes fit into the world.

This article is the first in a series that will provide information on how the PHB II classes can be incorporated into the Realms. All of this information is optional. At the end of each entry, alternative ideas are listed for how to include the history and lore written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

### Beguilers

Beguilers first appeared among churches dedicated to the preservation and guarding of secrets. They were sorcerers trained to focus on illusion and enchantment. Young children with sorcerous potential were chosen to be raised in the church and taught its deepest secrets. High priests relied on beguilers to weave webs of deceit that concealed and preserved the knowledge of their faith.

The faiths that most frequently used beguilers included Gargauth, Mask, Leira, Sehanine Moonbow, Shar, and Baravar Cloakshadow. In recent years, these faiths have experienced a variety of changes and conflicts that drove away or expelled their beguilers. With the exception of the church of Baravar, no more beguilers are linked to churches in Faerun.

Among Gargauthans, beguilers served an incredibly important role. Using their magical abilities, they wove webs to conceal the vast conspiracies and corruptions set in motion by "the Tenth Lord of Nine." When secrets began leaking out and spoiling many of the church's plans, the beguilers suffered horrible punishments. During the Time of Troubles, they were blamed for the unraveling of many of the church's schemes. With increasing punishments -- maiming, horrible scarification, and other tortures -- the beguilers abandoned "the Hidden Lord's faith." They are now hunted by the Gargauthans to destroy the secrets they possess.

The beguilers of Mask and Leira formed a single organization known as Demarch's Alliance, which served both churches. It is unknown who or what Demarch was, and the remaining former members won't provide any details. When Mask betrayed Leira, an irreconcilable rift opened in the alliance. In the Halls of Demarch -- a secret guildhall hidden beneath Tantras -- a massive battle known as Demarch's Fall was fought between the two factions. In bloody, mist-shrouded skirmishes, the beguilers of Mask and Leira tore each other to pieces, leaving behind an undead-infested network of tunnels obscured in fog. Surviving members fled to all corners of Faerun, fearing retribution and the "reacquisition" of the secrets they possessed.

Of all the churches formerly employing beguilers, the situation in the faith of Sehanine Moonbow is most surprising. It is unknown precisely what occurred to anger "the Luminous Cloud," but rumors abound. According to the most oft repeated, in the Year of Lightning Storms, "the Lady of Dreams" became furious with the beguilers of her faith. They fled from her temples, using their superior powers of illusion to conceal themselves from the elven deity's clergy. Whatever crime they committed must have been dire, for followers of Sehanine are tasked with bringing back the rogue mages dead or alive.

The Church of Shar expelled its beguilers, no longer finding any use for their abilities. The primary task of the beguilers of Shar was to conceal the existence of the Shadow Weave. When the "Lady of Loss" revealed its existence, openly flaunting her masterful creation, their usefulness waned. The beguilers were forced out of the church, sometimes violently.

The church made little effort to hunt them down at that time. It is now beginning to regret letting them go because of their knowledge of secrets that could be compromising to the faith.

When rogue beguilers ran from their churches, they used their abilities to conceal their whereabouts. They taught their abilities to young people with sorcerous potential, hoping to foster apprentices for protection and to carry on their legacies. Most of the runaways remained independent from any groups, but a few joined organizations or became operatives for governments -- a job their training and experience left them well prepared for. Benevolent beguilers have been found among the Harpers, Guardians of the Weave, Lords' Alliance, Moonstars, and Soft Claws. Malevolent beguilers have joined the ranks of the Cult of the Dragon, the Shadow Thieves, the Twisted Rune, and the Zhentarim.

The only church that hasn't lost its beguilers is that of Baravar Cloakshadow. Gnomes who worship other deities claim that The Sly One's faith is becoming increasingly twisted and insular. While no formal organization exists among the clergy, the change seems universal, as if the god himself is infecting his followers with increasing paranoia. The chosen of that faith, Embrel Berrodwyn (NG Male Gnome Beguiler 4/Favored Soul 4/Mystic



Theurge 10) is rumored to be close to Baravar's goal of concealing all gnomes from detection. Even the Knights of the Shadowy Cloak are affected, becoming more aggressive in their fight against the gnomes' eternal enemies.

For those wishing to use the history of the beguilers without incorporating the class into their games, here is an alternative. A beguiler can be replaced by a sorcerer with a large number of enchantment and illusion spells. The arcane trickster class allows a sorcerer/rogue to have both powerful spells and rogue abilities, much in the same way as a beguiler. Embrel's levels in beguiler and favored soul can be replaced by levels in sorcerer and cleric, still allowing him to qualify as a mystic theurge.

## Dragon Shamans

While not particularly common, dragon shamans are found among barbarian tribes that worship or live in close vicinity to dragons. Scholars postulate that these shamans learn their powers from a dragon that lairs near their territory. Some dragon shamans can be found in more civilized lands, but the insular tribes are more likely to develop dragon cults.

Several dragon shamans live among the barbarians of the Far Hills. These barbarians form small, tight-knit cults of dragon worship led by their dragon shamans. The barbarian tribe of the Earthrust Mountains known as "the Lost" has worshipped dragons for over 100 years. Their first dragon god was red, but they have also worshipped a brass dragon. There have been cases of dragon worship among the Uthgardt barbarians of the Great Worm Tribe. These are relatively rare -- evil dragons usually don't have the patience and restraint necessary for this, and most good dragons find it distasteful. Other cults exist among the tribes of the North and the island barbarians in the Sea of Swords.



The Cult of the Dragon does worship dragons in its own way, but only a handful of dragon shamans have been recorded among its ranks. It is more common for "civilized" dragon cults to pop up when charismatic leaders ally themselves with dragons for power. As with most cults, the leader attracts the downtrodden -- orphans, victims of abuse, widows, and the homeless -- by promising them a better life in return for their worship of a dragon (or dragons). The most well known instance of this was in the Year of the Tusk. A cult formed near Myth Drannor that worshipped a small group of green dragons. The cult kidnapped locals, offering grisly sacrifices to the greens. It was eventually discovered and destroyed, but it did significant damage to the area before its demise.

The worship of dragons is more common among humanoid tribes than it is among humans. At least three orcish cults in the High Moor worship red and blue dragons. These are quite entrenched in the region, having been there for several hundred years. These tribes tend to include some of the most fanatic worshippers, instilling unshakeable loyalty in their dragon gods. Dragon shamans are found most frequently among orcs, but they also exist among kobolds and lizardfolk.

For those wishing to use the history of the dragon shamans without incorporating the class into their games, here is an alternative. A dragon cult can be led by an adept or a cleric of a dragon god (especially if that cleric has the dragon domain).

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## About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on *Dragons of Faerun*, the *Magic Item Compendium*, and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for [Silven Publishing](#). He enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). Send questions or comments to [eytan@eytanbernstein.com](mailto:eytan@eytanbernstein.com).

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# Class Chronicles

## Duskblades and Knights

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### Duskblades

In the ancient Vyshaanti fighting academies, a martial style developed among young elves who were gifted in fighting and magic. This was a divergent path of bladesinging -- a more brutal style that incorporated heavier armor and more deadly spells. Originally known as Nael'kerym, these warriors greatly complemented bladesingers. They were meant to be heavy combat spellblades, while the bladesingers acted as precision skirmishers.

When the army of Aryvandaar invaded Shantel Othreier in -10,900, the heavily armored spellblade contingent was faced with a terrible decision. Witnessing their nation invading an allied land, trafficking with infernal powers, and showing a complete disregard for the lives of their kin, these warriors were torn between abandoning their nation or slaughtering their brethren. Heated discussion occurred at the war council. One side was firmly in support of the Vyshaanti, citing a variety of reasons why the attack was just. To the other side, these explanations and excuses rang hollow.

Before the war council could resolve this thorny question, a fast-moving orc horde fell upon both armies. The loyalists stayed with the Aryvandaaran forces, slaughtering elf and orc alike. The dissenters fought orcs only, attempting to stay away from both other contingents and meeting mostly with success.

Afterward, the warriors who slew indiscriminately became known as duskblades. They received this name because their contingent broke through the Shantel Othreier line at dusk, cresting a hill toward victory. Survivors of the enemy forces described these warriors as frightening blurs of magic and metal, shining in the fading orange sun like vengeful, fallen angels.

Following the massacre, the duskblades came to be thought of as "steel dancers," or H'ei'Yal Drathinmaleé. Those that cleaved through their brethren with sword and spell became ignominious symbols of Aryvandaaran treachery. The dissenters were forgotten, a footnote in most elven lore tomes. When the Vyshaanti, and later the Dlardrageth, descended into the evil of infernal lore, the duskblades became symbols for the corruption of the ancient bladesinging tradition.

The dissenters at the battle for Northern Shantel Othreier may have been forgotten, but the tradition did not end there. Valorous duskblades remained, helping Shantel Othreier until the end, as well as other invaded kingdoms. They constantly proved their valor in these battles, but eventually, their tradition all but died out when the Vyshaanti succeeded in conquering the rest of the elven realms. When the Vyshaan reign came to an end, many of the duskblades died with it. Later, some were sealed in Nar Kerymhoarth with the rest of the Fey'ri legion. They were recently seen among the Fey'ri army led by Sarya Dlardrageth.

A few of the duskblade dissenters remained after the Crown Wars, passing down the tradition through the generations. Eventually, this art became mostly lost, something that was practiced only secretly for fear of association with the Vyshaanti. Future duskblades hid their abilities, mimicking the more fluid styles of the bladesingers by wearing mithral armor and studying music and dance. They knew that if their true abilities were revealed, they would be associated with the treachery of the crown wars.

Thousands of years have passed, and the duskblade tradition is all but forgotten. Here and there, an elven warrior learns this tradition from a mentor, usually unaware of its dark origin. Most current duskblades are sun elves, but there are members from other subraces.

There are no formal groups of duskblades in Faerun. The study of this art is always passed down by an experienced mentor to a promising young elven warrior. Many young duskblades do not learn anything about their history until centuries into their studies. The secrets are jealously guarded by justifiably cautious mentors.



The greatest concentration of duskblades seems to be in Silverymoon, but there are a number in Everska and the new settlements in Cormanthor. For the most part, these are valorous elven warriors. Small numbers of duskblades closer to the Vyshaanti ideal are hidden among members of the Eldreth Veluuthra and in some of the sun elf noble houses of Evermeet. Duskblades serving the Eldreth Veluuthra are often called "cleansing blades" (Uluuth Phlarenn), a name sometimes used as an alternative for the entire organization.

For those wishing to utilize the history of the duskblades in Faerun but without incorporating the class into their games, there is an alternative. It is easy enough to use the bladesinger prestige class from *Races of Faerun*. Use the Battle Caster feat from *Complete Arcana* to allow bladesingers to wear mithral full plate. The rest is just character choices and style.

## Knights

Wherever valiant soldiers and honor-bound despots fight, there are knights. A knight fits easily into any organization of lawful clerics, fighters, and paladins. They are found leading armies, boosting the morale of their soldiers and directing the attacks of key enemies away from allied spellcasters and archers.

A number of valorous organizations count knights among their membership. The Knights of the Flying Hunt defend Nimbral from the threats of Calishite slavers. Knights make up much of the bulk of this organization, because the Nimbese do not tolerate organized faith in their realms.

The Knights of Imphras II in Impiltur are dedicated to expunging pockets of the abyss buried underground. They fight against the fiends that remain from ancient Narfell. They also oppose the goblinoids, bandits, worshippers of the Gods of Fury, and Eltab.

A less glamorous but no less courageous order is the Knights of the North. Dedicated to the destruction of the Zhentarim, these knights are ever vigilant. They brave harsh conditions with little comfort to curb Zhent activities in the Moonsea region. Their job is often a thankless one, but their passion to end the tyranny of Zhentil Keep is boundless.

Valorous Knights are also found among a number of other organizations. The Knights of the Eternal Order battle undead perversion in the name of Kelemvor. The Knights of Holy Judgment, Knights of the Merciful Sword, and Knights of Samular carry out Tyr's vision of a world free of chaos, crime, and depravity.

Not all knights are members of good organizations. Evil Knights can be found among the Zhentarim, upholding order with a might-makes-right attitude. The Vengeance Knights, under the tutelage of the corrupt Knights of the Shield, use intimidation, violence, and bullying to uphold the law as laid forth by their masters, especially in Tethyr and the Western Heartlands. The Church of Bane counts many knights among its ranks, many of which are also Zhentarim. Their god's passion for tyranny and fear molds these warriors into fearsome black knights.

For those wishing to utilize the history of the knights in Faerun but without incorporating the class into their games, there is an alternative. Paladins, blackguards, and fighters can make suitable knights, qualifying for most knightly prestige classes from *Complete Warrior*, *Champions of Valor*, *Champions of Ruin*, and a variety of other sources.



## About the Author

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## Class Chronicles

# Warlocks, Part 1

Eytan Bernstein



Earlier articles in this series discussed how to incorporate [beguilers and dragon shamans](#) and [duskblades and knights](#) from *Player's Handbook II* into the Realms. This article deals with the extremely popular warlock class. In addition to exploring ways to include warlocks in your games, this installment also details Davoren Hellsheart, a warlock devoted to Asmodeus and who is featured in the novel [Depths of Madness](#) by Erik Scott de Bie.

In the Realms, there are a number of possible supernatural origins for warlocks. The most common is an infernal source such as the fallen archdevil demigod Gargauth or the archdevils Asmodeus and Mephistopheles. These individuals represent the majority of warlocks and are, with rare exceptions, almost universally evil.

A small number of warlocks derive their powers from fey pacts and bloodlines. These most commonly arise from pacts with the unseelie courtiers of the Queen of Air and Darkness, but other sources exist as well. A small band of shadar-kai warlocks has been spotted along the Golden Way near Telfamm.

Elven powers native to Faerûn also have spawned warlocks. The chaotic energies of the deteriorating Sildéyuir have affected the births of a small number of Star Elves, creating powerful magical defenders. Led by their indomitable leader, Pherix Traeith, they act as a defensive bridge between the Yuirwood and the Sildéyuir plane, fending off incursions on both ends.

A coven of fey'ri warlocks derive their power from an ancient pact with the fallen solar Malkizid. Despite the near decimation of the daemonfey army, most of these warlocks survived. They fled after being defeated by the armies of Lord Seiveril Miritar, then attempted to pick up lives halted by thousands of years of imprisonment.

Warlocks are present among a number of the planetouched races of Faerûn. Many tieflings who descended from infernal powers pursue dark invocations, though abyssal tiefling warlocks exist as well. A small coven of worghest warlocks is known to exist in the Mines of Tethyamar. Scholars believe that they derive their powers from a pact with the mammoth greater barghest known as Tarkomang. There are even rumors of warlock bloodlines among the celadrin in Cormanthor.

For those who wish to incorporate this lore into their games without introducing the warlock class, here is an alternative. With small changes, many of these individuals and groups could be sorcerous bloodlines. The rules for heritor/heritage feats allow these sorcerers to exhibit powers and qualities characteristic of their otherworldly origins but without the need to take levels in the warlock class.

### Infernal Origins

Among all those likely to foster warlock bloodlines, none are more enthusiastic than archdevils (for more information archdevils, consult [Fiendish Codex II](#)). They enjoy sowing corruption and extending tendrils of control by spreading their bloodline and making pacts with Faerûnian mortals. While the most frequent archdevils trying their hands in these ventures are Mephistopheles and Asmodeus, pacts and bloodlines are fostered by most of the other archdevils.

#### Infernal Affinity

Your infernal abilities are more potent against good opponents.

**Prerequisite:** Evil outsider or Fiendish Heritage, Ability to use lesser invocations

**Benefits:** Good aligned creatures suffer a -1 penalty on saving throws against your eldritch blasts and invocations. Good aligned outsiders and those with an aura of good suffer a -3 penalty on saving throws against your eldritch blasts and invocations.

### The Black Star

Glasya, daughter of Asmodeus and slayer of the Hag Countess, is one of the most frequent employers of warlock pacts after Asmodeus and Mephistopheles. Through her agent, a Paerlyon known as Oagnuxthiode, she has cultivated a small coven of warlocks known as the Black Star in Zhentil Keep. The coven secretly lairs within the sewers and basements of Zhentil Keep, plotting for control of the city and the Black Network. An erinyes known as Eshaeris leads them in their manipulations and dark deeds, both as a game to pass her time and as a set of cards to play against her rivals, Fzoul Chembryl and Scyllua Darkhope. Eshaeris is a patient creature, and the Black Star shares this quality, using the insidious talents of its members to conquer one merchant or lordling at a time. Thus it slowly builds its power base in the city. In particular, the coven seeks to supplant members of the Zhentarim in order that they might control the organization and spread its aims toward the ultimate goal: political and economic conquest of Faerûn.



**History:** The Black Star is a young pact assembled of diabolist warlocks united by Eshaeris (*Mysteries of the Moonsea*) in her guise as Lady Desmonda. Along with Yanser Vorath, she brought together influential and wealthy worshippers of Cyric and other deities cast aside by Bane's return, and trained them in the darkest of powers, focusing upon guile and persuasion, breeding a band of assassins and cultists. Only Vorath knows her true nature. Others in the cult know her only as Lady Desmonda, Vorath's mistress (just as she is mistress to many in the city).

After her role in the overthrow of Lord Orgauth and her subsequent "fall from grace," Eshaeris worked to frustrate the schemes of Fzoul Chembryl whenever possible. With Scyllua Darkhope unavailable (because of engagements elsewhere in Faerun), Eshaeris turned her attention toward corrupting Rassendyl, ruler of Mulmaster, in the hope of furthering her effort against Fzoul. Members of the pact and Eshaeris herself make clandestine visits to Mulmaster, securing the ruler's favor with bribes and will-enslaving powers. Vorath, however, dares even more -- not only does he plan to betray Eshaeris to her enemies but also to ascend beyond the bounds of humanity and attain a sliver of godhood, becoming the baneson reborn. With Eshaeris and the rest of the coven occupied in Mulmaster, there is no limit to Vorath's betrayal.



**Current Activities:** Vorath manages the day-to-day leadership of the pact and decides which merchants to intimidate, which noble families to manipulate, and the like. He has an excellent head for intrigue, but as his powers mature and grow -- thanks to pacts made with infernal powers beyond Eshaeris's knowledge -- he has put more and more responsibility on the shoulders of Reoul Sathis, a devout Cyricist and jealous rival for Vorath's affections. She uses both the powers he taught her and her divine arts to create a wide variety of useful potions and poisons for the pact. The pact prides itself on secrecy, and most warlocks focus on powers of stealth and darkness.

**The Black Star (Minor Arcane)** AL LE; 12,000 gp resource limit; Membership 12; Mixed (6 humans, 2 half-elves, 1 tiefling, 1 erinyes); Dues 10% tithe

**Authority Figures:** Lady Desmonda [Eshaeris] (LE female erinyes), Yanser Vorath (LE male Illuskan warlock 16)

**Important Characters:** (Reoul Sathis, LE female Tethyrian cleric 3 /warlock 3/eldritch theurge 5 [Cyric])

**Associated Classes:** Warlock

**Associated Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive

**Requirements:** At least 5 or more ranks in 2 of the following skills -- Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive

**Favored in Guild Benefits:** None

**Special:** Lady Desmonda and Yanser Vorath only recruit the wealthy, influential, or well connected. Potential members must show ambition and ingenuity. Alternatively, they must possess resources, contacts, or power desirable to the organization.

### Disciples of Asmodeus

As the most powerful archdevil in hell, Asmodeus makes a great effort to maintain bloodlines and pacts among mortals. This allows him to maintain spheres of influence in different planes, cementing his position as most powerful lord. He is the most frequent patron of tiefling and half-fiend warlocks in the Realms. He jockeys for influence over these infernal servants, battling Mephistopheles for control.

In addition to tiefling and human pacts and bloodlines, Asmodeus also courts influence among organized lawful evil humanoids such as hobgoblins. One of his most despicable servants is detailed below.

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### Davoren Hellsheart

Davoren Hellsheart is a vile, treacherous scoundrel who seeks nothing less than absolute domination over those around him for his own evil gain. He made his first appearance in the novel [Depths of Madness](#) by Erik Scott de Bie, in which by turns he aided, betrayed, saved, and attempted to murder the heroine, Fox-at-Twilight. In a world where little is as it seems, Davoren, though he never betrays his intentions, is honest in what he is -- a dark-hearted monster.

### Davoren Hellsheart

Human warlock 10/hellfire warlock 3[FCII]/disciple of Asmodeus 2[BVD]

LE Medium humanoid

**Init +3; Senses** Listen +2 Spot +2

**Languages** Common, Ignan, Infernal

**AC** 26, touch 18, flat-footed 21

(+3 Dex, +7 armor, +3 natural armor, +3 deflection)

**hp** 106 (15 HD); fiendish resilience (1/day fast healing 1 for 2 minutes); DR 2/cold iron

**Resist** fire 15, cold 5

**SR** 20

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** +12/+7 +2 stiletto (dagger) (1d4+2/19-20 x2)

**Base Atk** +10; Grp +10

**Atk Options** brimstone blast, eldritch chain, eldritch spear, frightful blast, hellfire blast, repelling blast

**Special Actions** deceive item, hellfire infusion

**Combat Gear** 3 scrolls of cure serious wounds, scroll of dimension door, scroll of dimensional anchor, scroll of divine favor, scroll of modify memory, wand of eagle's splendor (27 charges), wand of false life (37 charges), wand of lesser restoration (22 charges), wand of lightning bolt (caster level 10, 28 charges)

**Invocations** (CL 14th):

Greater -- chilling tentacles, wall of perilous flame

Lesser -- brimstone blast, eldritch chain, voracious dispelling

Least -- beguiling influence, eldritch spear, frightful blast (DC 16)

**Spell-like abilities** (CL 14th): At will -- detect magic, eldritch blast 7d6 (CL 14, +14 ranged touch), hellfire blast 13d6 (CL 14, +14 ranged touch), hellfire shield (DC 21); 1/day -- charm (DC 15), command (DC 15)

**Abilities** Str 11, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18

**SQ** Learn Secret (Gather Information 1/week with +10 bonus)

**Feats** Devil's Favor (3/day +2 bonus on attack, save, or check), Devil's

Flesh (+3 natural armor, +3 Intimidate), Devil's Stamina (+6 hit points; fast healing 3 1/day for 5 rounds), Disciple of Darkness (Gain a +1 luck bonus on single roll 1/day when performing evil act), Evil Brand (+2 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures), Leadership, Weapon Focus (eldritch blast)

**Skills** Bluff +9, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +16, Use Magic Device +20 (+22 when using scrolls)

**Possessions** combat gear plus *bracelets of the Lord Warlock\** (+7 AC, +2 resistance bonus to saving throws, spell resistance 20, allow wearer to use the invocation repelling blast (DC 20) at will, summon imp 3/day for 14 rounds [equivalent to summon monster III cast by a 14th level sorcerer]), *darkring* (+3 deflection bonus to AC; 2/day infernal boost: +10 enhancement bonus to Strength & Con for 2d6 rounds, followed by one hour of fatigue), +2 stiletto (dagger)

\* Bonus included in the statistics above.

Born of demons and worshiping the king of devils, Davoren Hellsheart is a cruel and -- despite his name -- heartless creature, prone to manipulating others toward his own benefit. His powers manifest in ruby fire, the better to reflect the power of his infernal patron, Asmodeus, Lord of the Hells. Driven by his obsessive need to dominate others and wrench their obedience and worship, even at the point of a fiery blade, Davoren seeks to control and further the aims of his master.

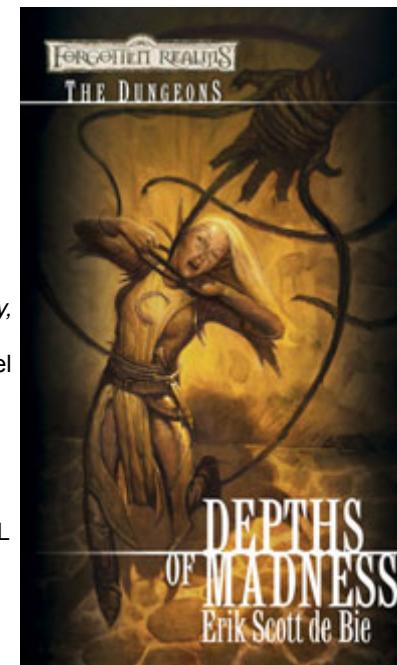
Paired with his overwhelming thirst for power, he suffers from a fundamental lack of self-esteem and confidence. Like all bullies, he can punish but cannot endure. This comes from a childhood spent as the smallest and weakest child, abused and neglected by his parents in his Daggerdale home. When he reached adolescence, however, he experienced dark, bloody dreams sent to him by demons, it seemed. Dark, sorcerous powers accompanied these visions, but the demons warned Davoren to keep them hidden. Unable to conceal his new, uncontrolled strengths, Davoren found himself the laughing stock of his village once more. In bitter vengeance, he planned and carried out the heinous murders of his fellows and his family, then fled the reprisals of an angry liege lord. Davoren found the path of Asmodeus to control his dark rages with icy discipline.

Davoren has gray skin that seems to be made of something other than flesh, eyes that gleam red, and limp, dead hair worn in a disheveled, unkempt fashion. As a youth, he kept careful composure, but now he cannot keep the wildness from his visage. He favors black and red leather garments and is rarely seen without his elbow-length black gauntlets. Beneath his mottled, much-stitched clothing, hideous scars cover most of his body. He has a soft, haggard voice that betrays more than a hint of madness. He limps and coughs frequently and shakes uncontrollably at times. He is wary of being touched. His health is not as broken as it seems, and he is capable of hideous displays of strength and endurance at need.

The Hellsheart is particularly hesitant to speak of his doings in and around Uktar and Nightal of 1374, and he grows angry and fearful when the time is so much as mentioned. No one knows what happened to him, but by the hideous scars visible even on the flesh not covered by his clothing, it was something foul. Those foolish enough to inquire and lucky enough to survive his wrath speak of a word he utters under his breath: 'Twilight.'

What he means by this, no one can say.

Next installment -- Origins.



## About the Author

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other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for [Silven Publishing](#). He enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). Send questions or comments to [eytan@eytanbernstein.com](mailto:eytan@eytanbernstein.com).

A native Californian, Erik Scott de Bie is a long-time gamer, a novice fencer, and (when he has the time) a writer. He has authored an increasing number of fantasy works, including the *Forgotten Realms* novels [Ghostwalker](#) and the forthcoming [Depths of Madness](#). Erik spends his daylight hours compiling technical documentation for The Boeing Company and cursing whatever foul darkness spawned the dreaded "day job." For more information about Erik, his myriad-though-charming eccentricities, and how to pronounce his name, see [his Wizards of the Coast profile](#) and [his blog](#).

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# Warlocks, Part 2

Eytan Bernstein, Erik Scott de Brie



This is the second article dealing with the extremely popular warlock class. The [first installment](#) explored ways to include warlocks in your games and detailed Davoren Hellsheart, a warlock devoted to Asmodeus (the character was featured in the novel [Depths of Madness](#) by Erik Scott de Bie).

In the Realms, there are a number of possible supernatural origins for warlocks. The most common is an infernal source such as the fallen archdevil demigod Gargauth or the archdevils Asmodeus and Mephistopheles.

A small number of warlocks, however, derive their powers from fey pacts and bloodlines. These most commonly arise from pacts with the unseelie courtiers of the Queen of Air and Darkness, but other sources exist as well. We examine those warlocks this week.

### Fey Origins

The fey of Faerûn are reclusive and mysterious. Even those druids and rangers who are friendly with the sylvan races can't claim to truly know them, much less their deepest secrets. While most fey are neutrally aligned, content to live their lives in harmony with nature, some have allied themselves with strange, dark powers. A malevolent entity with increasing influence in Faerûn, the Queen of Air and Darkness is the most common originator of warlock pacts among the fey. While small numbers of fey warlocks derive their powers from a connection to the Seelie Court, the majority are associated with the Queen and her Unseelie minions.

#### Fey Affinity

Your fey ancestry has enhanced your warlock abilities.

*Prerequisite* -- Chr 13, Fey or must possess the Fey Heritage feat, warlock level 2

*Benefits* -- You can cast *detect animals or plants* a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier. Your caster level for this ability is the same as your warlock caster level.

There were two powerful and a number of lesser Unseelie warlock covens in Faerûn. The first, a group of plane-hopping shadar-kai known as the Lakh-Myr Thorns is based on the Golden Way near Telflamm. Allied with the shadowlords, the shadow fey have carved a niche in the cutthroat world of smuggling and acquisition. Their leader, a warlock known as Gaen Ral (NE male shadar-kai rogue 1/warlock 6/Telflamm shadowlord 6), has allies with the Shadowmasters and is a friend of Grand Master of Shadows Keshna Finlothleer.

The other coven is a great mystery to sylvan scholars of Faerûn. Up until the Year of Lightning Storms (1374), this coven, known as the Tairemgira, was the most powerful fey warlock group in the Realms. Based in the Kryptgarden Forest, its members -- along with other wild, Unseelie courtiers -- would dance on the night of the full moon, hunting prey with their eldritch blasts and invocations until dawn. They had no fixed base, appearing from hidden portals with no warning and disappearing just as quickly. Then, without the slightest reason, the court vanished completely. Even those Unseelie fey interrogated can't (or are too afraid to) comment on the disappearance of the coven. Rumors float on the wind of the horrific machinations of King Witchthorn, the Verdant Prince (MMIV) of Kryptgarden. They claim that the fey lord (NE male verdant druid 18) has punished the Tairemgira for a broken oath-bond. After an anonymous tip, Unseelie emissaries have been dispatched to Waterdeep to interrogate members of the Adarbrent family, a noble house reportedly allied with Witchthorn. Even more frightening is the rumor that Witchthorn is allied with Claugliyimatar, the ancient Green Dragon that lairs in Kryptgarden Forest.



While the majority of fey warlocks are associated with the Unseelie Court, rumors abound that the Seelie forces have begun to experiment with pacts as well. At least a few warlocks travel Faerûn in service to Titania, combating the malevolent efforts of the Queen of Air and Darkness. Neither court is particularly influential in the Realms, but their respective presences are growing.

### Elven Origins

The elves of Faerûn are at one with the land and magic, favoring more traditional sorcerous pursuits such as nature magic, wizardry, and bladesinging. Warlock heritage and pacts are almost unknown outside of two elven subgroups -- the star elves and the fey'ri. The former derive their heritage from the unstable energies of their magically created home plane. The latter hold pacts with dark forces such as the fallen Solar Malkizid.

### The Star Elves

Over 2,000 years ago, the star elves of the Yuirwood, faced with increasingly aggressive human expansion, cast a mighty spell on a series of menhir stones, creating a realm coterminous with the forest known as the Sildëyuir. Since then, the star elves have inhabited their realm of perpetual twilight, living out their lives in peaceful seclusion. The only contact they had with Faerûn was through the Masters of the Yuirwood, a small number of rangers and druids who protect the forest from outside interference.

Life changed for the star elves in the last few centuries. Alien sorcerers known as nilshai invaded their realm. The invaders laid siege to sections of the realm, eroding the boundaries and thus the stability of the plane. A small number of star elves born during this period exhibited strange abilities and physical qualities. Unlike their brethren, these residents are native to the Sildëyuir and are bound even tighter to its mysteries.

This group of native star elves took up different pursuits, but at least ten have become warlocks. They are led by Pherix Traeith (CG male otherworldly star elf warlock 8/mindbender 1/hellfire warlock 3/master of the Yuirwood 10/enlightened spirit 6). Pherix was the first star elf born with these strange qualities and, as such, was an outcast from his people. He was expelled from the plane at a young age, forced to wander the Realms. As a young elf bereft of any guidance but displaying incredible magical potential, Pherix came under the influence of dark powers. He unknowingly made a dark pact with Seryntalia, a sorceress in service to Mephistopheles.

It was only through the intervention of a band of adventurers who shared Pherix's travels that he escaped his servitude. With the support of his old comrades, Pherix redeemed himself, turning away from temptation. Soon after, he heard word that the Sildëyuir was under attack from a large band of Nilshai, and he joined a group of rangers in the Yuirwood who had heeded a call for help. Unaware of his past, the rangers accepted Pherix's help, coming to the aid of the star elves. It was only after Pherix helped them win a decisive victory against the Nilshai that the elves realized who he was. Grudgingly, they accepted Pherix back into their ranks, recognizing his loyalty and dedication.

### Twilight Affinity

Your eldritch blast is effective against incorporeal undead.

**Prerequisite:** Star elf, Ability to use least invocations

**Benefits:** Between sunset and sunrise, your eldritch blasts and invocations affect incorporeal undead normally. If you use the hideous blow invocation as part of a melee attack, that attack also benefits from this feat.

**Normal:** Eldritch blasts and invocations suffer a 50% miss chance against incorporeal undead.

Since his acceptance, Pherix has gathered other warlocks who had hidden their powers from the star elves. He splits his time between leading this band and his duties with the Masters of the Yuirwood. As a former outcast and native of the Sildëyuir, he has the experience and ability to bridge the gap between the two realms. For now, he doesn't take sides, but soon the elves must make a decision. Pherix and his coven are likely to be highly influential when the time comes, and he has a strong following among the youth of the land. As one of the most powerful warlocks in Faerûn and beyond, he has the knowledge and experience to connect the star elves with the outside world.

### The Fey'ri

While the star elves have derived their powers from the eroding energies of their home, the fey'ri have achieved power through pacts with dark forces. When Malkizid corrupted the sun elf house of Dlardrageth and others, he also made a number of warlock pacts. The power from these pacts remains and has been passed down several times to younger fey'ri. Despite the defeat of the fey'ri legions, the majority of warlocks survived. They now work as mercenaries, leasing their services to the highest bidders. The warlocks were directionless until their leader, a noblewoman known as Szeþþer Aelrothi, was contacted by a being of incredible power -- an ancient servitor of the Spider Queen.

The elven cultures that survived the fey'ri invasion are experiencing a renaissance in Cormanthor, The High Moor, and other areas, but a dark cloud hangs above them. Unbeknownst to the settlers, a power has reemerged from deep in their pasts and it has little love for the fair folk. Wendonai the Seducer (LE), the balor who corrupted the dark elves into worshipping the Spider Queen, has begun to slip the bonds of his 2,000 year imprisonment at the hands of the servants of Horus Re. Two years yet remain of Wendonai's exile, but he has begun to cultivate relationships with denizens of Faerûn. In the ears of the surviving fey'ri warlocks he has whispered dreams of power, glory, domination, and revenge beyond their wildest imaginations.

Wendonai has previously granted dark pacts with the Ilythiiri House Sethomiir and its coronal, Geirildin. When his spies reported the sundering of the fey'ri army, he knew he had found a perfect opportunity. During his 2,000 years of exile, the balor experimented, learning special techniques to expand his repertoire of corruption. He can now use his fiend of corruption (FF) abilities on native outsiders such as fey'ri and tieflings. As he breaks the bonds of his banishment, he plans to subvert Szeþþer and her band and hopes to use them to decimate the armies of the God-Kings of Mulhorand. In return, he promises to help them exact revenge against the elves, though he has no intention of carrying out his side of the bargain.

### Planetouched Origins

The planetouched populations of Faerûn tend to have more warlocks among them than the rest of the populace. These warlocks often develop their powers in concentrations of supernatural energy. All planetouched regions in the *Player's Guide to Faerûn* are affected, but the ones with the greatest number of warlocks are tieflings (Thay and Unther), genasi (Calimshan and Thay [fire]), celadrin (Cormanthor), and worghests (the Mines of Tethyamar). While warlocks with heritage-based powers can be found anywhere in Faerûn, these are the most

common sources among the planetouched races. Azerbloods, celadrin, d'hin, and worghests are described in greater detail in Eric Boyd's article "Legacies of Ancient Empires: Planetouched of Faerun" in *Dragon Magazine* #350. Other planetouched races such as tannariks, d'hin, and azerbloods may have a few warlocks in their midst, but they are not particularly common.

Tiefling warlocks are even more likely than others of their kind to exhibit obviously inhuman traits such as cloven hooves, a sulfurous reek, horns, a tail, or glowing red eyes. They tend to develop their powers at a young age, often encouraged by their ancestors to cultivate their horrible gifts. Other tieflings make pacts with evil outsiders to activate what they feel is dormant power within their souls. Twin tiefling warlocks work covertly for Samas Kul (UnA), Master of the Guild of Foreign Trade in Bezanur. The corpulent red wizard uses the warlocks known as Tolyst and Finora to spy on and intimidate his trade rivals. Tolyst is easily recognized by his large fangs, wolfish grin, and orange eyes. Finora can be identified by her catlike tail and yellow cat's eyes.



Thay also has at least a few genasi warlocks in the service of the Firelord. High Flamelord Iphegor Nath (UnA) employs several fire genasi warlocks to defend his temple and, on occasion, perform special missions in the name of Kossuth. It is believed that Nath brokered a deal between the genasi and the primal fire elemental known as Sthes'kthes. In return for serving the primal and his master Kossuth, the genasi were granted warlock powers. The four warlocks -- Arthek, Duron, Canthel, and Dzivir -- are known for their fire-related invocations and equally fiery tempers.

Among the good races of Faerun, celadrin are one of the few that produces warlocks with inherited power. Somehow, the combination of elven blood with that of eladrins has a tendency to produce offspring with the potential to become warlocks. These children grow to become terribly beautiful defenders of the Church of the Winsome Rose. It is known that at least three of these warlocks have become eldritch theurges (CM), warlock/clerics devoted to the worship of Hanali Celanil. Whispers abound that these mysterious servants walk the forests of Cormanthor, rekindling love among the elven settlers. Some settlers believe that they do this to ensure the survival and propagation of the elves in the forest, but others suggest that they simply enjoy seeing elves in love in Cormanthor again.

A truly frightening thing occurred among the goblin population of the Mines of Tethyamar. While the diminutive, green-skinned humanoids are used to worghests -- goblins who have crossbred with barghests -- in their midst, they are not used to the presence of powerful warlocks. These individuals are rarely the result of natural bloodlines because, generally, barghest blood is not potent enough to propagate warlocks. This all changed when the immense greater barghest known as Tarkomang moved into the area. Tarkomang is one of the largest barghests ever to live in Faerun, a monstrosity of such immense size that his goblin and worghest servants had to hollow out the inside of a small mountain to house him. In the few decades since Tarkomang entered the Mines, he has spawned a number of worghest warlocks and created pacts with residents. While generally preferring worghests for his pacts, he has granted powers to a small number of the more martial goblins. It is unknown if Tarkomang has any plans for greater domination, but his great size, mammoth appetite, and large following could become a serious problem for the nomadic populations of the Desertmouth Mountain region.

### Planar Affinity

Your planar heritage makes you a more flexible warlock.

**Prerequisite:** Native outsider, Ability to use lesser invocations

**Benefits:** Each time you become eligible to replace an existing invocation with another invocation, you can instead replace two invocations. Thus a warlock who reaches 6th level could replace two least invocations. When the same warlock reaches 11th level, he can replace two least or lesser invocations.

In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on all Charisma-based checks when dealing with outsiders within one step of your alignment on each of the alignment axes.

**Normal:** A warlock can replace only one invocation at 6th, 11th, and 16th level.

### About the Authors

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for [Silven Publishing](#). Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

A native Californian, Erik Scott de Bie is a long-time gamer, a novice fencer, and (when he has the time) a writer. He has authored an increasing number of fantasy works, including the *Forgotten Realms* novels [Ghostwalker](#) and the forthcoming [Depths of Madness](#). Erik spends his daylight hours compiling technical documentation for The Boeing Company and cursing whatever foul darkness spawned the dreaded "day job." For more information about Erik, see his [blog](#).

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## Scouts and Healers

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. The first two articles in this series discussed how to import classes from *Player's Handbook 2* and the warlock class into the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. This installment focuses on two classes from *Player's Handbook 2*-- the scout -- and the *Minatures Handbook* -- the healer. At the end of each entry are alternatives for how to include the ideas written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

### Scouts

Scouts are the first line of defense in any standing army. With their ability to move quickly, superlative stealth and survival skills, and their pension for sniping at enemies while staying out of harm's way, scouts are the best defense against getting surprised, surrounded, and outnumbered. While rogues and rangers can be effective in these endeavors, rogues lack the wilderness abilities and toughness of the scout, and rangers lack the skill and speed. These abilities, along with the scouts' ability to find traps, make scouts a great asset to most parties.

Among the elves of Faerûn, the largest contingents of scouts resides on Evermeet and in newly resettled Cormanthor. The elite group of scouts on Evermeet, known as Kel'min'hara (fleet defenders of the blessed), are based in Sumbrar, the island military stronghold 50 miles to the east of Evermeet. This contingent of 100 elite lookouts and snipers utilizes portals between the two islands to be ready for threats both on land and from the sea. The numbers of the Kel'min'hara were greater prior to the resettlement of Cormanthor, but when Seiveril Mirtar put out his call for volunteers, a significant portion of the elite squad heeded his request. Now, 35 scouts of the original group patrol the forests of Cormanthor, stomping out baatezu, drow, and other threats. Having lost 15 of their members in the war, the Kel'min'hara of Cormanthor have a renewed dedication to protecting these lands from evil. They sing campfire songs about the legendary deeds of Otaerhyn Hawksong, the wood elf commander of the scout contingent of Cormanthyr's armor.



The scouting tradition is strong among other races as well. Seven halfling scouts of the akh'velahr (the standing army of Cormanthyr) destroyed a large encampment of worshippers of Moander in the Year of the Galloping Gorgon (503 DR). The septet became known as the Heroes of Myth Drannor and was celebrated for years. Two of their members were given prominent positions as armathers of Myth Drannor. After the fall of Myth Drannor, a contingent of halfling scouts returned to their ancestral land and established a strong scouting tradition that continues today.

Throughout Faerûn, scouts serve in armies, act as bounty hunters, work as guides, and travel with adventuring parties. From the wilderness guides of Rashemen to the elite lookouts of Silverymoon, scouts play an important role. DMs who do not wish to introduce this class, however, have little extra work to do. Almost any PC or NPC scout could just as easily be a rogue or ranger (or a multiclass combination of the two). While scouts have a more focused hybrid of stealth and wilderness abilities, those classes can almost as easily function in the same roles.

### Healers

Healers are divine spellcasters devoted entirely to tending to the sick and injured. Healers only belong to good faiths and cannot refuse to help good-aligned wounded creatures. While the *Minatures Handbook* allows healers to derive their powers from ideals or causes, in Faerûn, healers must choose a patron deity. It is possible for healers to belong to any good or neutral-aligned religions, but they never associate with gods granting the death, destruction, hatred, metal, retribution, suffering (with the exception of Ilmater), tyranny, undead, or war domains. Healers are most commonly found in churches with the healing domain -- Berronar TrueSilver, Ilmater, Lurue, Sharindlar, and Torm.

Healers are unique among the members of their churches in that they typically remain entirely apolitical. It is rare for a healer to be involved in religious intrigue or to be denied spells from her deity. If she fulfills her oath to heal the sick and injured at all times, her deity has no reason to punish or refuse her. Some might find this life boring, but to a healer, anonymity and neutrality are liberating. They also make her an excellent and trustworthy midwife, physician, combat medic, and adventuring companion.

The Churches of Berronar TrueSilver and Sharindlar share collective responsibility for the health and well being of the dwarven people of Faerûn. Sharindlar's clergy typically oversee the more "fun" aspects of health, such

as sex, courtship, and romance. Sharindlar's faithful, known as *thalornor* (those who are merciful) are easygoing -- like sisters or confidants with whom dwarves can share problems and secrets. Berronar's clergy, known as *faenor* (those of the home) take on the role of stern but caring matriarch, helping people with problems in a more formal role. Healers from both religions care for the sick and injured, working both on the battlefield and in medical wards. Sharindlar's healers are more likely to work on a micro-level, getting their hands dirty with local problems. Berronar's healers are more likely to work in a directorial or educational capacity, teaching and organizing healing and familial activities. It is not uncommon for healers of both religions to adventure, though the more chaotic nature of Sharindlaran healers makes them more likely to travel. The churches of both faiths run a healer's college together in Earthheart -- the religious capital of The Great Rift (homeland of the gold dwarves). Graduates tend to the sick and injured in the Rift, acting as physicians, midwives, and combat medics to the multitude of dwarves living in the region.

Healers of Ilmater are often even more dedicated and ascetic than the paladins and clerics of the Broken God. Unlike some healers, those dedicated to Ilmater rarely refuse to help the injured of even evil and tyrannical races and groups. They never endorse or support such causes, but when an individual is in need, these healers seldom deny aid. In Heliogabalus, a group of Ilmatari worshippers runs a healer's college known as the End's Rest. This small college tends to the paladins and young recruits who defend the city as well as the local sick, pregnant, and injured.

For those wishing to employ healing colleges but without using the healer class, there is a simple alternative. Clerics and druids can perform much the same roles as healers, though their focus is wider and their politics are often more complicated.



### About the Author

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## Warmages and Favored Souls

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Earlier articles](#) in this series discussed how to import the classes from *Player's Handbook* 2 and the warlock class into the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. This installment focuses on two classes from the *Minis Handbook* -- the Warmage and the Favored Soul. At the end of each entry are alternatives for how to include the ideas written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

### Warmages

Warmages are the undisputed magical lords of the battlefield, equipped with a greater array of destructive evocation and conjuration spells than any other class. Despite their great power, warmages suffer from a fundamental lack of versatility. They are unable to cast the breadth of utility spells -- protection, concealing, information gathering, transportation, and other magics -- that make wizards powerful. To some of the cultures of Faerûn, the ability to destroy in a variety of ways is (or was) too much to ignore. To other cultures, warmages serve as elite battlefield generals, espousing the old adage that the best defense is overwhelming offense.

The ancient Raumathari battlemages were some of the most fearsome examples of warmages in Faerûnian history. While many of the battlemages were wizards and sorcerers, a significant portion was made up of warmages. The art of this forlorn empire may be mostly lost, but those few who still practice it are extremely dangerous. Raumathari battlemagic involves a mixture of both destructive arcane magic with swordplay, blending the two in terrifying destructive synergy. When the Bronze Battletower (UnE -- the home of the powerful Raumathari battlemage Vostas) was under siege, her lover, a warmage by the name of Welbohn Khul, defended it to his last breath. It is believed that Welbohn's spirit was absorbed into the tower after his death, leaving the warmage to haunt the tower forever. Locals whisper that the current resident, a renegade Wychlaran by the name of Iakhna Nuchlev (NE female Rashemi sorcerer 3/druid 3/durhan[UnE] 3), is being driven mad by Welbohn Khuul's spirit (CN Raumathari male human ghost swashbuckler 3/warmage 6/Raumathari battlemage 10). Khuul is trying to drive out the durhan in the hopes of bringing students back to the Bronze Battletower to study battlemagic. He can't drive her out himself, because she hides in a room that is shielded from him in his undead state.



While many Thayans look down on warmages as narrow-minded louts, they can't deny the usefulness of having a contingent of these casters in their armies. From the perspective of the Red Wizards, warmages make excellent subjects because they are powerful weapons but lack the magical protections to defend themselves against mental control. A band of politically neutral warmages has arisen in Thay in recent years under the leadership of Norano Reked (N Mulan male warmage 14). Calling itself Daarthos Koruna after a strange magical artifact the members discovered in the Sunrise Mountains, the band serves Thay as mercenaries for hire. The Daarthos Koruna are seven circlets that render their wearers undetectable by magical and psionic means. For the most part, the band clears out the ruins of the Sunrise Mountains and Delhumide, but they have been known to perform special missions for a number of zulkirs.

Warmagic traditions have developed among a number of other races and lands. A small number of warmages are found among the War Wizards of Cormyr, though the order generally looks askance at the narrow focus of these members. The Shoon Imperium kept an elite cadre of warmages known as the sihirbalak. Many members fled to the Heartlands and Inner Sea lands after the fall of the Shoon Empire in 450 DR. Among the sun, moon, star, and wild elves, warmages are uncommon but do exist. They were instrumental in a number of battles against demonic hoards before the fall of Myth Drannor.

Currently, several warmagic academies are scattered across Faerûn. A small academy, appropriately known as the School of Warmagic, has been open for the last three years in Halarahh, the capital city of Halruua. Though boasting only 50 students, this academy doesn't have the negative reputation that warmage schools have in other parts of Faerûn. A small department at the Wizard College of Gheldaneth in Mulhorand teaches warmages, though only 75 are enrolled. Some of the other students in the college look down on the warmagic students, but the nation sees them as an important line of defense in its continued existence. Small private academies also exist in Waterdeep, Silverymoon, and Suzail.

For those wishing to use the ideas presented above but without adding the warmage class into their games, here is an alternative. It's quite possible for sorcerers focused on offensive magic to duplicate much of what

warmages do. They might not be as versatile in their breadth of damaging spells, but they make up for that by being able to supplement their destructive spells with defensive and utilitarian magic.

## Favored Souls

Mortals who perform great services to deities, devoting their lives and work to the cause of their god or goddess, sometimes become the Chosen of that deity. Mystra's Chosen -- the seven sisters, Elminster, and others in the past -- are the most well known, but many other deities have Chosen worshipers. The Rotting Man, the hideous blightlord who corrupts and rots the Rawlinswood, is the Chosen of Talona. While some Chosen come into their status because of deeds and service, others come into the world with their deity's favor. These Chosen are known as favored souls, infants born as physical manifestations of a deity's power on Faerûn.

Being born a favored soul has both advantages and disadvantages. Like a cleric, a favored soul has access to her god's divine magic. Unlike a cleric, however, the magic of a favored soul is natural. As such, it is unlikely to be denied by her god. Because favored souls do not need to pray for their spells, deities don't need to approve or disapprove each and every incantation. This and the many divine powers of a favored soul make members of the class quite powerful. Despite these powers, favored souls are often hindered by a sense of inescapable destiny that surrounds their births. They didn't choose their paths and may not want anything to do with their religion. In this way, the powers of a favored soul can be a burden rather than a blessing.

Most Faerûnian deities have at least a few favored souls in their service. Some choose to have only one at any given time, but others spread out their favored souls among the lands in their worship. Rarely is there more than one favored soul in a given region, unless it's highly populated. Because they are often seen as direct signs from their god, favored souls rarely lead normal lives. The reason there are so few is because they create ripples in their travels, affecting everything they touch with their god's divine power.

A number of favored souls are known to exist among the many faiths of Faerûn. Braeden (DoF, LE female half-brown dragon half-human favored soul 10 [Tiamat]) is Tiamat's favored soul in Unther and the daughter of the brown dragon Slavin'Krath'Magaal (DoF, NE female fiendish juvenile brown dragon blackguard 4). She has received visions from her god showing something monstrous emerging from the Pit of Many Colors. She believes that this creature will play a crucial role in the upcoming battles faced by the Church of Tiamat. When she revealed this information to her father Malise(DoF), the high priest of the Altar of Scales (DoF, a hidden underground temple in Unthalass dedicated to draconic experimentation), he laughed at her, suggesting that she could never receive visions from the goddess. Now she plots with her mother to overthrow him, feeling that he has lost touch with the will of the Dark Lady.

The favored soul of Urdlen is a terrifying creature known as Curdle (CE male half-fiend spriggan favored soul 11). Curdle vaguely resembles a gnome in stature but is massively built for a creature of its small size and reeking of rancid flesh and blood. It has gleaming red eyes, long, bestial talons, and in its large form, batlike wings. Curdle stalks the fields near the town of Asbravn in the Western Heartlands, looking for things of beauty and innocence to destroy. The Riders in Red Cloaks have reported seeing the creature's handiwork on a number of occasions -- destroyed works of art and gems, eviscerated livestock, maimed and murdered pets, the occasional elderly couple frightened to death, and much worse. Recently, Curdle has gone on a dark rampage, stalking the edges of Asbravn at night, murdering gnomes and other townsfolk coming home from evenings of drink and song. Rumors abound that the creature has been sent on a destructive spree by its dark god for some hideous purpose. The events have become so dire that they have attracted the attention of Embrel Berrodwyn (NG Male Gnome Beguiler 4/Favored Soul 4 [Baravar Cloakshadow]/Mystic Theurge 10), the favored of the Sly One. Embrel has been busy at work crafting a grand gnomish illusion, but the murders have enraged him so much that he's put his great spell on hold. Townsfolk whisper of an approaching epic conflict between the two gnomish scions. All are certain that Asbravn will never be the same again.

For those wishing to employ the concept of favored births but without adding the favored soul class to their games, here is an alternative. Favored status need not have a mechanical representation. Prophecies, signs, and portents could indicate the favored status of an infant's birth without requiring a special class. Feat and prestige class choices, as well as spell selection, can create a theme for a cleric that separates her from her colleagues.



## About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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## Archivists and Dread Necromancers

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Earlier articles](#) in this series discussed how to import the classes from *Player's Handbook* 2 and the warlock class into the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. This installment focuses on two classes from the *Minis Handbook* -- the Warmage and the Favored Soul. At the end of each entry are alternatives for how to include the ideas written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

### Archivists

The origin of [archivists](#) in Faerûn is shrouded in mystery. This is for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that these enigmatic spellcasters don't like to share their knowledge. Each group, order, and individual member of this class has a different origin or explanation for how they came into existence. Most are specialized members of religious orders in a manner similar to members of the healer class. They occupy a small niche in certain faiths that focuses entirely on the accumulation of divine knowledge from as many sources as possible. In many cases, clerics become archivists when their minds are awakened by a special vision from their god.

The most expansive group of archivists in the world is a group known as the Benign Order of the Third Eye. This group of divine practitioners in service to Savras is uncommonly secretive for a faith typically associated with honesty and truth. It is quite new, having been founded in 1371 during the Feast of the Moon. On that day, a handful of worshippers in a substantial number of major churches experienced uncharacteristically candid visions. The vision took the form of a calm, breezy vineyard before violent purple lightning became visible in the distance. In place of grapes, the vines were weighed down by millions of tiny, white or purple crystal balls. Savras spoke almost candidly, expressing the need to accumulate knowledge and magic for an upcoming battle with Cyric, the Prince of Lies. Since that vision, the members of the order have traveled around Faerûn, accumulating divine knowledge from as many sources as possible. Officially, they are supposed to be respectful of the sacred places, tombs, and sanctified grounds of other religions, but in their religious zeal, they often overstep these boundaries.

The Brotherhood of the Secret Quill is an order of Oghma archivists with members in many temples of significant size in Faerûn. Most members work by day as record keepers, managing bureaucratic affairs such as temple finances, library loans, and similar jobs. While performing these duties, the brothers make extra copies of texts and secrets away the most important lore of the Binder in a hidden safehold. This mammoth, extradimensional library is known as "the Vault of the Bound." It can be opened only by members who have memorized key passages from sacred texts in a certain order. To gain entrance, one must have a keyed item -- usually a quill or token -- and recite the text properly in a specified location in each temple. Members are usually invited after demonstrating proper devotion and respect for knowledge (minimum of 5th level). They are inducted inside the Vault of the Bound, in a ceremony that involves the sharing and receiving of previously unknown knowledge. Inductees must present a thesis on a unique subject, impressing the order with their thoroughness and creativity. Accepted recruits become members. Rejected recruits have their memories altered to erase all knowledge of the order, the vault, and the rest of their ordeal. It is common for members of the Brotherhood to take levels in the loremaster prestige class.

The Order of Ibis is probably the most mysterious archivist order in Faerûn. It is a secret order of Thoth operating out of the University in Gheldaneth in Mulhorand. Thus far, the order has remained completely hidden from the rest of the church and Mulhorand. It was founded when a group of cleric/wizards of the Lord of Magic excavated a forgotten complex buried beneath the university. During the excavation, they accidentally activated an ancient magic rune which transported them to another place. They found themselves in desert oasis dominated by an immense pyramid. The structure was topped with a large, golden ankh. Ibises and baboons were abundant -- sunning themselves, lounging in the trees, and drinking from the cool pool. Despite the beauty of the scene, the oasis seemed neither idyllic nor peaceful. A herd of rushing ibexes came bounding down the steps of the pyramid, nearly trampling them. When they reclaimed their footing, they saw a mammoth humanoid avatar of their deity slowly walking down toward them on the air. The avatar stopped halfway, whereupon it opened its mouth to let out a sound that mortals clearly were not meant to hear. All of the worshippers were knocked unconscious, later awakening on the floor of the excavation bleeding from the eyes, ears, and noses. All had become archivists, merging their wizardly and priestly powers together into a single, more flexible form of spellcasting. None had heard the deity speak but all understood its meaning. They were to



ruthlessly monitor and control the import, export, and transmission of knowledge throughout Mulhorand and its trading partners, making sure that Mulhorand's best interests were always kept foremost.

Other groups of archivists exist among most of the knowledge-oriented churches, including those of Mystra, Azuth, and others with the Knowledge, Magic, Rune, and Spell domains. For those wishing to use the ideas presented above but without adding the archivist class into their games, here is an alternative. Characters with levels in wizard and cleric, or in the mystic theurge prestige class, can achieve spellcasting versatility similar to archivists. The visions received by the practitioners can change their outlooks without changing their classes.

### Dread Necromancers

[Dread necromancy](#) is not a field of magic that is normally possible for a Faerûnian mortal to learn. In order to take up this dark art, a mortal must be exposed to a dark ritual or aura of death powerful enough to corrupt her soul. In the Year of the Coven (595), a group of four mages specializing in necromancy performed just such a ritual. These wizards were a macabre human aristocrat from Alaghôn in Turmish known as Levanst Karlbach, a beautifully wicked half-elf sorceress called Shedylain Leifenhair from the Chondalwood, a renegade drow wizard-assassin known as Prin'Thal Flith'Krysthin from Undraeth, and a mysterious half-orc tribal shaman known as Yubaaren Whitehands from the Orsraun Mountains. Beseeching their dark patrons -- Bhaal, Talona, Kiaransalee, and Yurtrus respectively -- they performed a ritual known as "the deadening." This took place in a network of magically hidden underdark tunnels somewhere between present-day Westgate and Tezir. It is unknown if the deities had to cooperate to make the ritual successful, but after it was completed, the four mages became dread necromancers.

After completing the ritual, the four necromancers began to escape the mortal bonds that had restricted them in life. They opened a small academy known as Darkbranth in the tunnels, where they passed on the secret of their magic to brilliant young spellcasters. They discovered that subsequent generations did not need to undergo the ritual. As long as they were taught by one who had undergone the ritual or one who had achieved lichdom by reaching the pinnacle of the class, they could study dread necromancy. After some time, all four of the founders reached the pinnacle of their abilities, soon to undergo the transformation to become liches.

In the Year of the Kindly Lich (606), Levanst Karlbach had second thoughts about his transformation. During his time teaching at the school, he became disillusioned with the faith of Bhaal and the notion of eternal undeath. He found the religions of the other founders equally loathsome and began to distance himself from the affairs of the school. In Myrtul of 606, he attempted to leave the school, bringing with him the brightest students who were of like mind. Having sensed his doubts, Levanst's colleagues were prepared for what they considered his betrayal. Fearing that he would expose their school or disseminate their secrets, they attempted to destroy him and his followers. In a devastating battle that shook the earth above, the four necromancers threw every spell they knew at each other, inflicting plague, summoning undead, releasing catastrophic necromantic energies, and worse. Realizing that this was a battle that could not be won, Levanst ordered his undead giant centipedes to bring down the tunnels, killing all who remained. Before the school was destroyed, however, a number of supporters from each of the four factions escaped into the world above.

*The Deadening* is a ritual that requires the sacrifice of three virgins who have dedicated their lives to a god of good such as Lathander, Mielikki, or Lurue. The virgins are killed in an elaborate ceremony involving numerous ritual implements and highly complex incantations. In the end, the bodies of the virgins are sprinkled with the blood of a freshly slain unicorn. They are taken to a cemetery dedicated to a god of light and interred, desecrating the burial grounds. Each participant must expend 1,000 XP and loses one hit point permanently.

In the centuries that have passed since the destruction of Darkbranth, the survivors of the school have spread across Faerûn. They have selected pupils to learn the secrets of dread necromancy, happy to retreat into their crypts, graveyards, and mausoleums, contemplating death and lichdom. One recent student, however, has not been content to contemplate and retreat. Ahrdaun Vensestra is obsessed with the legacies of the four founders. He sought out their magical heirlooms and even searched for lost Darkbranth. Eventually, he found the school and uncovered the secrets within. It is unclear what he plans to do with the knowledge and power accumulated in the long-abandoned tunnels in the Dragon Coast, but it is unlikely to please the Draeven (folk of the Dragon Coast).

Other, similar rituals have been performed, allowing their practitioners to become dread necromancers. It's likely that other methods exist. Worshippers of the gods of death and decay continually work to expand their macabre powers. For those wishing to use the lore without importing the class into their game, here is a simple alternative. Necromancy specialists and sorcerers with a penchant for death magic can easily replace dread necromancers in Darkbranth or any similar order. The ritual they perform could give them the knowledge necessary to become liches or vampires or to achieve some other dark magic.



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Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous

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05/23/2007



## Hexblades and Ninjas

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Earlier articles](#) in this series have discussed how to import numerous classes from *Player's Handbook 2* and other sources into the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*. This installment focuses on the Hexblade (from PHB2) and the Ninja (from *Complete Adventurer*). At the end of each entry are alternatives for how to include the ideas written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

### Hexblades

Hex magic is a form of sorcery that manifests at a young age. It tends to occur in poorer areas where magical training and education are unavailable, though this is not always the case. Some embrace this ability, becoming evil or neutral [hexblades](#) bent on vengeance and retribution. Others fight it, seeking to transform their innate powers into something more positive. These youths tend to study sorcery in depth, becoming sorcerers and forsaking the dark blight of hex magic entirely. The former are more common -- the allure of hex magic is especially strong. They embrace a "might makes right" attitude, viewing academia as pointless, asceticism as foolish, do-gooders as deluded, and book-learners as weak.

Many hexblades are self-taught, though it is not uncommon for a young hexblade to learn his craft from a mentor. There is only one hexblade college on Faerûn, Hexcidon, and it is housed in Bezantur. At this school, generations of hexblades study to become elite bodyguards and generals for Thay.

Most hexblades, however, are loners who travel to gain power, riches, and pleasure. They seek vengeance against any who get in their way and brook no fools or the faint of heart in their travels. This makes them perfect agents for neutral and evil deities of vengeance and retribution. These hexblades most commonly follow the divine guidance of Hoar, Kiaransalee, Loviatar, Shevarash, or Uthgar. The first two of those are discussed here.

Hoar has guided the footsteps of a number of hexblades in their search for vengeance. These warriors typically enter the ghostwalker prestige class, traveling around Faerûn in search of wrongs to right. These hexblades are almost entirely neutral -- not merciful but also not cruel. They treat all offenders the same, meting out punishments that fit the committed injustice.

Most drow hexblades are loners and assassins. A small but sizable minority, however, serves the whims of the Revenancer. Each of these agents, known as "revenant blades," serves a single cell of priests devoted to Kiaransalee. They are frequently accompanied by undead minions supplied by their priestly masters or through their own feats and abilities. They take revenge on the foes of the Vengeful Banshee, especially worshippers of Eilistraee, Dumathoin, and Kelemvor.

A small presence of hexblades exists among the Imaskari. These members serve the Lodge of Retributive Masters by taking revenge against those who have sinned against the society. They almost always take levels in the Imaskari vengeance taker prestige class, though they must be able to cast 3rd-level hexblade spells in order to qualify. These hexblades study in a manner similar to other Imaskari arcanists, but they are more focused on a practical mix of vengeance magic and martial prowess than on magical esotericism.

While most hexblades wear only light armor, that is not a rule, especially among those belonging to the Vengeance Knights, an order of tyrannical warriors that serves the Knights of the Shield, a loose network of greedy and paranoid Southern merchants. These warriors favor the heaviest armor they can find. They typically take the Battlecaster feat, wearing mithril armor and using mithril shields. This allows them to avoid suffering arcane spell failure with their hexblade spells. They serve the malevolent Knights of the Shield as bullies and enforcers much of the time, but when called to duty, they can be agents of brutal vengeance.

For those wishing to use the concepts presented above but without using the hexblade class, here is a simple solution. Hexblades could be replaced with macabre fighter/sorcerers (perhaps eldritch knights) with a penchant for curse magic.

### Ninjas



The origin of [ninjas](#) can be traced back to Kara-Tur many hundreds of years ago, but since the Shou and other peoples of that distant land have settled in Faerûn, their martial arts and other secrets have spread via cultural diffusion. While the greatest concentration is among the Shou clans in Thesk, the art has traveled to a number of other regions.

There are more ninjas in Telflamm than any other city in Faerun. With the illicit activities and the cutthroat mercantile economy, Telflamm is the ideal place for ninjas to flourish. It is a city of intrigue covered in webs of deceit and replete with elaborate mind games. The Nine Golden Swords includes numerous ninjas among its members, sending them off to spy, assassinate, and collect. They are divided into rival clans that operate in a variety of different, secret hideouts. They are in direct opposition to the Shadowmasters, having clashed with that guild on a number of occasions. Whispers abound of an upcoming street war the likes of which has rarely been seen in Telflamm.



The leader of the ninja clans in Telflamm is Master Kinju Kal-Okyama (NE Male Tuigan-Shou Ninja 14), a ninja lord of mixed Tuigan and Shou heritage. Kinju is second in command among the Nine Golden Swords, answering only to the Golden Master in Phsant. His life did not begin auspiciously, however. Kinju's mother was raped by a Tuigan general and then left to die on the trade route. Before she died of her injuries, she left the infant Kinju hidden in a merchant caravan to be discovered when the caravan reached the city. He was 'raised' by the merchant, though he was, in essence, little more than a slave. As soon as Kinju was strong enough, he ran away from the merchant's house. Life on the streets was hard, but Kinju soon learned the ways of the city. He rose among the guilds, studying the art of ninjutsu with the wily Master Orayma -- who was later killed by Kinju. Orayma felt that Kinju was too ambitious, and he was correct. Kinju murdered his superiors, rising in the ranks because of the fear he inspired. Now he rules the ninja clans with an iron fist, justifiably paranoid about the numerous ninjas who would depose him.

The art of ninjutsu has spread to other parts of Faerun. Small numbers of ninjas can be found among the Night Masks in Westgate, the Fire Knives, the guilds of Calimport, and the Shadow Thieves. Most of these members are of Shou heritage, but some were taught by the Shou or blackmailed the mysterious denizens of Kara Tur into teaching them the ninja arts. There are undoubtedly mercenary and rogue ninjas that have escaped their clans or murdered their masters. Most are evil, but not all. Some have given up the life of assassination and spying, preferring to use their talents for more positive pursuits. These ninjas often meet with opposition (and death) from their brethren, but this hasn't stopped a small number from defecting.

For those wishing to use the concept of ninja clans and the lore presented above but without using the ninja class, here is an alternative. Ninjas could be rogues, monks, or a multiclass mix of the two focused on stealth, assassination, poison, and spying. While it is somewhat difficult for either of those classes to emulate the supernatural powers of a ninja, it is certainly not impossible given the right feats, prestige classes, and magic items.

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Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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## Factotums and Spellthieves

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Earlier articles in this series](#) have discussed how to import numerous classes from *Player's Handbook 2* and other sources into the *Forgotten Realms* Campaign Setting. This installment focuses on the Factotum (from *Dunescape*) and the Spellthief (from *Complete Adventurer*). At the end of each entry are alternatives for how to include the ideas written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

### Factotums

Numerous explorer companies exist in the civilized lands. Some of these are clubs for noblemen of low rank, places where disgruntled third sons can feel important and be among likeminded individuals. One such group is the Lodge of the Sphinx, an exploration company based out of Urmlaspry in Sembia. While some of the members are talentless spoiled nobles, soaking in the cigar-smoke-filled 'good old boy' environment, many others are skilled travelers with incredible breadth of knowledge and ability. Members of any class can join, but some of the best are factotums, true jacks of all trades.

The Lodge was founded in 1342 by Bertin Clanin, an ambitious son of a Sembian noble house, as a club for his raffish and disaffected dandy friends. To the surprise of everyone, including himself, Clanin (known affectionately as "Teller" by his friends, for unknown reasons -- began taking exploration seriously. Clanin's company blossomed, and lazy chaff was soon weeded out from dedicated and seasoned explorers. They traveled the world, seeking out its exotic locales. The company is still active today. Its leader, a descendant of Bertin named Heraldon Clanin (LN male Sembian human aristocrat 2/factotum 7), organizes expeditions to Chult, the Moonshaes, and other distant lands. The Lodge commemorates its founder and its name with a miniature, petrified sphinx perched above the fireplace in the common room.

A small band of *volamtar* -- dwarves who patrol trails between dwarven and human settlements in the name of Marthammor Duin -- has been frightening travelers who traverse the pass between Sundabar and Silverymoon. They call themselves the Trailfinders of the Pass. Merchants staying in Auvendell claim to have seen and spoken to the group, and testify that the dwarves were affected by bizarre magic that caused them to blink in and out of sight. Unbeknownst to the travelers, the dwarves were under the effect of a Netherese curse.

The enterprising volamtar are multiclassed factotum/clerics led by Elmenhardt Gundergrlim (CG male shield dwarf factotum 4/cleric 3 [Marthammor Duin]). Their unusual plight arose when the dwarven merchant Rurik Silverhilt hired them to clear out the underground tunnels believed to have once been the Low Road. In those depths, they discovered a breach in the sealed way station that led to buried Netheril. To their surprise, the chamber beyond the breach was intact. In the chamber, they found several unfamiliar items of unknown power, including an ancient hourglass, a massive spellbook, and a magical chair.

Unfortunately, their presence drew the attention of the ghosts of Netherese who had died when they were sealed behind the gate. One of the ghosts, a powerful chronomancer by the name of Krefeldithian (not to be confused with *The Chronomancer*, Jeriah Chronos), cursed the dwarves. This unusual curse causes them to blink out of time whenever they try to explain what they saw or return to the tunnels.

The stricken dwarves fled the chamber, unable to take any of the items with them except for a single map of the region. Now they wander the Silverymoon Pass, trying to rid themselves of the curse.

Factotums gain the ability to channel positive energy in a manner similar to clerics. They can use this energy to turn or damage undead and to heal wounds. Normally, a divine practitioner in the *Forgotten Realms* Campaign Setting is required to select a patron deity that grants her abilities. Factotums are an exception to this rule. A factotum can choose a patron deity -- often Tymora, Llira, or another god or goddess related to luck and inspiration -- but is not required to do this. Religious factotums worship the god they find to be the most inspiring. Some factotums pray to numerous gods, paying homage to whatever deity is most useful at the time.

If a factotum does not select a patron deity, her powers are nothing more than borrowed divine energy. She is most likely unaware of the source, drawing from the divine ether or from unknown powers. This also means that she is probably considered faithless -- a mortal who does not worship a particular god of the Realms. As such, her soul has no place to go when she dies. Most factotums are canny enough to realize this and carefully choose when and how to worship a particular god that suits their ideals.

### Font of Inspiration

You have unearthed a well of inspiration from within your soul.

**Prerequisite:** Int 15, Must have Inspiration as a class feature.

**Benefits:** When you take this feat for the first time, you gain 1 inspiration point.

Those wishing to use the lore presented above but without employing the factotum class have a simple alternative. Explorers on Faerûn can easily be rogues, experts, bards, and other skilled classes. Factotums have an impressive array of skills and abilities, but other classes can easily make exceptional explorers.

### Spellthieves

During the Time of Troubles (1358), numerous deities were wounded or killed in avatar form. Their blood spilled into the land, causing miraculous and sometimes devastating changes in the environment. Mortals that came in contact with the blood or ingested it when drinking tainted water sometimes experienced unusual mutations. Other, more fortunate mortals developed strange gifts, including the ability to steal magical energy. These mortals are known as spellthieves.

The spirit of portfolio theft imbued the spilled blood with the properties that created spellthieves. Some of the fighting had nothing to do with portfolio acquisition but stemmed instead from long-held grudges and feuds. Nevertheless, the world was charged with the ripples of the divine theft, tainting even the most noble of blood. The deities that fought during the Time of Troubles include Anhur, Bane, Bhaal, Clangeddin Silverbeard, Gilgeam, Gond, Gwaeron Windstrom, Ibrandul, Iyachtu Xvim, Kelemvor, Labelas Enoreth, Hoar, Leira, Malar, Mask, Myrkul, Mystra, Nobanion, Ramman, Red Knight, Selune, Shar, Shaundakul, Tiamat, Torm, and Tymora. Any deity involved in fighting (whether the aggressor or defender) that was injured can be the catalyst for the imbue of a spellthief. The land in which a battle took place is the most likely place for a spellthief to be born, though pregnant women exposed to godsblood sometimes gave birth to future spellthieves in other locations.

It is not entirely accurate to say that spellthieves are the result of stolen divine power. Gods in Faerûn derive their power from the fervor and numbers of their worshipers. Drops of shed godsblood do not directly weaken a deity, but they do forge a connection between a deity and the affected mortal. The deity in question does not even need to be alive. Dead deities still have enough power for the connection to survive. In most cases, neither the deity nor the spellthief becomes aware of the connection, but in some, the spellthief learns to exploit the connection to siphon off minute fractions of the deity's power. These mortals can gain access to the Godsblood Spellthief feat.

A number of well-known spellthieves gained their powers from godsblood spilled during the time of troubles. Anwhar Bellgate (NE male Chondathan rogue/spellthief 6) is a merchant who travels the Trade Way between Scornubel and Waterdeep. During the Time of Troubles, he developed powers of spellthievery after coming in contact with godsblood shed during the battle between Bhaal and Cyric. Anwhar continues his mercantile endeavors, but by using the strange death powers he channels from Bhaal's blood (see the Godsblood Spellthief feat), he has become a highly successful assassin. Other individual spellthieves have used their abilities for any number of causes and life paths.

One of the few organizations of spellthieves is an unlikely group known as the Fallen Justice. They were a group of 13 Untheri scouts who came in contact with Ramman's blood when the Untheri deity of war died during the Time of Troubles. During the violent battles that took place, the scouts were drenched in their Lord's blood, absorbing a larger than normal amount of his power. Today, the group -- led by their valiant commander Erilon Amadar (LN Untheri male scout 4/spellthief 7) -- fights against the former foes of Ramman, especially the followers of Hoar and Gilgeam.

Most spellthieves are the result of direct contact with godsblood, but some are the children of those who were exposed. Others gain their powers when exposed to a powerful wild magic event or when tainted water (such as from the Winding Water) is ingested in large quantities. The myriad of strange events related to the Time of Troubles allows for a large variety of explanations for the emergence of spellthieves.

For those wishing to use the lore presented above but without introducing the spellthief class into their games, there is an alternative. Spellthieves could be rogue/sorcerers or rogue/wizards who use their spells and sneak attacks to remove the abilities and defenses of their enemies. Characters can select ambush feats (as presented in *Complete Scoundrel*) that allow rogues to sacrifice sneak attack dice to inflict a number of types of penalties and hindrances.

**Special:** You can take this multiple times. Each time you take this feat after the first time, the number of inspiration points you gain increases by 1 (for example, you gain 2 inspiration points if you take the feat a second time). The maximum number of times you can take this feat is equal to your Intelligence modifier.

### Godsblood Spellthief

You derive power from your exposure to godsblood.

**Prerequisites:** Steal Spell as a class ability.

**Benefits:** Select a domain from one of the deities involved in the Time of Troubles on the following list:

Anhur, Bane, Bhaal, Clangeddin Silverbeard, Gilgeam, Gond, Gwaeron Windstrom, Hoar, Ibrandul, Iyachtu Xvim, Kelemvor, Labelas Enoreth, Leira, Malar, Mask, Myrkul, Mystra, Nobanion, Ramman, Red Knight, Selune, Shar, Shaundakul, Tiamat, Torm, Tymora.

When you steal a spell, you can use the stolen spell energy to cast a single spell from the domain you have chosen. The domain spell must be of equal or lower level than the spell you have stolen. If you do not cast this spell within one hour, the spell energy fades away harmlessly. You can select the good, evil, chaos, or law domain only if that domain does not conflict with your alignment. You can use this feat a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier. This ability functions in all other ways like the Steal Spell ability.

**Special:** This feat can only be selected once.

### About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous

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## New and Expanded Classes

### Swashbucklers, Marshals, Dragonfire Adepts

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Earlier articles in this series](#) have discussed how to import numerous classes from *Player's Handbook 2* and other sources into the *Forgotten Realms* Campaign Setting. This installment focuses on the Swashbuckler (from *Complete Warrior*), the Marshal (from the *Minatures Handbook*), and the Dragonfire Adept (from *Dragon Magic*). At the end of each entry are alternatives for how to include the ideas written here but without requiring the introduction of these classes into your game.

#### Swashbucklers

Swashbucklers have a long history in the Realms. Whether swaggering bravos or martial dandies, swashbuckling characters are among the easiest to adapt to the Realms. Favoring light armor and finesse weapons, these stylish warriors are a fusion of fighter and rogue that is easy to fit into any party. Because of the simplicity of adaptation, this entry will focus on the history of swashbucklers and discuss some of the more well known individuals and institutions.

While certain fighting styles such as dueling and bladesinging lend themselves to the swashbuckler class, swashbuckling is more a matter of style and attitude than of a particular style of fighting. Most swashbucklers in the Realms have no special training in 'swashbuckling', having learned their fighting skills at academies, from personal tutors, or in their own exploits as dandies and bravos. There are exceptions, of course. Some have studied at special schools or under masters who encourage a flair for the dramatic.

Skoalam Marlgrask (CN male Chessentan Swashbuckler 18) is a well known professional duelist who travels Chessenta, looking for sponsors to finance his dueling career. He makes a sizable income from this, buying properties all over the region. Marlgrask has proven extremely difficult to kill (much to the chagrin of his many enemies and detractors), possessing a sixth sense for danger and a remarkable resistance to poisons. He occasionally takes on students, teaching young wealthy noble sons and merchants in return for exorbitant sums of money.



Sraece Telthorn (Fighter 16/Swashbuckler 7) is a teacher of swordplay at a number of locations in both Yhaunn and Waterdeep. In contrast to Skoalam, who lives a life of luxury, Sraece lives a much earthier life, preferring simple pleasures such as the company of lads and lasses, local bars, and common traditions. Despite his earthiness, Sraece is every bit the effeminate dandy, balancing the role of hardened swordsman and effete fashion-hound equally well. He appears quite straightforward, but those in the know suggest that the master swordsman hides many secrets, not the least of which is his knowledge of several portals between the City of Splendors and Yhaunn.

The dregs of Skullport may seem an unlikely stage for the dramatics of swashbucklers, but the city's penchant for intrigue and performance has filtered down into its lowest depths. The colorful swashbuckler Rhaunaguth acts as a hiresword in the underground city, taking a variety of contracts that test his blade. He is one of three mercenary lords that compete for these contracts. The other two are the joyless warrior Dalagor, who favors undead minions, and the well-connected (and protected) half-elf Trilluach.

The drow are known more for their cruelty and viciousness than for their flair for the dramatic, but the latter should not be underestimated. Melee-Magthere, the academy for male warriors in Menzobarranzan, may try hard to breed civility and chivalry out of its students, but a small number still manage to graduate with swashbuckling flair. The members of Bregan D'aerthe include several swashbucklers, not the least of which is their extravagant leader Jarlaxle. His penchant for style and drama rivals even the most good-hearted Waterdhavian dandy, his cunning outmatched by none.

From the swaggering mercenaries of Sembia to the Society of the Grand Gauche in Raven's Bluff, numerous swashbuckling groups and individuals exist throughout the Realms. For those wishing to use the lore above but without introducing this class, there is an alternative. Any swashbuckler can easily be replaced with a fighter/rogue multiclass or one of the *Unearthed Arcana* fighter or rogue variants, such as the thug or the rogue variant on page 58.

#### Marshals

There are many who believe that a true general is born, not made. Those who hold this belief feel that these gifted leaders come into the world with an inherent talent for leadership, tactics, and battle strategy. Others posit that the best war leaders hone their skills by moving up through the ranks of military forces, paying their

dues and earning their keep. These warriors have slogged on through rainy marches, slept in their armor in stifling heat, watched their friends die, and still kept to their mission. The wisest in the Realms know that real war leaders must have a combination of both these things -- natural talent tempered by war experience. These generals are known as marshals, and war cannot be fought without them.

All marshals in the Realms have significant military experience. Some were born into royalty or nobility, starting out life with a certain pedigree. Many of these go on to military academies where they hone their sense of honor and sharpen their fighting skills. Other marshals come from humbler backgrounds, starting out as grunts and soldiers and eventually earning their way up in rank. Significant experience is required to be able to project the confidence and reassurance that comes from a marshal's minor and major auras. While marshal is a 20-level class, many of these warriors have levels in fighter or paladin before proceeding to marshal. Some do start out as marshals, but their true prowess does not become evident until higher levels.



A number of military academies exist that pave the way for young warriors with a talent for tactics and leadership. The Academy of Arms in Athkatla provides basic warrior training for many young men and women. Special courses are conducted for those with a propensity for tactics and leadership. Rolbanyion Zelnar (LG Tethyrian male fighter 4/Marshal 11), a disowned noble son of a slave-trading family in Tethyr, is the permanent staff member for these courses. He runs special simulations in difficult battlefield situations, inviting magical guests to provide unusual challenges. Rolbanyion, or "Old Rol" as he is called by his students (but never to his face), would have been eliminated by the Zelnar family long ago, but the noble family fears retaliation from the Council of Six. Rolbanyion is vital to the Council's plans -- he trains troops to fight in the Stinger Wars or against the Sothilisian Empire. Rolbanyion has cultivated a relationship of respect with the various military and guard authorities, often inviting Warmaster Vikton Velinticula (head of the Amnian archery division), Seashield Albenard Erenkonia (head of the Amnian navy), and Brightblade Bruth Behlhorn (chief tactical officer of the Amnian army) to be guest lecturers and to discuss the threats faced and tactics employed in their divisions.

Numerous other war colleges and academies exist in the Realms. Purple Dragon Knights in Cormyr work hand in hand with the War Wizards to plan tactics. They count a number of marshals among their ranks, valiant and tactically brilliant battle leaders who coordinate both military and magical strategies. While some of the Knights are wary of the wizards, they cannot deny the necessity for magical and military cooperation. These marshals must learn to balance magic and might, often employing auras that enhance the spellcasting ability of their wizards. Such cooperation exists in other regions as well, though the cooperation of magic and military might not always be smooth.

For those wishing to use the lore presented above but without introducing the marshal class into their games, there is an alternative. Fighters, paladins, and other warrior classes can be substituted for marshal. Various feats (such as leadership and aura-granting feats), prestige classes, and other mechanisms can help such a warrior simulate the bonuses granted by a marshal to his troops without requiring levels in the marshal class.

### Dragonfire Adepts

Like warlocks, dragonfire adepts in the Realms either forge pacts with powerful beings or access the innate power of their blood. Only beings of great power can supply such pacts -- dragon ascendants such as Tchazzar, draconic deities such as Tiamat or Bahamut, or augmented dragons of extraplanar power. These adepts tap into their acquired or natural power, using it to produce magical invocations similar to those of warlocks but also to use breath weapons resembling those of dragons. Unlike warlocks, dragonfire adepts are frequently found among good creatures, though less so than among those who embrace evil.



Whereas dragon shamans are usually found only among primitive human and humanoid tribes, dragonfire adepts run the whole gamut of civilization. Some are primitive tribal mystics not dissimilar to dragon shamans. These make pacts with or are descended from extremely powerful dragons in their regions. Others come from noble families, having rediscovered a long-lost link to an ancient, powerful wyrmlord. Regardless of the source of their power, dragonfire adepts are often misunderstood and feared. They carry the same aura of awesome power, sense of mystery, and terrifying intensity that is found in true dragons.

It is not uncommon for dragonborn of Bahamut to become dragonfire adepts. Their reawakening by Xymor has granted them the innate power to manifest dragon magic and breath. Currently, a group of five reclusive dragonfire adepts known as "The Light of Xymor" is off on a mission in the underdark below Vaasa. It is unknown what the goal of this group is, but it is believed that they are staging an attack against the Handmaidens of the Undying Queen, an insidious group of Tiamatan clerics based in Vaasa.

One of the most foul dragonfire adepts in the Realms is Nevelaster Rellicraun (LE unique Untheri tiefling male warlock 6/dragonfire adept 6). Nevelaster is a tiefling of extremely unusual ancestry. It is believed that he descended from some horrible pairing of an abishai and a human, resulting in an abominable hybrid of draconic and native outsider. Nevelaster is even stranger, because he walks the paths of infernal and dragon magic, possessing levels in both the warlock and dragonfire adept. Some Tiamatan clerics in Unther believe that Nevelaster is vital in the Dark Queen's plans for the conquest of the Realms.

The most common sources of dragonfire adept pacts are draconic deities. Tiamat and Bahamut make the greatest number of these pacts, but other dragon gods of the Realms can also provide such pacts, including --

- Aasternian (dragon god of learning and invention)
- Astilabor (dragon god of status and wealth)
- Chronepsis (dragon god of fate and death)
- Falazure (dragon god of undeath)
- Garyx (dragon god of destruction)
- Hlal (dragon god of inspiration)
- Io (dragon god of creation)
- Kalzareinad (dead dragon god of secrets)
- Kereska (dragon god of creativity and magic)
- Lendys (dragon god of justice)
- Tamara (dragon god of life)
- Task (dragon god of greed)
- Tchazzar (dragon demigod of Chessenta), and
- Zorquan (god of dragonkind)

The next most common sources are powerful draconic magic users and augmented dragons bearing fiendish, celestial, or dracolich pseudonatural abilities. Included among this list are --

- Arsekaslyx (pseudonatural guardian of the Well of Dragons)
- Nexus (most powerful sorcerer of true dragonkind)
- Alasklerbanbastos (dracolich Lord of Threskel), and
- Dretchroyaster (hideous dracolich of Cormanthor)

The statistics for all of these dragons can be found in Chapter 1 of *Dragons of Faerûn*.

For those wishing to use the lore presented above but without introducing the dragonfire adept class into their games, there is an alternative. Sorcerers, especially those with the half-dragon template or draconic heritage feats, can duplicate many of the abilities of dragonfire adepts, filling much the same role.

#### Infernal Adept feat

You have learned exotic invocations previously beyond your grasp.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to use greater invocations as a dragonfire adept or a warlock, special

**Benefits:** You learn one invocation from another class's list, choosing an invocation no more than two grades lower than the highest grade of invocation you know. For instance, an 11th-level warlock could learn a least invocation from the dragonfire adept list, while a 16th level dragonfire adept could learn a least or lesser invocation from the warlock list.

**Special:** This feat can be selected multiple times. It can be selected by a dragonblooded warlock with no additional requirements. The same is true for an outsider or fey dragonfire adept. If a character is not of those races, she must perform a special quest to learn the invocation. The specifics are left up to the DM, but the quest should involve some service to a force capable of granting the desired invocation and should take considerable time.

#### About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here](#).

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## Psionic Races and Classes

### Blues, Duergar, and Elans

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Previous articles in this series](#) discussed how to import classes from *Player's Handbook 2*, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and other sources into the *Forgotten Realms* Campaign Setting. This installment focuses on psionics and psionic classes in the Realms. The classes discussed are drawn from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and *Complete Psionic*. This article begins an examination of psionic races -- blues, duergar, and elans -- as a backdrop for psionic PCs and NPCs. Upcoming articles will deal with additional races, psionic classes, and psionics realities across the Realms.

The history of psionics in the Realms is less complicated than it might appear. Previous editions of *Forgotten Realms* have held different philosophies on the inclusion of psionics, ranging from complete inclusion -- even granting wild talents to numerous NPCs -- to the complete removal of psionics from the Realms. Third Edition and 3.5 adopt a more moderate approach, acknowledging and developing a small number of psionic organizations, races, and NPCs, but without making psionics a dominant aspect of the setting.

Even at its most pervasive, psionics (referred to in the Realms as the Invisible Art or mind magic) has always been a minor aspect of the Realms, limited to a handful of monster races and aberration types (such as mind flayers, yuan-ti, aboleths, and duergar), a small number of humans and drow, and a few odd religions. Psionics is a mysterious power that is barely understood and often completely unrecognized among the general populace. Despite this relative scarcity, small amounts of psionics are sprinkled throughout the Realms.

A handful of psionic races have sizable populations in the Realms. All of the common races contain a small number of psionic characters, but psionic power is much more common among the races described below.

#### Blues

Wherever there are significant goblin warrens, a small proportion (about 5%) of the population will be born blues, cunning and intelligent psionic goblins. These creatures, when allowed to survive, have an effect on the warrens far out of proportion to their numbers. They bring a startling degree of organization, tactics, and cohesion to these ordinarily squalid and disorganized communities.

The greatest example of this can be found in the goblin warrens of Brikklex under the Earthspur Mountains. Nominally led by Overshadow Wronsa (NE male bugbear fighter 6/rogue 3), the true power of Brikklex is divided evenly between a pair of blue psions and a bugbear cleric. The blues -- Drilret (CE male blue psion 5 [nomad]) and Gryxt (LE female blue psion 6 [telepath]) -- are the brains behind the settlement. Their role is to provide Wronsa with 'news' from outside the warrens, but the information they feed to him is highly filtered through their own agenda and laced with their own ambitions. These cunning psions play a dangerous game, and it is beginning to arouse suspicion from the religious leader of the tribe -- Wronsa's consort, the bugbear priestess Pruet (CE female bugbear cleric [Hruggek]).



The situation was not always this way. Originally, the blues served Wronsa truly and faithfully. They were subverted by lawan Thelecanter, a professor at the Nautical School of Magic in Hlammach in Impiltur (LE male Damaran transmuter 3/master specialist 10), with promises that they will be paid for their treachery with powerful magic and psionic items to set themselves up as tyrants.

Thelecanter has no intention of handing over the magic and psionic items he is promising to the two blues, as he has a much larger target in his sights. Some time ago, he learned (from a diviner colleague at the school) of a portal leading between the Gray Forest and the town of Longsaddle in the Dessarin Valley. Thelecanter realized immediately the strategic importance of such a portal, and he made it his goal to gain complete control over the gate. Further research revealed to him the presence of the twin blues within Brikklex, and he recognized in them the perfect tool to achieve his goal. Since their secret agreement, the blues have been feeding Wronsa information suggesting that the hobgoblins of the Gray Forest plan to move against Brikklex. Thelecanter hopes that this will incite a war between the two goblinoid tribes -- a war that will weaken both tribes so significantly that he can swoop in and destroy the remnants, thereby gaining control over the portal.

#### Duergar

During the time of their enslavement under the illithids, the duergar developed innate psionic abilities. The combination of psionic power, grim efficiency, and racial advantages make duergar fearsome foes. All duergar

possess the ability to become invisible and to enlarge their forms. Some develop these innate powers to an even greater extent, becoming psychic warriors and soulknives.

Numerous psionic organizations are attributed to the duergar. The Forak-Erach-Naek is a group of duergar soulknife/assassins based at the Darklake. Recently, the assassins staged an attempt on the life of Urdol (NE aboleth psion 10 [telepath]), ruler of the Aboleth city of Dupapn. Urdol declared war on the group, and that situation is likely to explode quite soon. (The Forak-Erach-Naek is described in detail on page 173 of the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*.)

The Gray Ghost thieves guild in Gracklstugh has a number of psionic members -- mostly lurks but also multiclass duergar and dero psychic warriors and psions. The guild is embroiled in a bitter war with the Keepers of the Flame, an order of psion/clerics [Laduguer] that serve Themberchaud (young adult red dragon), the Wyrmsmith of Gracklstugh. The war began when Zunkhasp Saltbaron (LE male duergar lurk 14), the nominal leader of the guild, organized the theft of a dragon egg from Themberchaud's treasure hoard. Themberchaud did not lay the egg -- he is a male dragon -- but it might be his offspring or part of the spoils of one of his conquests. The enraged keepers declared war on the guild, throwing the everyday affairs of the city into chaos.



Psionic power plays a major role in the city of Dunspeirrin, capital of the Steel Kingdom. The Spear of Conquest is a massive temple complex to Deep Duerra. Its membership comprises over 300 priests and 500 followers led by War Queen Ovdana Xothcorlar (LE duergar cleric 3 [Deep Duerra]/psion 3 [egoist]/psychic theurge 10). It also serves as a war college, a school of psionics, and as the primary religious congregation of the city. From her seat as the head of the complex, Ovdana is the real power behind Dunspeirrin, even though she nominally serves the War King. Under the influence of Deep Duerra, the dominant deity in the city, the college of psionics is one of the largest schools of psychic studies in either the Realms above or the Realms below.

A second prominent organization in Dunspeirrin is the Invisible Blades, a group of psionic spies and assassins that serves the Steel Kingdom. This group undertakes both internal and external missions -- it might equally send spies against a foreign power or assassins against dissenters in the capital city of Dunspeirrin.

The Mindstalkers of the Invisible Art are a secretive group of duergar psychic theurges with cells in most northern gray dwarf settlements. They hope to unify their race under a single consciousness for the purpose of power and conquest. In recent years, they have extended their sphere of influence into the duergar settlements beneath the Savage Frontier and in Skullport. Rumors abound in the human cargo trade that the Mindstalkers are buying slaves with psionic talent in order to breed those abilities into their population through psionic experimentation. It is unknown what the results of these experiments might be (or are), but opponents of the organization fear that this breeding program will enhance the power of the gray dwarves.

## Elans

Elans first appeared in the Realms during the time of Jhaamdhath, powerful psions that used their mental abilities to become immortal. The secret of this transformation was lost when the elves of Nikerymath destroyed the 12 cities of Jhaamdhath (see *Lost Empires of Faerûn*) with a mammoth, magical tidal wave. The citizens of the capital city, along with the leaders of the other 11 cities, were all in attendance at a massive gala in the Palace of Naarkolyth to celebrate the launching of a new naval fleet when the entire city was inundated by crashing waves. Unable to save themselves, the entire population drowned. When the citizens died, their consciousnesses merged into two beings -- a massive caller in darkness known as Bdethrys (22 Hit Dice, see the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*) and a strange vestige, now known as Abysm the Schismed (See [The Mind's Eye: Three Psionic Vestiges](#) and [The Tome of Magic](#)). Abysm represented the majority of the population, good citizens who were too swept up in the success of their empire to realize the destruction it was causing. The souls of a minority of the population which enjoyed the conquest and was completely callous to the loss of home and way of life being suffered by the elves were congealed into Bdethrys, a malevolent entity that seeks nothing but the consumption of souls.



Not all of the citizens of Jhaamdhath died when the city was destroyed by the elves. Many of the more powerful citizens had psionic contingencies that saved them from destruction by allowing them to teleport to safety while their poorer kindred perished. This included all of the heads of the cities, whose descendants went on to form many of the noble families of the region's later kingdoms.

Eventually, the 12 scions of Jhaamdhath realized that their time was at an end. Approximately 300 years after the fall of Jhaamdhath, the scions placed themselves in temporal stasis in the ghostly, extraplanar Palace of Naarkolyth, only to awaken when mortals entered the floating city. Abysm stands guard over their bodies, ready to lure in mortals when the time is right.

Since the destruction of Jhaamdhath, a phantom palace has been seen floating above the city once every few years. In the month of Flamerule, during the Year of Lightning Storms (1374), it rose above the waters of the Vilhon Reach. A ship happened to be traveling those waters, transporting dignitaries from all

## Wild Psionic Zones

Wild psionic zones, while far less common than their wild magic counterparts, do exist in the Realms. They are most frequently found near the ruins of ancient Jhaamdhathan cities. Small zones come into being

over Faerûn to Arrabar for a gala summit, when a massive electrical storm swept across the water, buffeting the vessel with strong wind and lightning. The storm was so intense that it plunged the ship below the surface, where most of the passengers drowned. Twelve alone were saved by the telekinetic power of Abysm and brought to Naarkolyth. Abysm instinctually knew to bring the mortals so that they could serve as new recipients of the elan transformation. When the mortals arrived, the scions awoke, understanding what needed to be done. After many centuries, the psionic energies of their stasis had decayed, making it impossible for them to leave Naarkolyth. The scions believe that the mortals, imbued with psionic power, may eventually come to free them. Unfortunately, before they had a chance to impart this knowledge, Abysm sent the mortals away.

Now the scions are awake but unable to affect the outside world in any substantial way. Despite their significant power, they cannot breach the psychic barriers created by Abysm and Bpdethrys. Their only hope is that the imbued mortals put together the pieces of their puzzle and locate Naarkolyth before the chaotic energies of their prison collapse it, thereby destroying both it and them.

The twelve elans awoke in random locations all throughout Faerûn, sent back when Abysm's lucidity wavered and its mind descended into chaos. They have no memory of their former lives or the events at Naarkolyth (save for the vision of a massive, dark cloud of human faces screaming at them) but all know that they are somehow different -- better than they were before, but also diminished. Most have a minor relic of their visit to Naarkolyth -- a power stone, dorje, or similar object.

### Elans as Player Characters

The twelve elans transformed by Abysm and the scions have no recollection of their pasts. All were dignitaries of minor importance from different nations throughout the Realms. Their forgotten histories and backgrounds can be written however players and DMs see fit. It's quite possible for these characters to run into people from their former lives, creating interesting and complex stories. They may also search for the source of their transformation, allowing Jhaamath and Naarkolyth to emerge in the campaign.

*Elans* use a form of the regional backgrounds system outlined in *Champions of Valor*. They do not come from any particular region, but their shared experiences provide them with common background traits.

*Region:* Character can have any region of origin, but all are united by their experience at Naarkolyth.

*Automatic Languages:* As per original home region.

*Bonus Languages:* As per original home region.

*Favored Deities:* As per original home region, though it's possible that some may come to worship Auppenser.

*Regional Feats:* Scion of the Twelve and three from original home region.

*Regional Equipment:* (A) Equipment from their original home region, or (B) dorje of a 1st-level psionic power with 20 charges, or (C) two 2nd-level power stones, or (D) two shards (+4, any one skill).

### New Feat -- Scion of the Twelve [Regional, Psionic]

Your body and mind hold the essence of one of the twelve scions of Jhaamath, allowing you to recognize the presence of your kind.

*Benefits:*

- You can use *detect psionics* at will as a psi-like ability. Your manifester level is equal to your character level.
- You gain a +2 bonus to your effective manifester level when manifesting powers from the clairsentience discipline.

You may select this feat only as a 1st-level character. You may have only one regional feat.

### About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

near decaying psionic items and artifacts. Larger wild psionic zones manifest in areas where powerful psionic minds died violently. They are also found in ancient places of the illithids and yuan-ti.

Lost temples, ruined psionic monasteries, and ancient artifacts are scattered across the Realms in the lost places of the world. When they decay or are left alone for centuries, their power can become warped and create an area of unstable mental energy.

Mechanically, wild psionic zones function in much the same way as wild magic zones as described in the FRCS, though they only affect psionic powers.

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## Psionic Races and Classes

### Ghostwise Halflings, Githyanki, Mind Flayers, Yuan-ti, and Psionic Bestiary

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Previous articles in this series](#) discussed how to import classes from *Player's Handbook 2*, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and other sources into the *Forgotten Realms* Campaign Setting. This installment focuses on psionics and psionic classes in the Realms. The classes discussed are drawn from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and *Complete Psionic*. This article begins an examination of psionic races -- blues, duergar, and elans -- as a backdrop for psionic PCs and NPCs. Upcoming articles will deal with additional races, psionic classes, and psionics realities across the Realms.

The history of psionics in the Realms is less complicated than it might appear. Previous editions of *Forgotten Realms* have held different philosophies on the inclusion of psionics, ranging from complete inclusion -- even granting wild talents to numerous NPCs -- to the complete removal of psionics from the Realms. Third Edition and 3.5 adopt a more moderate approach, acknowledging and developing a small number of psionic organizations, races, and NPCs, but without making psionics a dominant aspect of the setting.

Even at its most pervasive, psionics (referred to in the Realms as the Invisible Art or mind magic) has always been a minor aspect of the Realms, limited to a handful of monster races and aberration types (such as mind flayers, yuan-ti, aboleths, and duergar), a small number of humans and drow, and a few odd religions. Psionics is a mysterious power that is barely understood and often completely unrecognized among the general populace. Despite this relative scarcity, small amounts of psionics are sprinkled throughout the Realms.

A handful of psionic races have sizable populations in the Realms. All of the common races contain a small number of psionic characters, but psionic power is much more common among the races described below.



#### Ghostwise Halflings

These tribal halflings possess a limited form of telepathy that allows them to mentally communicate with nearby creatures with whom they share a common language. Psionic characters are moderately more common among the ghostwise than they are among other races of hin. Most ghostwise halflings with psionic powers are wilders or psychic warriors, but they are not limited to these classes. The most famous psionic ghostwise halfling is Blaein Haltspear of the Channathwood (LG male ghostwise halfling monk 6/fist of Zuoken 10), slayer of the dragon [Amilektrevitriolis](#). With his fame, outsiders are beginning to learn of these reclusive hin and their unusual abilities. In campaigns featuring psionics, ghostwise halflings are assigned the psionic subtype.

#### Githyanki

The githyanki hold a minor outpost in Middle Old Shanatar called Gathchorof, in the ruins of the ancient dwarven realm of Torglor. Under their ruthless leader Frethen Harmswa (Female Githyanki Fighter 10/Psychic Warrior 6), the githyanki are making small inroads into the Underrealms, where they hope to expand their sphere of influence. So far, their expansion is tentative and focused defense. The soldiers of Gathchorof are distrustful of outsiders and unwelcoming to visitors. Rumors are circulating through the Underdark suggesting that the githyanki are looking for some sort of necromantic artifact. The illithids believe that the githyanki lost a powerful phylactery when a rift opened in astral space. The duergar whisper that the githyanki are seeking an artifact that draws the souls of the dead into the astral plane. Regardless of the nature of the artifact, the races of the Underdark are on edge. They fear an increasing githyanki expansion that will shake up the power dynamic of the land.

#### Improved Speak Without Sound [Psionic]

You have expanded the limits of your racial telepathic abilities.

**Prerequisite:** Ghostwise Halfling, Manifester Level 1st

**Benefits:** You gain the telepathy special ability (as described on page 316 of the *Monster Manual*). You must be psionically focused to use this ability. When you are not psionically focused, your ability functions as if you did not possess this feat.

**Normal:** The range of your telepathy is 20 ft; you can only speak with creatures with whom you share a common language; you can only speak with one target at a time.

#### Mind Flayers

The most feared of the psionic races are the illithids or mind flayers, alien octopus-headed creatures that dwell in dank places, manipulating the minds of lesser beings. A small but significant minority of these creatures have levels in psion, though all have significant inherent psionic ability. The most powerful mind flayer city is Oryndoll, a massive complex in the Lower Darklands. Ruled by the Encephalithid (NE elder brain psion 20 [telepath]), an incredibly powerful elder brain, Oryndoll is one of the most imposing and powerful cities in the Underdark. Recently, astral travelers have reported seeing strange explosions in astral space near portals originating in Oryndoll. Psychics among them claim to have heard strange alien screaming and have seen visions of an enormous, tentacle-headed being quaking in anger. Some whisper that Ilsensine, the god of the illithids, is angry with Oryndoll, but this is only conjecture.

### **Yuan-ti**

The most frequently encountered psionic creatures in the Realms are the yuan-ti. They are most common in Chult and are encountered in Hlondeth, but they can be found throughout the Realms. This race is the most usual introduction people have to the *invisible art*. From minor charms and attractions to full-blown psionic manipulation, those who cross the serpent folk often live (or not) to regret it. Because of considerable interbreeding between yuan-ti and humans in the Serpent Kingdoms, psionic ability is more common here than in other parts of the Realms. This is also because of emanations from the remnants of buried Jhaamath (described elsewhere in this series). In most of the Realms, less than 1 in 10,000 people possesses even minor psionic ability. In lands where yuan-ti are more common, the number increases to 1 in 1,000, sometimes even 1 in 500. Other human lands with psionic presences will be described subsequently in the "Psionics Across the Land" installment.



### **Psionic Bestiary**

Psionic powers are significantly more common among monsters (especially aberrations) than among humanoid populations. A number of psionic monsters exist throughout the Realms, with the greatest concentration being in the Underdark.

- **Aboleths:** A number of small aboleth communities exist in both the waters of the Realms Above and in the Underdark. The largest of these is the city of Dupapn, led by Urdol the Mindseer (see the description of [the duergar](#)).
- **Alkada (Wingless Wonders):** These strange creatures resemble comical walking eggs, but that is where they cease being funny. With strange psionic blasts, an anti-magic shell, and the ability to release wild magic blasts (in a manner similar to *rods of wonder*) these creatures are dangerous when frightened. For the most part, the alkada -- which are generally found in or near wild magic zones and in areas of strong *faerzress* -- are harmless, but if provoked, they can prove quite deadly.
- **Araumykos:** The massive, sentient fungus below the High Forest is possibly the oldest living creature on Faerûn. While generally peaceful, it can defend itself by employing an astonishing array of psionic powers. Its reactions are completely unpredictable; it might use a minor charm when faced with a massive attack or warp reality when a gloaming tries to eat a piece of it. Some whisper that the creature is an avatar of Psilosyf, the lord of the Myconids, but this is only a theory.
- **Gem Dragons:** Gem dragons (amethyst, crystal, emerald, sapphire, and topaz) are rarer than their metallic and chromatic counterparts in the Realms. When the dragons of Faerûn went mad, the gem dragons used their abilities to leave the material plane. Since the Rage ended, they have begun to trickle back into Faerûn to reestablish their lives, but they often meet with great obstacles.
- **Grell:** These horrible, disembodied, psionic brain birds are most commonly found in the Vast Swamp, though they can exist anywhere that is foul enough. Those dwelling in the swamp worship the Imperator (advanced grell psion [shaper] 17), a massive grell that dwells completely submerged in the deepest depths of the swamp. The creatures treat the Imperator as a god, but in reality, it is no more than an extremely powerful psion.
- **Haun:** These malicious, psionic worms inhabit the coldest reaches of the world. Both arctic dwarves and northern barbarians tell of these foul creatures and spit with disgust as they recount tales in which the creatures leapt from refuse piles, inches from biting off the face of a companion. While filthy and foul, the haun are also extremely intelligent. They plan their moves and use clever tactics. When their normal prey -- the giant slugs known as haundar -- is unavailable, they have been known to attack humanoid settlements.
- **Intellect Devourers:** The strange, walking brains known as intellect devourers are typically found in the employ of illithids. Because of their ability to possess a humanoid host, the creatures are often sent to spy on rival mind flayers, drow, and duergar. They are sometimes found alone in the Underdark, patiently waiting for and stalking sentient foes in order to feast on their brains.

#### **Serpentine Mind**

Your yuan-ti heritage has endowed you with psionic talent and resistance to the abilities of your ancestors.

**Prerequisite:** Snake Blood

**Benefits:** Each time you take the Psionic Talent feat, you gain one more power point than you normally would. In addition, you receive a +3 racial bonus on saving throws against the special abilities of Scaled Ones (as described in *Serpent Kingdoms*), including their poisons, psi-like abilities, and supernatural powers.



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07/03/2007



## Psionics Across the Land

Cormyr, Evereska, Kaliesh-Erai, Halruua,  
Sembia, the Shaar, Thindol

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. [Previous articles in this series](#) discussed how to import classes from *Player's Handbook 2*, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and other sources into the *Forgotten Realms* Campaign Setting. This installment focuses on psionics and psionic classes in the Realms. This article provides the geographic backdrop in which to place psionic PCs and NPCs.

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### Psionics Across the Land

Psionics crops up in small amounts throughout Faerûn. In some areas, such as the Serpent Kingdoms and the Underdark, psionic energy and the interbreeding of psionic races increases the frequency of psionic talent considerably. In others, psionic characters rally around a pivotal figure or gain acceptance through tolerance or the need for their skills. In addition to those described below, several psionic organizations are mentioned on pages 172-174 of the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*. The following are a sample of hooks that can be used in a campaign with a psionic focus.

#### Cormyr

Castle Crag, Cormyr's defensive outpost against the Stonelands, has begun to include psions on its staff. In the beginning, Bren Tallsword commissioned the mind mages for the purpose of sending messages to Arabel. Castle Crag needs to be able to call on Arabel's aid quickly and efficiently in the event that the outpost is attacked by overwhelming numbers. When a particularly nasty gnoll raid was predicted by the clairvoyant powers of one of the mind mages, a young soldier by the name of Ormion Bowbreaker (LG male Chondathan Psion [seer] 8), the question of including psions in the army was finally put to rest. When word spread of the interception, the War Wizards sent several of their members to speak with (interrogate) the mind mages. The War Wizards declared the mind mages to be trustworthy, but many War Wizards are still suspicious. Nevertheless, a call for the recruitment of further mind mages has been sent out, and the War Wizards are now combing the lands for wild talents.

#### Evereska

The greatest collectors of psionic lore in the Realms Above are members of the Kaliesh-Erai, an elven association of psionic characters in Evereska (as detailed in the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*, page 172). Currently, the organization is experiencing a schism. Its older, more conservative members, led by the venerable Theldir Whitemoon, seek seclusion, desiring to distance themselves from the outside world, especially the non-elven world. The younger contingent, led by Dalhoeneir Delthoenoth, wishes to correspond with non-elf mind mages, possibly even admitting such individuals into their ranks. This conflict recently erupted when one of the members, a young moon elf by the name of Reliath Crescentia, stole a number of powerful objects from the collection of the organization. This sparked a massive series of debates about the future of the organization that have yet to be resolved.

- **The Kaliesh-Erai (Standard Psionic)** AL Any non-evil; 40,000 gp resource limit; Membership 55; Elves (25 moon elves, 15 sun elves, 5 wood elves, 2 wild elves, 1 avariel, 1 celadrin, 6 half-elves); Dues 10% tithe.
- **Authority Figures:** Theldir Whitemoon, leader of the conservative contingent (LN male sun elf psion 18 (shaper); Dalhoeneir Delthoenoth, leader of the expansionist contingent (CG male moon elf wilder 11)
- **Important Characters:** Reliath Crescentia (CN female wood elf lurk 9)
- **Associated Classes:** Psionic classes (mainly psion and wilder)
- **Associated Skills:** Autohypnosis, Knowledge (psionics), Psicraft
- **Requirements:** At least 5 or more ranks in 2 of the following skills -- Autohypnosis, Knowledge (psionics), Psicraft
- **Favored in Guild Benefits:** 15% discount on psionic services
- **Special:** Will only accept elves and half-elves with demonstrable psionic ability.

## Halruaa

Halruaa is known for its numerous wizards but even more for the fact that many common folk have basic magical training. Surprisingly, Halruaa also seems to have a greater than average number of psionic characters. The best known mind mages in Halruaa are members of the Destroyers, a mercenary company based in Halabbar. Led by Daltim Flamefist (LN Halruaan domain wizard [fire] 3/psion [shaper] 3/cerebromancer 10), a powerful Halruaan noble and scholar of pyromancy and psionics, the Destroyers number about 50, including 20 warriors, 15 wizards and sorcerers, and 15 psionic characters.

Daltim is well known for his endeavors leading the Destroyers but also for his research. He penned the book *Daltim's Tome of Fire*, a treatise on both fire magic and psionic powers and items. He lost the book while involved in the Tethyrian Civil War and hasn't been able to find it. Daltim offers a reward of 10,000 gp to anyone who brings back the tome and 1,000 gp for credible information leading to its return.

## Sembia

Sembia is a land full of mercenaries. As long as these mercenaries are effective, most Sembian merchants and nobles don't care about the source of supernatural powers of their employees. As such, a small, but greater than average number of psionic characters -- mostly mercenaries -- have congregated in the land. The largest organization of this type, and the only one to exclusively recruit psionic characters, is the Stray Thoughts (described in detail on page 173 of the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*). Led by Jacenelle Traen (CG female Chondathan wilder 16), the group is well known for its discretion and professionalism. Recently, the Stray Thoughts were hired to search for a psionic artifact of unknown abilities by an elusive, cowed figure known as Z'dusk. Unbeknownst to the mercenary company, the artifact they are searching for -- which is buried somewhere in the sandy caves of coastal Sembia -- is some sort of loosed fragment of an avatar of the god Ilsensine, god of the illithids. Z'dusk (NE male illithid psychic warrior 6/elocater 10) is a scout for the Council of Oryndoll. The council hopes that recovering the fragment will quell the anger of Ilsensine, but they are taking no chances. They plan to hire several other bands of mercenaries and adventurers in an effort to find the artifact. They have no intention of paying the 25,000 gp reward for the item's return, hoping instead to seize it from the mercenaries and kill them.

## The Shaar

An unusual event occurs every four years in the Shaar during the month of Eleasis. Each year, hundreds of people gather from all over the South (and beyond) to a massive dance in the central plains known as the Dance of the Shimmering Blades. Attendants claim that the land calls to them, sending forth welcoming pulses of energy as an invitation to return to their roots. Prior to this time, Shaarmid swells with travelers making their way to this gathering. Almost all of the attendants have some form of psionic ability, though many have only the faintest wild talent, such as enhanced vision or a minor psi-like ability. Most of the attendees are wilders who feel the call most passionately, but others are drawn, never even knowing that they possess psychic gifts. All dance, eat, drink, and revel deep into the night for seven days, making lifelong friends and contemplating their own life's journeys. Members of numerous races, many of whom would not normally get along, are brought together by an unspoken bond. No one speaks of why they are there, but all feel a common connection.

## Thindol

In a network of narrow caves running through the Hills of Sythrlia in this remote grassy region bordering Chult lives the Sythrlian Sybil, a psychic seer of incredible power. Sythrlia was an ancient heroine of Thindolean history, famous for her liberation of the people from the grip of yuan-ti domination. The Sybil (CN female Chultan human psion [seer] 11/psion uncarnate 10) is an expert in all things psychic as well as a powerful and wise prophetess. Visitors travel from all over Faerun to seek the Sybil's guidance, sometimes to be turned away without ever seeing the reclusive seer. They keep coming back, however, knowing that she is one of the most knowledgeable scholars of psionic lore in the Realms.

## Psionics Among the Drow

For much of its history, Menzobarranzan included a powerful family of psionic drow among its elite -- House Oblodra. When the drow clerics lost their connection to the Spider Queen, House Oblodra made its move toward dominance, using its psionic power in an attempt to overwhelm the priestesses. The attempt nearly succeeded, but in the end, the house was destroyed and most of its members slaughtered. A few members of the family survived, mostly by being out of the city at the time. The most well known is Kimmuriel Oblodra, leader of the mercenary band Bregan D'aerthe, but there are at least a few other survivors, none of whom are aware of each other. These drow are carving new niches for themselves in both the Realms Above and in the Underdark.

Psionics also plays a pivotal role in the workings of Llurth Dreier, the most populous drow city in the Realms. While drow represent the majority of the population, true power lies in the 'hands' of aboleths with levels in psion and cleric [Ghaunadar]. A number of the aboleth ruling this city are extremely powerful, enabling them to maintain tight rein on such a large populace. Unbeknownst to the aboleths, their constant psionic manipulation of the populace has begun to awaken latent psychic talents in their thralls. It's likely that this will lead to some sort of revolt, but the resistance movement has not yet developed sufficiently to enable this to happen.

## About the Author

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## Psionic Classes

**Ardent, Divine Mind, Psion, Wilder,  
Erudite, Psychic Warrior, Soulnknife, Lurk**

Eytan Bernstein

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### Psionic Classes

All of the 20-level classes found in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and *Complete Psionic* can be found in the Realms, though some are more common than others. The most commonly seen are psions and wilders, followed by psychic warriors and soulnives. The other classes -- lurks, divine minds, erudites, and ardent are present, but in fairly small numbers.

### Ardents and Divine Minds

Ardents and Divine Minds are in many ways the clerics and paladins of psionic characters. They are more detached from their religions than members of those divine classes, believing in the qualities and philosophies their deities represent more than in the holiness or sanctity of the god itself. Ardent and divine minds can be found in an organized religious structure such as a monastery of Deneir or a temple of Deep Duerra but are just as frequently encountered on their own. In general, these characters determine a philosophy and then find a deity that matches it. It's possible that they could be 'called' by their deity, but more often the god is barely aware of the devotion of these characters, being more interested in those who exult in his or her holiness.

While any of the religions of the Realms can produce divine minds and ardent -- as described on page 11 of *Complete Psionic* -- they are most frequently found among religions with a specific connection to psionics. For more information on these religions, see the Psionic Religions section outlined below.

### Psions and Wilders

Psions and wilders are by far the most commonly encountered psionic characters in the Forgotten Realms. Unlike with the difference between wizards and sorcerers, there isn't always much distinction between the development of a psion or wilder's powers. Both usually have innate psionic ability, though in some cases, a psion's ability can be awakened via intense meditation and asceticism, whereas a wilder's abilities are always inherent. The biggest difference between the classes is the method by which they channel their powers. Psions manifest by exerting control over the powers that live in their mind. This is usually done through the use of chakra, meditation techniques, yoga, or other mental and physical disciplines that allow for great mental and physical control. Wilders manifest through the force of their emotions, becoming more powerful when they feel passionately about what they are doing. The more out of control a wilder gets, the more dangerous she becomes. A wilder need no schooling to develop her powers, but generally, a psion must find a teacher, book, or mentor in order to further unlock her gifts, though exceptions do exist.

### Psionic Religions

Few deities in the Realms are concerned with psionics, but there is a small handful of gods that have psionics as part of their portfolio of worship. None of these gods have much in common save for their interest



in the mental arts.

- **Auppenser:** The slumbering god of fallen Jhaamdhath retains a glimmer of awareness, granting powers to a select few -- mostly [psychic theurges](#), [divine minds](#), and [ardents](#) -- many of whom have taken the Servant of the Fallen feat (from *Lost Empires of Faerun*). It's quite possible that the elans who awakened at Naarkolyth might discover more about this lost god, increasing his worship and awakening his consciousness. Auppenser grants access to the Guardian, Mental Power, Physical Power, and Repose mantles.
- **Deneir:** Deneir is not explicitly interested in psionic powers, but it is known that his chosen exhibit significant telepathic and clairsentient ability. A number of his priests are [psychic theurges](#), perfecting both their minds and their faiths through study and devotion. Deneir grants access to the Good, Guardian, Knowledge, and Magic mantles.
- **Deep Duerra:** The Queen of the duergar is a malicious and violent deity bent on conquest and domination. She demands strength of body and mind from her followers, accepting nothing less than complete control and ruthlessness. While Laduguer is more popular among the older generations of duergar, Deep Duerra has a significant following among the youth of the race, especially those with psionic powers. Deep Duerra grants access to the Evil, Law, Mental Power, and Physical Power mantles.
- **Ilsensine:** The alien and elusive deity of the illithids is experiencing a strange, new sensation -- anger. It has recently lost a fragment of one of its avatars and has no idea how this occurred. In its anger, it has shocked the mind flayers into searching for the artifact but is not fully aware of how its anger affects its people (or perhaps it doesn't care). Ilsensine will not relax until this shard of consciousness is restored, devoting almost all of its energies to its recovery. It grants access to the Evil, Knowledge, Law, and Magic mantles.
- **Laduguer:** The chief duergar deity is not as focused on psionics as his daughter Duerra, but his worshippers do include a significant number of mind mages. The worshippers of Duerra consider the invisible art as their key tool in the domination of other races. The worshippers of Laduguer see it as just another part of their might and magic. The Gray Protector grants access to the Evil, Law, Magic, and Protection mantles.
- **Piscaethces:** The Blood Queen, an elder evil nominally worshipped by the Aboleth, is a wholly alien and unreachable entity. While she does not actively take part in any aspect of Aboleth existence, she does grant domains and mantles to her followers, few though they are. Piscaethces grants access to the Corruption and Madness, Creation, Evil, and The Planes mantles.
- **Sseth:** The worship of Sseth is complicated, because the true god known as Sseth has been asleep since the Time of Troubles. His portfolio has been subsumed by Set, who is granting domains and mantles. Set (in the guise of Sseth) grants access to Evil, Law, Light and Darkness, and Magic mantles.

Among the human regions of the Realms, psions and wilders are most frequently found in areas built over the remains of the civilizations of psionic humans and monsters. This includes the Vilhon Reach (along with the rest of the Serpent Kingdoms), areas that are built above illithid and duergar cities, and areas with strong wild psionic fluctuation. Most others in their regions view the powers of these mysterious folk as just another type of magic. They are as mistrustful of psionic characters as they are of other magic users.

Even among experts, psionic characters are not normally thought of as healers. An unusual exception to this is a group of itinerant caregivers known as the Hands of the Glade. Based in the city of Gildenglade in Turmish, the group is of mixed race (elves, half-elves, and dwarves, as well as a few humans and members of other races), but of equal mind. They are dedicated to aiding injured and weary travelers and adventurers in Turmish, using their unusual psionic abilities to renew the bodies and minds of their charges. All are or aspire to learn the art of [sangehirm](#), an unusual discipline of psionics devoted to the healing of others.

## Erudites

Erudites are generally psions who are so studious that they have expanded the capacity of their minds. This has increased versatility in that they can manifest a vast array of powers, but they must compensate by limiting themselves to having a small number of powers available at any given time. Erudites can be found anywhere that psions are found, though they are more likely to live in institutions of learning such as Candlekeep.

The most well known erudite in the Realms is Mendelon Shroudkeeper (NG male Damaran erudite 18). Mendelon is a recluse, having holed himself up in Candlekeep, away from the prying eyes of his family, a devoted line of priests of Shar. He is one of the greatest scholars of psionic lore in the Realms but grants appointments very rarely.

## Psychic Warriors

For some, psychic power is a matter of physical and mental balance. They channel their mental energies into enhancing their bodies and fighting styles. These combatants are psychic warriors and soulknives, mind mages with a decidedly martial streak. Psychic warriors are similar to psions in that they must receive training to access their powers. Some manage to develop their abilities on their own, but almost all find that mentorship greatly increases their understanding of their abilities.

At the martial academy of Melee-Magthere in the drow city of Menzobarranzan, a small group of psychic warriors covertly meets to duel and practice their skills. Decidedly anti-establishment but extremely cautious, they keep their activities secret, fearing that after the catastrophe with house Oblodra, the matron mothers would destroy any hint of psionics in their city. They are led by Dormiil Dek'Theima, the son of the weapon master of House Dek'Theima, a minor house known for its expertise in poisons. Most of the six members hope

to join Bregan D'aerthe, but some speak of forming their own psionic company with plans to explore the world above. They secretly worship Selvetarm, exulting in the 'male power' they feel is denied to them in Menzobarranzan.

### Soulknives

Soulknives are split between self-taught warriors and those who studied under mentors. No one knows why some psionic individuals develop mindblades instead of manifestations. Among all psionic characters, the powers of the soulknife are the least cerebral in origin, stemming from complete physical rather than mental control. This is not to say that soulknives lack discipline. Their power lies in knowledge and respect for their bodies rather than contemplation of their minds.

The Forak-Erach-Naek is not the only organized group of soulknives in the Realms. Based in Impiltur, there is a unit of the Knights of Imphras II known as the Order of the Bladewright. These soulknives serve their country, dedicating themselves, body and mind, to the protection of the hidden Boy King, who is himself secretly a member of the Knights of Imphras II. Considering the frequent assassinations of kings in Impiltur's history, the crown is taking no chances with its heir, keeping him under constant protection despite his many protests.

### Lurks

Lurks are psionic characters with a penchant for sticking to the shadows. The talent necessary to become a lurk is similar to that of a psychic warrior but with more focus on subtlety and stealth. Lurks can be found in small numbers in any area with a significant thieves' guild. Lurks naturally congregate in major cities, as they grow tired of dominating the underground trade of smaller urban centers. They use their considerable advantages to carve a niche for themselves as deadly assassins and information brokers.

Surprisingly, lurks are more common among the dwarves than any other race in the Realms. A small guild of dwarven lurks, affectionately known as the Knights of the Wall, runs an illicit trade operation out of Hammer and Anvil in the Great Rift. Under their wily leader Harhault Hammerheart (CG male gold dwarf lurk 8), a worshipper of the dwarven god Marthammor Duin, the Knights make seedy bargains and illegal trade deals with greedy human merchants right under the noses of the guards of the Steel Shields at the outer wall of Earheart. Part of their success is owed to the dwarven tendency to assume that other dwarves are law-abiding citizens and industrious workers. But like anywhere else, a few individuals always go against the grain. Little they do is truly malicious. Harhault has ambitions to break down the rigid trade barriers limiting the Great Rift, and most of the group's activities are geared toward this end.



### About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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07/18/2007



## Binders

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from the *Player's Handbook* 2, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and *Heroes of Horror*. This installment focuses on one class from the [Tome of Magic](#) -- the Binder.

### Binders

Throughout the extensive history of the Realms, numerous gods, outsiders, powerful creatures, and tragic mortals have fallen out of memory. For a variety of reasons -- curses, banishment, the dissolution of a faith, or magical imprisonment -- these beings have been forsaken, abandoned by the world as forgotten relics of a former age. These 'vestiges' no longer truly exist, instead inhabiting a realm that can be accessed by none. Somehow, through accident, quirk of fate, or sheer force of will, some find a foothold in the Realms. As with any source of power, enterprising mortals discover and exploit the vestiges. Most often, such mortals seek an easy source of power, but sometimes they are true scholars delving into forbidden mysteries and arcane taboos.

As a mainly individualistic pursuit, no single culture or empire has a strong history of binders, but they were most frequently seen among the ancient Nar and Imaskari. The Nar were obsessed with the summoning and binding of evil creatures in all its forms. Theirs was one of the few cultures in the history of the Realms where binders had little fear of retribution. Today, ruins and artifacts of ancient Narfell bear hidden symbols and glyphs that can provide a savvy binder with clues and leads on summoning vestiges.

The Imaskari were interested in magic that related to other planes of existence and frequently employed portals and extradimensional spaces. Some of these portals are now malfunctioning, creating dank environments full of environmental and monstrous hazards. They also contain artifacts and glyphs hidden by the sludge of leaking elemental gates. Their use of the Celestial Nadir and numerous planar magics put them in contact with alien beings and gave them clues about ancient vestiges. Meticulous binders can find a treasure trove of clues about the existence of forgotten and abandoned entities by exploiting such portals.

Binders are found all over the Realms, but they rarely concentrate in any one location. The easy power granted by vestiges appeals to many, leading individuals all over the world to discover vestiges under their own unique circumstances. Whether they hear the call from beyond or discover ancient runes that lead to a series of other clues, each binder is unique in how she comes upon her path.

### Vestiges from the *Tome of Magic*

The following are adaptations of select vestiges from the *Tome of Magic*. The stories of the vestiges have been altered to fit the entities into the history of the Realms. Some, such as Andromalius or Ronove require little adaptation. Simply change Olidammara to Mask and make Ronove's patron Ilmater. Others, such as Buer, Grandmother Huntress, or Paimon, the Danger are generic enough that they require no changes. In the case of Karsus, the story can be expanded or altered slightly to include the greater detail present in the Realms, but the information can otherwise remain intact. Other entries require more substantial alterations.

### Acererak, The Devourer

The story of a human who sought immortality by turning himself into a lich fits well with that of Sammaster, First Speaker of the Cult of the Dragon. Unlike Acererak, Sammaster did not seek to become a god, but he did hope to control the world with undead dragons, rivaling Acererak in ambition. When Sammaster was slain by the heroes of the Rage of Dragons, his essence was dispersed by the light of Lathander. Despite this obliteration, the will of the archmage was so strong that his presence sustained itself beyond the reaches of space or time. Now, a few of his loyal followers in the Cult of the Dragon have begun experimenting with methods to call upon his power via special sigils.

### Agares, Truth Betrayed

The story of Agares has many parallels to that of the Djinni Calim, founder of the Calim Empire. Both were obsessed with the defeat of a rival genie. In the case of Agares, the genie was a rival commander. In the case of Calim, it was his arch-nemesis, the efreeti known as Memnon. Whereas Agares was betrayed by allies,



Calim was, in a different manner, betrayed by the elves of Keltormir. When the elves bound the spirits of the genies to the earth and air, they placed them beyond space and time. Now, Calim can be summoned as a vestige that grants powers related to the elements of earth and air.

### Amon, The Void Before the Altar

The parallels between Amon and the Netherese sun god Amaunator are such that little needs to be changed in Amon's entry to fit him into the Realms. Both deities were gods of sun and justice who were forsaken and neglected. Amon became twisted as a vestige such that some argue that the vengeful Bedine god At'ar the Merciless is just a twisted progression of abandoned Amaunator. For the purposes of the Realms, Amaunator can be substituted for Amon. Even if Lathander is an incarnation or progression of Amaunator, the very memory of the Netherese god's abandonment could have resulted in the creation of a vestige.



### Aym, Queen Avarice

In the Realms, Queen Helmma of Ammarindar can be substituted for Aym. While Helmma's sister, Princess Olmma (LN female shield dwarf ghost fighter 6) defended Citadel Yaunoroth with her life, Helmma was busy counting and cataloguing her riches. Helmma had been visiting for a short period to examine the riches that were stored in Yaunoroth. When the hordes of Ascalhorn swarmed the citadel, Princess Olmma bought time for the citizens to flee, but Helmma was so greedy that she couldn't abandon her riches and perished in the flames of her avarice. Helmma cursed Moradin for not protecting Yaunoroth, and he in turn cursed her soul, preventing her from an afterlife with the dwarves. Seeing a kindred spirit (and enjoying any opportunity to get back at Moradin for losing dominion over the gold dwarves to Dumathoin), Abbathor, dwarven god of greed, turned Helmma into a vestige.



### Marchosias, King of Killers

During the Time of Troubles, Bane absorbed the essence of all of the Bhaal-worshipping assassins in the world during his fight with Torm, greatly weakening Bhaal. The most despicable of the assassins, a strong-willed murderer by the name of Marchosias, would not be so easily subsumed. Marchosias managed to break free of Bane's control, and his soul slipped down into hell, where it rightfully belonged. While in hell, Marchosias was attacked by a throng of assassins and thugs he had murdered. In life, the assassin's favorite targets had been thieves, thugs, and murderers. In death, they were his undoing. His soul was torn to pieces by the legions of his victims, and he became a vestige in the void between space and time.



### New Vestige

The following is a new vestige for the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

### Zceryll, "The Star Spawn"

Zceryll was a mortal sorceress who communed with alien powers from the far realm. She became obsessed with immortality, seeking out the alien beings in the hopes of learning their eternal secrets. When she died, she became a hideously twisted vestige, forever seeking to re-enter the Realms via numerous artifacts she dispersed across the world. Zceryll grants you the ability to transform your body and mind into an alien form, granting you telepathy, resistance to effects related to insanity, the ability to summon pseudonatural creatures, and the power to unleash bolts of pure madness.

Table 1-2 Addendum: Vestiges by Level			
Vestige Level	Vestige	Binding DC	Special Requirement
6th	Zceryll	25	No

**Legend:** Thousands of years ago, an alienist sorceress known as Zceryll learned bizarre powers in a fight to defend herself against oppression. She was promised untold power by strange, alien beings known as star-spawn from beyond the world. All she had to do was to create portals to summon them.

Zceryll created the portals and summoned the star spawn to her aid. She fought back against her oppressors, finding a newfound purpose in her life. She traveled the world, creating many portals for her masters and items of her own devising.

Zceryll was unaware of the slow corruptive effect the star spawn had on her. By the time she realized something was wrong, it was too late to change. Eventually, her body became so suffused with alien power that she became one of them. When her life came to an end, she was a twisted and bitter old hag. She felt she had accomplished nothing and became obsessed with youth. When her time was up, her soul vanished into the far realms, and she became a vestige.

As a vestige, Zceryll, now a phantom twisted alien entity, seeks to exert as much influence over the Realms as possible. She has whispered clues to those who bind her in an effort to guide them to the location of artifacts and items she created, such as the *bone scepter of Zceryll* (in the Well of Dragons), the *star-spawn scepter*, the *aberrant spheres*, the *black blood kaleidoscope*, and the *rod of Taupanga*.

**Manifestation:** The area in and around the seal fills with thousands of tiny circular mirrors. A beautiful human woman is reflected in all of the mirrors, yet something is off about her features. After a few seconds, a scream is carried on the air and the image of the woman changes into a hideous mass of writhing tentacles. The mirrors then shatter, covering the floor with beautiful but alien patterns of glass that hurt the mind and cause the nose, mouth, eyes, and orifices to bleed black blood.



**Sign:** Your eyes appear as circular mirrors. In your peripheral vision, all other living creatures appear twisted, covered in tentacles, extra eyes, and vestigial organs.

**Influence:** Never admit that you need help or that you are weaker than anyone else. Treat those that are weaker than you with scorn and contempt, especially young women and spontaneous spellcasters.

**Granted Abilities:** While bound to Zceryll, your body and mind become alien, allowing you to channel the power of the star spawn in a variety of ways.

*Alien form:* While bound to Zceryll, you gain the pseudonatural template (page 161 of *Complete Arcane*).

*Alien Mind:* Your mind is alien and does not work like that of a normal mortal. You are immune to *confusion*, *insanity*, and *weird* spells. In addition, you receive a +1 bonus per four binder levels on saving throws against mind-affecting effects.

*Bolts of Madness:* You can fire a ray that dazes an opponent for 1d3 rounds. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack with a range of 100 ft. + 10 ft./binder level. A successful Will save negates the effect. Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again for 5 rounds.

*Summon Alien:* You can summon any creature from the *summon monster* list that a sorcerer of your level could summon. Any creature you summon with this ability gains the pseudonatural template. Thus, at 10th level you could summon any creature from the *summon monster I-V* list. When you reach 14th level, you can summon any creature from the *summon monster I-VII* list. You can only summon creatures that can be affected by the pseudonatural template. Once you have used this ability, you cannot do so again for 5 rounds.

*Telepathy:* You gain the telepathy ability with a range of 100 feet (as described on page 316 of the *Monster Manual*) and the Mindsight feat (as described on page 126 of *Lords of Madness*).

## About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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## Shadowcasters

### Shadow Magic

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from the *Player's Handbook* 2, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and *Heroes of Horror*. This installment focuses on one class from the [Tome of Magic](#) -- the Shadowcaster.

### Shadowcasters

Shadowcasters use powers akin to magic spells by forging a direct link with the plane of shadow. Though often solitary, shadowcasters frequently start out as promising apprentice magicians who are guided down a unique path by a shadowcaster mentor. At other times, shadow magic is a familial tradition, passed from one generation to the next. The most likely sponsor of a shadowcaster is one of the churches associated with darkness -- Shar, Mask, Shargaas, Set, and Lolth. These churches nurture shadowcaster mystic theurges and noctumancers, realizing the benefits of an increased interest in darkness among their worshippers.

A small number of shadow magic organizations have developed across the Realms. All need to deal with the many preconceived notions and judgments that come from those who don't understand their magic or ideology. One such shadow magic organization is "The Hand Behind the Mirror," a group of shadowcasters based in Athkatla. They are mercenaries known for their ability to rapidly transport warriors via the plane of shadow. This has been especially helpful in the current conflict involving the Sothillisian Empire and the Stingers of Oaxaptupa.

All shadowcasters face prejudice and persecution in the face of righteous paladins and clerics who believe that anything tied to shadow is inherently evil. Below is one of the larger organizations, a group of shadowcasters of mixed power who devote themselves to understanding shadow in all of its forms.

### Demarch's Folly

In the aftermath of Demarch's Fall -- a bloody battle between the beguilers that served the Churches of Mask and Leira in an underground complex below Tantras -- some of the survivors searched for other forms of magic. Tired of creating illusions that couldn't adequately protect them against their brethren, the former members sought a more direct source of power. Ironically, they found this source in the undead-infested tunnels of what was formerly Demarch's Alliance. Many survivors feared retribution and fled to the far corners of the world. Those who came to be known as Demarch's Folly feel that the safest place is their original headquarters, a place that is avoided at all costs by most former followers of Mask and Leira. It is in this place that those survivors found the answer to their problem -- shadow magic.

During the Battle of Demarch's Fall, the extreme amount of magic employed opened a rift to the plane of shadow. Shadows and other monstrosities emerged from the rift, but so did several magic items, having been sucked through the portal after being lost on the plane. One of these was the *tome of Suelivain*. Suelivain was a shadowcaster from the City of Shade who lost a number of his possessions during a shadowstorm. The tome, along with several other items belonging to him, were scattered across the plane of shadow. When the rift opened in Demarch's Alliance, it sucked the tome into the Realms. From Suelivain's notes, the members of Demarch's Folly began studying the basics of shadow magic. Eventually, they sought out other references and individuals mentioned in the tome. Thus began their road toward shadow mastery.



### Shadow Magic and the Shadow Weave

There is a fundamental difference between shadow magic and Shadow Weave magic. Shadow Weave magic users derive their power from a source of magic created by the goddess Shar that occupies the negative space between the Weave. Shadowcasters typically use the Weave to channel their magic directly from the plane of shadows. In this way, shadow magic has more in common with conjuration spells of the Weave than it does with spells cast via the Shadow Weave. Despite the differences in methodology and philosophy, many shadowcasters are naturally drawn to the Shadow Weave.

Shadow magic users can qualify for the three Shadow Weave feats described in the *Player's Guide to Faerun*. Those who take the Insidious Magic feat also gain an additional benefit. When they are capable of using their mysteries as supernatural abilities (rendering the benefit of the feat obsolete), they instead receive a +1 on the DCs of their mysteries used against Weave users. This bonus stacks with the Spell Focus feat and any other feat or special ability that increases the DCs of mysteries. This does not apply to mysteries from the transmutation or evocation schools.

## Current Activities

At present, the members of Demarch's Folly are traveling the world looking for more information about shadow magic. Mercenary in nature, they supply services in return for knowledge and tutelage. They located Suelivain and traded back his book and other possessions in return for guidance. Suelivain has illuminated some of the key differences between Shadow Weave magic and shadow magic, and even joined their group as a mentor and leader. From there, it was only natural to seek out a Shadow Weave user of shadow magic. They found such a person in Zezania Tarth-Kelet, a Tashalar priestess of Shar who studied both shadow magic and divine magic. Zezania joined their band and guided their future endeavors.

They plan to travel further, searching for any artifact, scrap of knowledge, or individual with information about shadow in all of its forms. While many of the members are evil in nature, their quest is one of knowledge, not conquest. They are not above stealing or intimidating, but for the most part, they deal fairly with possessors of knowledge and items that they feel are relevant to their interests.

**Demarch's Folly (Minor Arcane):** AL NE, LE; 15,000 gp resource limit; Membership 20; Mixed (14 humans, 2 half-elves, 1 moon elf, 1 tiefling, 1 shade, 1 gnome); Dues 10% tithe

**Authority Figures:** Suelivain (NE male shade shadowcaster 3/wizard 3/noctumancer 7), Zezania Tarth-Kelet (LE female Chultan cleric 3/wizard 2/child of night 3/mystic theurge 3)

**Associated Classes:** Shadowcaster, Shadow Weave user

**Associated Skills:** Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes)

**Requirements:** At least 5 or more ranks in 2 of the following skills -- Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes); Class abilities related to shadows (shadowcaster, Shadow Weave user, shadowcrafter, shadowdancer, etc.) or member of a race related to shadows (illumian, shade, half-shadow dragon, etc.).

**Favored in Guild Benefits:** None

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## About the Author

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## Truenamers

### The Power of Words

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from the *Player's Handbook* 2, the Complete series, the *Minatures Handbook*, and *Heroes of Horror*. This installment focuses on the Truenamer from the [Tome of Magic](#).

#### Truenamers

True names play an important role in all forms of magic, from conjuring foul fiends to power words with dramatic effects. All spellcasters use them to a certain extent, some more than others. The truenamer is a magic user who devotes her magical studies to understanding how the world is defined by a complex cosmic language known to very few people. As such, they are among the most academic magic users, spending years of their lives researching in libraries.



In the Realms, academically-minded religious institutions are the most likely places to find truenamers. The different philosophies of each faith define how truenamers of that faith see their power. This is clear in the choice of prestige classes and specializations chosen by members of different faiths. Bereft, truenamers interested in words of creation that can unravel the world, are common in the Church of Shar. Brimstone speakers, truenamers interested in the purity or goodness that can be achieved with their magic, are often found among the worshippers of Lathander and occasionally Kossuth. Truenamers in service to Oghma and Mystra are more likely to pursue a purer truename path, avoiding specialized truename prestige classes.

Truenamers are most frequently found in service to monasteries and schools dedicated to Oghma and Deneir. The Lord of Knowledge is the patron of academics and as such, he has a distinct interest in classification and definition. The magic of truenamers centers around defining the true name of each creature, object, and location, forging a clear connection with the worship of Oghma. It is no coincidence that clerics of Oghma are known as Namers. The largest concentration of truenamers in service to Oghma is found in the Leaves of Learning temple in Deepingdale.

As the god of language and writing, Deneir is a perfect match for the truenamer. Most of his clerics are as academic as any mage, taking their roles as scribes and chronicles quite seriously. In constant search of the "Metatext," the glyphscribes often dabble in truename magic. It's quite common to see truenamers in temples and other institutions dedicated to both Deneir and Oghma. The largest concentration of truenamers in service to Deneir is found in the Iron Dragon Mountain temple in the Earthfast Mountains.

Truenamers are found in other churches in the Realms. These fall into two categories. The former includes the faiths of Azuth, Gond, Miil, Mystra, Savras, Thoth, Velsharoon, and other deities with the knowledge or magic domains. The latter includes the faiths of Beshaba, Chauntea, Mystra, Lathander, Selûne, Shar, Tymora, and other deities associated with the creation and cosmological structure of the Realms.

Unsurprisingly, truenamers are also found at the premier academic institutions in the Realms. They are almost never enrolled in a specific program of truename studies, but rather, work one-on-one with special masters of their form of magic or in special study groups and seminars of four to five students. Such study groups can be found in a number of locations in the Realms. The wizard college of Gheldaneth in Mulhorand includes at least three small true name seminar groups. In Waterdeep, truename study groups and independent studies can be found at the Eltorchul Academy and New Olamn. One small but esteemed study group is found at the Lady's College in Silverymoon. Several independent study groups operate in Halarahh, Calimport, and Yhaunn.

Truename dabblers are significantly more common than truenamers in the Realms. These are spellcasters who study a small amount of truename magic to enhance their spells. These spellcasters learn the truename skill and often have significant contact and studies with truenamers but are not as dedicated as a truenamer. They use the spells listed on pages 253-262 of the *Tome of Magic*. Many of these spellcasters also take levels in truename prestige classes, most of which are geared toward non-truenamers with an interest in this form of magic.

#### House of the Unnamed

One of the only academies in the Realms devoted to truename magic is found in Velprintalar in Aglarond. Little more than a cluster of four study groups, the House of the Unnamed is a small haven for truenamers from the eastern Realms. Located in a small grounds building adjacent to the House of the Four Moons (a temple of Selûne), the House of the Unnamed contains the largest library dedicated to truename magic in the Realms.

Other libraries such as Candlekeep or the one found in the Leaves of Learning may contain more volumes of interest to truenamers but none are as well-catalogued or concentrated as in this school. The school is run by Elthenhelm Hamastyl, brother of High Steward Nerrol Hamastyl, the Simbul's representative to the Royal Council and the leader of Selûne's faith in Velprintalar.

**House of the Unnamed (Minor Arcane):** AL NG, LG, CG; 13,000 gp resource limit; Membership 19; Mixed (14 humans, 2 half-elves, 3 gnomes); Dues All members must spend 3 hours, 4 times a week, scribing and enhancing the library (at least 26 weeks of the year, though not consecutively).

**Authority Figures:** Elthenhelm Hamastyl (NG male Damaran truenamer 14).

**Important Characters:** Study group leaders: Sarlisha Kjenth (CG female Rashemi sorcerer 2/truenamer 7), Maaruel Vench (LG female Rashemi truenamer 8), Nelinarian Tansmith (CG male half-elf fighter 3/truenamer 6), Maerwûn Venedel (NG female Chondathan truenamer 9).

**Associated Classes:** Truenamer, spellcasters who dabble in truename magic.

**Associated Skills:** Knowledge (any), Speak Language, Truespeak.

**Requirements:** At least 5 or more ranks in Truespeak; at least 5 or more ranks in any 2 knowledge skills; ability to speak at least 3 languages.

**Favored in Guild Benefits:** None.

## About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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08/08/2007



## Incarnum

### The Stuff of Magic

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from the *Player's Handbook* 2, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and *Heroes of Horror*. This installment focuses on incarnum as outlined in [Magic of Incarnum](#), as a lead-in to our examination of Incarnates, Soulborn, and Totemists.

#### Incarnum

As presented in *Magic of Incarnum*, incarnum is misty, radiant blue energy made up of the souls of all beings -- living, dead, and even those yet unborn. It is found within all beings. Most, however, are unaware of its existence, leaving them incapable of shaping it into a usable form. In the Realms, incarnum is raw magic, mystical energy that permeates the world at all levels. Mortals can access incarnum only by making use of the wisps of raw energy that are shed during powerful magical occurrences such as the Time of Troubles or other events that damage or alter the Weave in significant ways.

Incarnum may be raw magic, but it is not divorced from the Weave. Rather, meldshapers use the Weave to craft simple magical constructs from incarnum. Incarnum is more unrefined than the Art and the Power (arcane and divine magic respectively), but it still is a form of magic like any other. Wise scholars of magic are aware that magic manifests in the Realms in numerous ways. Incarnum -- like binding magic, truename magic, shadow magic, invocation, and other heretofore undiscovered forms of drawing on the Weave -- may be a radically different form from traditional wizardry, sorcery, or prayer, but it is no less tied to the Weave.

Incarnum has always existed, but incarnum-wielders have not always been plentiful. There have always been some totemists who derived their powers from wisps of energy that were leaked in the creation of magical beasts by gods and wizards. Acting as tribal shamans among the primitive human, orc, giant, and goblinoid populations, these meldshapers probably were unaware that they were different from other magic-users.

There have always been a small number of soulborn, warriors who -- like paladins -- have a supernatural connection to their belief system. Soulborn tap into raw magic by exulting in their moral extremity. Because incarnum is a rawer and more physical magic, some form of mental extremity is necessary in order to shape it. Most soulborn -- at least prior to the Time of Troubles -- were unaware that they used unusual magic, believing instead that they were similar to paladins. Where soulborn differ from paladins and blackguards is in their devotion to a single ideal of morality as opposed to the belief system of a deity. Their role in the world is similar to paladins, though they fight as champions of an ideal, not a god.

Until recently, there were few incarnates in the world. In the past, few were aware that raw magic could be shaped into magical constructs. During the Time of Troubles, when deities walked the earth and their moral compasses were visible to any who cared to look, the amount of incarnum in the world increased dramatically. As the most magically powerful beings in the Realms, the very presence of so many divine avatars shook the Weave and ripped loose fragments of raw magic.

As gods walked the earth, many mortals joined with their causes, feeling a thrill from their association with divine beings of unimaginable power. Some became meldshapers when they absorbed raw magical energy and became aware of their ability to channel this energy into dramatic effects. Many of these people continued to support their deities, but others experienced a significant change when they were affected. Some of these new meld-shapers gravitated to one extreme of their deity's alignment, forsaking all other principles. As such, they were not welcome in their faiths or became uninterested in the convoluted dogma that detracted from what they felt should be their deity's message. These former followers went off on their own, channeling their heresies in different ways depending on their paths in life.

While the majority of meldshapers that emerged from the Time of Troubles were incarnates -- users who, like clerics, embodied their principals in their magic -- some also went down the path of soulborn or totemists. Warriors were more likely to choose the path of the soulborn, because they could the power to fight for their



moral vision. Those coming from rustic or uncivilized backgrounds were more likely to see incarnum as ancient spiritual energy. They tended to choose the path of the totemist, shaping incarnum into primal, animalistic forms.

The Time of Troubles is not the only source of newly awakened meldshapers. Encountering deities, exposure to wild magic, and experiencing powerful magics can all lead to the development of meldshaping abilities. Because they are mortal and cannot directly shape raw magic without the aid of the Weave, meldshapers can only shape incarnum into limited forms. They use incarnum to create semi-physical items that are tied to the chakra of the physical body. Only the most powerful meldshapers can affect their own hearts and minds with incarnum. None can utilize it in the reality-altering manner in which it might be used by the gods.

### Incarnum and Heavy Magic

Among the few scholars who have devoted their lives to the study of incarnum, a theory circulates suggesting that meldshaping is actually a primitive form of "heavy magic" manipulation. Heavy magic is a tangible, more concentrated form of magic that can achieve dramatic results with even the smallest quantity. It resembles dollops of clear honey that can be dabbed on objects and combined with spells to create a variety of effects. Little is known about heavy magic because its foremost expert -- the arcanist Karsus -- died in his attempt to steal the divinity of the goddess Mystryl. The few existing scholars of incarnum believe that the propensity for manipulating heavy magic may have been passed down from Karsus to his numerous descendants and bloodlines. This talent doesn't appear in every generation and is extremely rare. Sometimes it skips several generations only to re-emerge for no apparent reason.

The most frequent exposure to heavy magic occurred among visitors to Karsus's enclave, Eileanar. Heavy magic achieved everyday use in Eileanar through the creation of a gallery of "spell art." Regular visitors and residents of the enclave who experienced prolonged exposure to the gallery were prone to absorbing the magic and transferring it to their descendants. This had many similarities to birth defects caused by lead poisoning or carcinogens, though in many cases, heavy magic mutations are beneficial. Because the enclave was visited by people from both High and Low Netheril, meldshaping ability can be found virtually anywhere.

While the descendants of Karsus have spread throughout the world, making it possible for meld-shapers to appear nearly anywhere in the Realms, the greatest concentrations of meldshaping characters (those descended from Karsus) are found in areas populated by the direct descendants of Netheril. There are four small groups of pureblooded Netherese descendants in the Realms -- the marsh drovers of the Farsea Marches, the Tunlar barbarians of the Plains of Tun, the nomadic barbarians of the Ride, and citizens of Shade. Among the first three groups, meldshapers are almost exclusively of the totemist class, though it's possible a few soulborn exist. While most Shadowar are interested in wizard magic, the shadow weave, and illusions, a small minority are meldshapers of the soulborn and incarnate classes. It's likely that the oldest among them are at least tangentially aware of their connection to heavy magic, but the youngest probably have no knowledge of this.

The Netherese had numerous colonies throughout the world, some of which have probably been lost in the annals of history. The descendants of Netherese settlers and governors occasionally exhibit meldshaping ability. More frequently, however, meldshapers are found among the survivors of the three floating Netherese cities. These cities were saved by Mystra and most of their inhabitants migrated into Cormyr and the Moonsea region, following a number of catastrophes. Many of their descendants were absorbed into the growing Chondathan culture of the eastern Heartlands and are now dispersed among northern Chondathans and Vaasans.

The Netherese diaspora also includes half-blooded Illuskans and Halruaans who occasionally display meldshaping abilities. A few meldshapers have even shown up among the human and half-drow of Sshamath, results of interbreeding with Netherese from a lost fourth survivor state. The ruins of this state are found to the west of Sshamath in what was once Philock but is now known as the Netherese Caverns. Few venture into the caverns for fear of a malevolent entity that preys on those who plunder the rich graves of the Netherese dead.

The *Tome of Magic* presents a race known as the karsites -- hearty, magic-resistant descendants of Karsus. Most can trace some direct or indirect line to Karsus, but many are also the result of mutation from exposure to the spell art galleries of Eileanar. Like meldshapers, the appearance of karsites often skips a generation. Like the karsites in the *Tome of Magic*, those in the Realms hate magic but for completely different reasons. They are born with an inherent distrust of wielders of magic, but most do not know where this comes from. They are unaware that their hatred stems from Karsus's last moments of fury directed at Mystryl, the goddess responsible for his death. Those few who are aware of heavy magic grow to believe that all other magic pales in comparison. While many karsites are warriors and binders, a substantial number are also soulborn -- warriors who fight (usually for the lawful evil alignment) against magic as a corrupting influence. Some are also incarnates (typically neutral evil) who fight to combat Mystra's minions and creations.

(The lore presented above can be used instead of or in addition to that which is presented in the rest of the entry. Incarnum can be accessed in the Realms via the descendants of heavy magic, the manipulation of the wisps of energy cast off from major magical disturbances, or by other, heretofore unforeseen sources. Regardless of the source of their power, the moral fervor of incarnates and soulborn allows for the ability to channel incarnum/heavy magic, something that most mortals cannot do. Among totemists, belief in ancient



spirits allows for the channeling of incarnum in a primitive but unique manner. Even among those whose bloodline can be traced directly back to Karsus, the manipulation of incarnum does not come easily.)

Next installment -- Incarnates, Soulborn, and Totemists

#### About the Author

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## Class Chronicles

09/04/2007



## Incarnates, Soulborn, Totemists

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from the *Player's Handbook* 2, the Complete series, the *Miniatures Handbook*, and *Heroes of Horror*. The [previous installment focused on incarnum](#) as outlined in [Magic of Incarnum](#), as a lead-in to this examination of Incarnates, Soulborn, and Totemists.

### Incarnates

Incarnates are similar to clerics in their devotion to an ideal, but unlike clerics, these magic-users are obsessed with a single ideal. Most incarnates became aware of their abilities during or after the Time of Troubles. These mortals came in contact small amounts of raw magic during inter-deific warfare. The nature of their individual meld shaping depends on who they were allied with and the cause itself. A tyrannical warlord fighting in the name of Bane was likely to espouse evil; a benevolent healer in service to Torm was likely to dedicate his powers to good.

As a new phenomenon, incarnates are barely recognized as a unique form of magic user. Their powers are subtle in that they create what look like magic items or magical auras. Little physically differentiates incarnates from other warriors and magic-users. Unlike totemists, their powers do not have monstrous physical displays. They do not possess the unusual eyes of the soulborn. Their similarity to clerics means that few observers will be surprised by the azure glow of their items. As the deeds of incarnates become more well known, it is likely that they will eventually be recognized as possessing a unique form of magic, but their presence in the Realms (at least in substantial numbers) is so new that it hasn't yet been explored in depth by scholars.



Of all incarnates, those dedicated to law are most likely to form organizations. As such, it is unsurprising that one of the largest growing cells of incarnates was formed in service to Red Knight, goddess of military strategy. During the Time of Troubles, the Lady of Strategy helped defend Tethyr against a surge of monsters coming from the Forest of Tethir. She led the Company of the Red Falcon to numerous victories using her unrivaled tactical ability to outwit the overwhelming hordes. A small contingent of her army became aware of their incarnate abilities during the war. Calling themselves the Azure Falcons because of the blue glow of their powers, they dedicated themselves to military organization. Seeing glory in rank, file, and hierarchy, the Azure Falcons serve the Citadel of Strategic Militancy northeast of Baldur's Gate, acting as coordinators, planners, and drill sergeants. They are led by Captain Belgard Bloodhawk, cousin of High Lady Kaitlin Bloodhawk (high priestess of the temple).



**Azure Falcons (Minor Military)** AL LN; 10,000 gp resource limit; Membership 7; Mixed (5 humans, 2 half-elves); Dues Military service dedicated to Red Knight.

**Authority Figures:** Belgard Bloodhawk (LN male Tethyrian incarnate 11)

**Associated Classes:** Incarnate, Soulborn

**Associated Skills:** Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes)

**Requirements:** At least 5 or more ranks in two of the following skills -- Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Knowledge (the planes)

**Favored in Guild Benefits:** None

### Soulborn

Soulborn share much in common with paladins and blackguards, fighting for a narrowly defined ideal. Whether benevolent king, freedom fighter, tyrant, or ravager, each soulborn is dedicated to one of the four extreme alignments. In this way, they are similar to paladins as well as paladins of freedom, slaughter, and tyranny (as presented in *Unearthed Arcana*). Where soulborn differ from paladins is in the nature of their allegiance. An individual soulborn might serve a god whose alignment matches her own, but she is not bound to any deity. Her powers are not divine, thus she is not beholden to any deity. She uses her passion toward an ideal as a conduit for her power, but it is not actually divine in nature.

Like incarnates, soulborn are a relatively new phenomenon. There have always been soulborn -- warriors who unwittingly derive power by channeling their moral fervor into magical power -- but always too few to be of any note. Since the Time of Troubles, there have been significantly more soulborn, though still relatively few compared to other classes. Like incarnates, soulborn gained their powers through contact with an avatar or

some of the other means illuminated in the description of incarnates.

Soulborn differ from incarnates in two substantial ways. The first is that soulborn use incarnum to improve their fighting prowess -- fortifying, strengthening, and enhancing their bodies. The second difference is in ideology. Whereas incarnates are devoted to one single aspect of morality -- good, evil, chaos, or law -- soulborn are devoted to a single extreme alignment -- lawful good, chaotic good, lawful evil, or chaotic evil. As such, a soulborn tends to come across as more passionate and extreme than the seemingly more detached incarnates.

In the Realms, soulborn tend to be drawn to the same deities embraced by paladins of good, freedom, tyranny, and slaughter. Most soulborn start out in association with a god of one of these types, such as Torm, Selûne, Bane, or Malar. Unlike many incarnates, who exult in only one aspect of the deity who spawned their powers, most soulborn stay in contact with their religions of origin. They find neutral religions to be lacking in drive and passion, thus they are unlikely to follow any deity of a neutral alignment. Soulborn are in no way bound to their religion (though many are probably unaware of this), but many still feel a deep connection to the being responsible, albeit inadvertently, for their spiritual awakening.



Based in Nathlekh, City of Cats, the Sapphire Mane is made up of worshippers of Nobanion. The organization is mostly made up of soulborn, but also includes a number of incarnates and totemists. The organization was formed following the Time of Troubles when a number of the worshippers of Lord Firemane awakened to their meldshaping abilities while battling Malar, the Beastlord. Nobanion, with the help of his followers and the druids of the Emerald Enclave, drove Malar out of the Gulthmere Forest in a great battle that became known as the Roar of Shadows. Following the Time of Troubles, a group Nobanion's followers banded together, forming the Sapphire Mane. They have dedicated themselves to spreading the message of the King of the Beasts. The group proselytizes in the name of their lord but always with grace and never forcefully. They see their powers as the physical embodiment of their lord's mission to bring out nobility among the beasts of the Realms. At first the wemics and other residents of the City of Cats were wary of the meldshapers, but they soon came to see the incandescent blue flame of the meldshapers as a positive sign from their lord. All three major classes of meldshaper are found among the Sapphire Mane.

**Sapphire Mane (Minor Religious)** AL LG; 14,000 gp resource limit; Membership 17; Mixed (3 humans, 2 wood elves, 1 half-wood elf, 3 feline were-creatures, 8 wemics); Dues 12 weeks a year (need not be consecutive) spent in service to the cause of Lord Firemane **Authority Figures:** Sondar Torchmane (LG male wemic soulborn 8/incandescent champion 9), Nalorea Greenglen (LN female wood elf incarnate 2/cleric 3/sapphire hierarch 7), Shalishthsh (LG female weretiger totemist 9)

**Associated Classes:** Incarnate, Soulborn, Totemist, Incandescent Champion, Sapphire Hierarch

**Associated Skills:** Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes), Survival

**Requirements:** At least 5 or more ranks in two of the following skills -- Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes), Survival

**Favored in Guild Benefits:** Knowledge (nobility & royalty) and Survival are always considered class skills for you.

### Totemists

Totemists are somewhat of a paradox in that their power comes from sophisticated magical experimentation, but they themselves are primal and rustic. In general, totemists in the Realms derive their meldshaping abilities from the raw magic that is leaked when gods and enterprising mortals (usually wizards) experiment in the creation of magical beasts. When such creatures are created, a small amount of raw magic sometimes leaks into the ether. People who venerate these beasts occasionally learn to shape the spiritual energy associated with them into magical effects. They can draw upon the energy of each creature's creation, employing a variety of powerful abilities as a result.

Totemists are not common anywhere in the Realms, but they are most frequently encountered in areas where the populace venerates totems, beast gods, and nature spirits. They can be found in small numbers in certain Uthgardt tribes, acting as tribal shamans. In each tribe, the shamans are most likely to use soulmelds related to their totem. A Sky Pony shaman might use a *pegasus cloak*; a Gray Wolf shaman might employ a *worg pelt*; a Thunderbeast shaman is likely to use *thunderstep boots*.



Totemists are also found among beast cults. This includes the benign beast cult made up of followers of Lurue and Nobanion (described earlier), but also those devoted to Malar, the Beastlord. The benevolent cults tend to live in harmony with nature, praising and appreciating the nobility of their totems. The more malevolent cults revel in savagery, brutality, and bloodlust, using their powers in destructive, sanguine rages. Totemists associated with Lurue and Nobanion often come into conflict with those of Malar, fighting battles that resemble those fought by their gods but on a smaller scale.

Totemists exist among those who venerate nature spirits. In Rashemen, totemists are in league with telthor, powerful nature spirits of the land. These totemists derive their powers by channeling the energy of the telthor rather than raw magic leaked from the creation of magical beasts, but the results are much the same. Their

land is one of raw beauty, and they exult in channeling the spirit of that terrible beauty into physical form. They are particularly common among spirit folk who are more attuned to the spirits of the land, being part spirit themselves. Other nature spirit-channeling totemists exist among the Osse who come from lands to the South of Faerûn. It is even suggested that a few small groups of wild elves and wild dwarves include totemists. Among these people, the use of incarnum is rarely differentiated from that of other forms of magic.

#### About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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## Crusaders, Swordsages, Warblades

### The Sublime Way

Eytan Bernstein

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The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from *Player's Handbook 2*, the Complete series, the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, *Miniatures Handbook*, *Heroes of Horror*, *Magic of Incarnum*, and *Tome of Magic*. This installment focuses on the three classes from *Tome of Battle* -- the crusader, the swordsage, and the warblade.

#### **Tome of Battle in the Realms?**

More so than any other published system in *D&D* 3.5, the rule set described in *Tome of Battle* affects the history of the setting in which it's used. Some Realms purists might hesitate to use these rules, because the setting has no precedent for anime-style combat or characters. It is both unproductive and impossible to rewrite the history of the Realms to incorporate this style of fighting (and the various social structures attached to it). For that reason, this article will describe a variety of organizations, individuals, faiths, and regions that could be accessible to PCs and NPCs who use the *sublime way* but will not seek to rewrite the history of the Realms to make it so that these classes have always been a significant aspect.

This system works best for those who are happy to incorporate a wide variety of unique mechanics into their games, even if they are from far-flung regions or are rediscovered from lost temples. In many parts of the article, it is assumed that a great deal of cross-cultural diffusion occurs in the Realms. This might suit some games well, but others might be uncomfortable with this notion. This article is for those who are interested in using these classes and is geared toward giving them as many options as possible. Those who find the book too *anime* for their Realms tastes should convert the crusader orders into priestly or knightly organizations. Swordsage organizations and temples could be monasteries, while warblades could be fighters at more traditional academies or some sort of fighter/mage hybrids such as eldritch knights, Raumathari battlemages, or bladesingers.

#### **Blade Magic Origins: Scattered Martial Arts**

Ages ago, the disciplines of the *sublime way* were spread across the Realms. All were essentially martial arts -- styles of fighting with differing methods, philosophies, and foci. The adherents of one discipline were most likely unaware that any other disciplines (or cluster of disciplines) existed. It took the intervention of an ambitious warrior to bring the styles together.

As described in *Tome of Battle*, an immortal human warrior named of Reshar traveled the world learning each of the nine disciplines. It is unknown how he persuaded the masters of the different schools to reveal their secrets. Some suggest trickery, but most believe that the schools were impressed by his skill and dedication. If Reshar truly did all that is attributed to him, he may have lived for hundreds if not thousands of years.

In the hobgoblin Realm of Holorarar, Reshar learned the secrets of the Iron Heart from Master Urlek Kha-Th'tha. He underwent their torturous yet effective training, impressing the master with his cunning, commitment, and tolerance for pain. Dwarven practitioners of the *sublime way* -- especially those with nostalgia for Deep Shanatar -- contest this origin, but their claims have yet to be proven. Urlek's dojo was eventually destroyed in a titanic battle between the dwarves and hobgoblins.

Recently, a tribe of goblins has taken up residence near the ruins of the temple in the area that was once Holorarar. When a traveling underdark guide passed through, the goblins indicated that they could see the inside of "some old building with lots of papers and statues." The drow plans to return to explore the temple but is occupied at present with events elsewhere.

Reshar studied Desert Wind from two disparate sources. He learned some aspects of the discipline from a nomadic band of Bedine in Anauroch. Some depict the nomads as fearless dervishes who could go days without water, but their true identities are unknown. It is also believed that he apprenticed himself to a Zakharan traveler who was a member of the Desert Wind faith that is native to that land.

The Bedine nomads eventually settled and built a temple in a cavern under the sands of Anauroch. The dragon Amilektrevitroelis -- who lived in Anauroch before migrating to his current lair in the Rathgaunt Hills -- destroyed the cavern with his powerful lightning breath. Present-day swordsages believe that the remaining structures of the temple are inhabited by undead practitioners of the *sublime way* who, no longer requiring sleep, spend their days in eternal training.

Reshar studied among the martial arts masters of Kara-Tur, learning the disciplines of Diamond Mind, Setting Sun, and Shadow Hand. Many swordsages believe that he learned some of the secrets of the Setting Sun discipline from the halflings of Luiren. It is also rumored that Reshar was resistant to learning the Shadow Hand discipline, but he realized that a warrior must embrace both light and dark to truly understand himself.

The disciplines of Diamond Mind, Setting Sun, and Shadow Hand are still practiced extensively in the lands beyond the Unapproachable East. In addition, Shou settlers brought the disciplines to the Golden Way, disseminating some of their secrets to the populations of the West. Today, a small number of blade magic academies dot the length of the Golden Way.

Reshar traveled among the southeastern realm of Veldorn, learning the furious Tiger Claw discipline used by the resistance movement to fight against the tyrannical rulership so frequently looming over that region. The Tiger Claw discipline has remained a local specialty among both humanoid and monster populations, though the inhabitants are probably unaware of its history. Styles similar to Tiger Claw have also been observed in other areas of the Shining Lands, a few smaller regions of Kara-Tur, including the White Tiger Monastery in T'u Lung, and among some of the more savage members of the Tuigan tribes.

From the dwarves of the Great Rift, Reshar learned the indomitable discipline of Stone Dragon. He valued the dwarves' courage, steadfastness, and stoicism in the face of pain and hardship. The original Stone Axe Center was built in Bhaerynden under the leadership of Axemaster Thrangold Axetone but was destroyed in a battle by monster and drow worshippers of Ghaunadaur from the Deep Wild. It has since been rebuilt behind a waterfall in the Great Rift under the leadership of Reldig Silverpike (LG male gold dwarf warblade 10/deepstone sentinel 5).

Sages suggest that Reshar wandered several of the great elven civilizations, learning of the religious strength and devotion to ancestors. From the elves, he learned the Devoted Spirit discipline. It's believed that there are abandoned sword temples in Seros and Ascalhorn. Some claim that the avariel still practice the Devoted Spirit discipline, but they are not talking, so this is hard to confirm. Today, a small blade magic temple exists in the Aerie of the Snow Eagles in the Icerim Mountains of Sossal. The small temple of seven students is led by Avjianos Greatspan (CG male avariel warblade 10/eternal blade 6), son of the leader of the aerie, Winged Father Aquilan Greatspan.

Reshar learned the discipline of White Raven from swordmasters in the Vast. With centers in Procampur, Ravens Bluff, and Tantras, the tradition of blade magic in the Vast has never really died. In fact, the Vast has continued to be one of the largest bastions of blade magic in the western Realms. It is especially prevalent among the Knights of the Raven in Raven's Bluff.

### Tome of Battle Disciplines

- **Desert wind:** This discipline is known by this name in Zakhara, as it is tied to the religion of the same name. Among the Bedine of Anauroch, the discipline is sometimes known as Dune Flame, but there are those that also call it Desert Wind. In Raurin, the Dust Desert, the discipline is known as Dust Storm because of its resemblance to the horrible sandstorms that plague that desolate wasteland.
- **Devoted Spirit:** In ancient Seros, this discipline was known as Strength of the Sea. When Seros was abandoned, many of the practitioners of the *sublime way* that lived there felt that the strength of the sea had abandoned them. Among the avariel, the discipline is known as Winged Spirit in deference to the winged ancestors of the avariel who sacrificed their lives to keep the race alive. In the Vast, it is known as Ancestral Sword, paying homage to the great blade magicians of ages past.
- **Diamond Mind:** Among the Shou, this discipline is known as Steel Lily, evincing the eastern swordsage philosophy that the mind can be the body's greatest weapon. Legend tells of a Shou master who could empty his mind and body such that he could actually balance on a lily pad.
- **Iron Heart:** This was the name used by the hobgoblins of Holorarar. It perfectly represented their cold, cruel style of training, focused entirely on the achievement of martial perfection. The present day blade magicians in the dwarven city of Iltkazar have a different name. While hardly sentimental romantics, the dwarves are considerably more warm-hearted than the hobgoblins of old. They refer to this discipline as Mithril Heart, feeling that they are as tough and skilled as the hobgoblins but lighter of spirit and stronger of character.
- **Setting Sun:** The halflings of Luiren know this discipline as Sunset Palm, feeling that subtlety and awareness allow them to turn weakness into strength and turn an enemy's advantages against him. In T'u Lung, the discipline is known as Dusk to Dawn (and Dawn to Dusk), embodying the principle that darkness can be made light just as light can be made into darkness.
- **Shadow Hand:** Each ninja clan, ronin band, and assassin guild in Kara-Tur knows Shadow Hand by a different name. Some ninjas refer to it as Shade Strike, preferring to use the powers of the discipline to strike from darkness. The ronin who study Shadow Hand refer to the discipline with a name that roughly translates as Disgrace Embraced. The assassins know it as Penumbral Arc, but they are not sharing the reason behind this.
- **Stone Dragon:** The name the dwarves of the Great Rift use for this discipline roughly translates as Stone Axe, Cave Pearl. They explain that this embodies the idea that force tempered by beauty and balance makes for perfection.
- **Tiger Claw:** This discipline is known by a variety of names, all variations on animal themes such as Wolf Claw, Bear Fang, and Griffin Talon. In many places, the discipline remains unnamed, because it is more a way of life among the populace than an organized fighting style.
- **White Raven:** The White Raven discipline originated in the Vast and is still known by that name today, but it is known by other names in areas to which it has spread. Among the avariel, it is known as Blue Eagle. The worshippers of Anhur know it as Gold Falcon. In Luiren, the crusaders of Arvoreen call it Silver Owl.

### Practitioners of the Sublime Way

Martial characters who dabble in the *sublime way* are fairly common, but the majority of blade magic practitioners in the Realms are members of the crusader, swordsage, or warblade classes. Crusaders can be found in many of the same places as paladins but also can serve as an alternative to paladins in religions that are non-lawful. Swordsages are located in many of the same places as monks, both academic and martial.

Warblades are found all over the Realms, both East and West, sometimes studying in schools of war but also running their own dojos and sword temples.

## Crusaders

Crusaders are the implacable, spiritual lords of war, similar to paladins in their zeal but without the alignment restrictions that limit those holy warriors. Crusaders only have access to three disciplines, but these three -- Devoted Spirit, Stone Dragon, and White Raven -- provide them with equal parts conviction, durability, and leadership ability. A number of crusader orders can be found among the faiths of the Realms, including those of Anhur, Tempus & Red Knight, and Torm.

The Church of Anhur is one of the best fits for crusaders, because its adherents embody both raw fury and strategy and tactics. Crusaders of the faith are priests of Anhur charged with the defense of Mulhorand (as defined by its historic, not its current, boundaries). They must destroy Mulhorand's enemies and protect all of its residents from evil. The powers they receive from the Devoted Spirit discipline are put to the test when combating the depredations of Thay; the powers of Stone Dragon give them the fortitude to defend against Thayvian magic; White Raven grants them the leadership and brotherhood necessary to defend their people. Battlestorm Temple, a church dedicated to Anhur, is housed in the City of the Gods in Skuld. It is led by Bladestorm Leader Mithresh Kaldierion (CG male Mulhorandi crusader 14) and has over 20 students.



Tempus embodies sheer martial revelry mitigated by a love of strategy.

Red Knight is the lady of strategy, a cool and collected patron of tacticians, planners, and battle coordinators. Over 30 members of all three blade magic classes worship and study in the combined Tempus & Red Knight sword temple in the city Tegal's Mark in Tasseldale, known as the Red Steel Gambit. By far the greatest number of disciples is from the crusader class. The master of the temple -- Thomwaith De'Krestin (N male Chondathan crusader 17 [Tempus & Red Knight]) is blessed by both the Lady of Strategy and the Lord of Battles.

Three Sister sword temples operate in the Vast in the cities of Raven's Bluff, Tantras, and Procampur. The temple in Procampur is led by Oriphau McMaren (LN male Chondathan swordsage 14) and is typically responsible for guarding visiting dignitaries and providing security for major galas and events. In Tantras, a group of crusaders of Torm known as the Trueblades fights for the just order advocated by their deity. The organization, led by Phindrake Korlaunt (LG male Chondathan crusader 12), did damage control following the titanic battle between Torm the True and Bane. Despite the long history of blade magic in the vast, the Knights of the White Raven are a very new order. Prior to the founding of this order, a handful of practitioners of the *sublime way* were spread among the Griffons, Hawks, and Phoenix. Founded following the Time of Troubles, the White Raven order was founded to serve both Torm and Lathander. It is actually a small subset of the Ravens. Led by Pradian Karneth (LG male Vaasan crusader 9/healer 7), the order -- like the Trueblades of Procampur -- is tasked with providing damage control following catastrophes and during war.

## Swordsages

While not all martial monasteries embrace the use of weapons, it is not uncommon to find swordsages in many of the same places where monks are found. With their contemplative, almost scholarly approach to fighting, swordsages have much in common with monks of both a scholarly and an academic bent. Swordsages can be found anywhere that monks and other practitioners of the *sublime way* train, but they are particularly common among the orders of the Broken Ones and the Hin Fist.



Together with the monks of the Broken Ones, the swordsages of the order travel as pilgrims throughout the vast Dalelands, righting wrongs and doing the good work of their god. Where they differ from crusaders is in their ascetic lifestyle and detachment. They serve the aims of Ilmater but without the unflinching zeal of a crusader. They have no fixed temple or hierarchy, though they often pass by the many shrines to Ilmater throughout the Dales. Monks of the Broken Ones can freely multiclass as swordsages.

Of all of the blade magic orders in the Realms, the Hin Fist best embodies the Setting Sun discipline. Luiren halflings are known for their philosophy of turning their size and the fact that their enemies underestimate them into great advantages. They believe in the power of halflings (to a lesser extent, other "little people") to master themselves and their world. Setting Sun is all about turning one's weakness into advantage and the enemy's advantage into weakness. The swordsage contingent of the Hin Fist is known as the Sunset Palm and is led by Olard Strawsmith (LG male lightfoot halfling swordsage 13). It is based in the city of Chethel in an abandoned timber warehouse. While the order performs many of the roles other warriors in Luiren do, they are best known for their coordination of the Sunset Games, an athletic competition in Chethel with a variety of sports and events that favor halfling athletic pursuits such as throwing and jumping. Sunset Games are held every fourth year in Flamerule. Hin Fist members can freely multiclass between monk and swordsage.

## Warblades

In the Realms, warblades face prejudices that are not experienced as much by swordsages and crusaders. Whereas swordsages are frequently associated with monasteries and crusaders are tied to religious orders, warblades share less of a link with other classes. Monks and clerics tend to be more tolerant of blade magic

practitioners in their orders, feeling that these members are simply expressing the order or faith's philosophy in their own unique way. Warblades share a great deal in common with fighters, but their flashy powers often create distance between them and more conventional warriors. Fortunately, there are a few bastions of blade magic that cater to the skill and tactics of warblades in the Realms.

The Academy of Arms in Athkatla has a training division of warblades. These warriors study the disciplines of Diamond Mind, Iron Heart, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw, and White Raven. The leader of the division, Blademaster Borrobar Starlynskor (LG male Tethyrian warblade 7/master of nine 10) brings in blade magic practitioners of different types (including swordsages and crusaders) from all over the world. He has guest lecturers from Zakhara, Luiren, Veldorn, the Vast, and other far-flung regions. The division's philosophy is that every style learned expands the repertoire, tactics, and skill of the students, making them better, more prepared warriors. Many members aspire to the mastery of nine prestige classes.



Centuries ago, an adventuring company known as the Nine Swords slew monsters and righted wrongs in the Vast. They were a group of 10 blade magicians -- four crusaders, five warblades, and the swordsage Thallastam (LG male Chondathan swordsage 1/wizard 5/jade phoenix mage 10). Thallastam had studied in Kara-Tur in his youth before he formed the Nine Swords in his homeland, the Vast. When the group disbanded, Thallastam cast a magic spell, hiding the nine swords of his companions in Swords Pool, the body of water that lends its name to a village in the Vast. Thallastam himself preferred unarmed combat, but the rest of his companions favored the use of swords. Recently, a small group of young blade magicians from the Vast have reformed the Nine Swords Company, using the Inn of the Nine Swords in the town of Swords Pool. Information concerning the Nine Swords can be found on page 156 in the *City of Raven's Bluff* supplement (which can be [downloaded for free](#)).

### Tome of Battle Prestige Classes

- **Bloodclaw Master:** Multiclassed warblade/barbarians who worship Malar, the Beastlord are the most likely to have levels in this prestige class. They are most commonly found in the Hordelands and the High Forest performing the droning Bloodsong over creatures slain in their rabid, vicious hunts.
- **Bloodstorm Blade:** A group of blade magicians known as the Hin Blades of Brandoberis operates out of Beluir. For the most part, the group of swaggering halflings is more concerned with causing trouble and carousing than it is with any practical purpose, but it has always come to the aid of Luiren in times of danger. It is led by Prelgard Bottlenocker (CG male strongheart halfling warblade 10/bloodstorm blade 3).
- **Deepstone Sentinel:** The Stone Axe Center is a large dwarven sword temple hidden behind a waterfall in the Great Rift. It is led by Reldig Silverpike (described earlier) and acts as a highly trained defense force when the gold dwarves are attacked by forces from the Underdark.
- **Eternal Blade:** The eternal blades were once an order in service to Correlon in Cormanthor, but they became arrogant and lost favor with their god. With Seiveril Mirita's resettlement of Cormanthor, young elven warriors have revived the tradition. They located an ancient blade temple in the heart of the capital and have restored it. So far, the organization, led by Elgine Goldheart (CG female moon elf crusader 10/eternal blade 2,), is small, possessing only four members, but with the constant influx of elven settlers to Cormanthor, it's bound to expand.
- **Jade Phoenix Mage:** In Kara-Tur, jade phoenix mages are relatively common, but they go by other names in the Western Realms. The Shou brought the tradition with them in travels to the West. While no major centers exist, a small number of students of the Raumathari Battlemagic and elven bladesinging traditions have studied jade phoenix magic. These practitioners still think of themselves as battlemages and bladesingers, but who incorporate learned elements from another culture into their studies. Reshar's constant companion, the Raumathari battlemage Turoth Krenth, was the main reason the warrior was able to travel throughout the Realms. Turoth used his magic to transport Reshar to the distant locales where he studied the unique disciplines. Turoth was an accomplished blade magician and wizard who is often forgotten in the legends of Reshar.
- **Master of Nine:** There are a few blade magicians in the Realms who seek to master all nine of the martial disciplines in the tradition of Reshar. This is always an individual initiative; there are no groups of masters of nine. The most frequent origins of these wandering warriors are the Vast and Tethyr, both of which have strong blade magic traditions.
- **Ruby Knight Vindicator:** Deities whose portfolio relate to the sanctity of death and burial employ these knights to protect the faith, but more importantly, to defend proper burial and treatment of the dead. Among the worshippers of Jergal, these warriors are known as Knights of the Shroud. The organization in service to Kelevnor is known as Knights of Eternal Peace. The Knights of Sanctity serve Osiris as tomb guardians and watch out for the safety of children in their communities. By far the most somber blade magic order in Luiren, the Knights of the Hound, performs a variety of funereal functions, ensures that proper burial traditions are followed, and acts as a steady presence in the face of disaster, all in the name of Urogalan
- **Shadow Sun Ninja:** Shadow Sun Ninjas are primarily groups of reformed ninjas and dark monks in Kara-Tur, but they have spread their beliefs among some of the faiths in the Realms that are concerned with balance. Some disciples of this class are devout followers of Grumbar, Oghma, Ubtao, and Waukeen -- religions concerned with maintaining a balance between light and dark, good and evil.

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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09/18/2007



## Eastern Classes

**Samurai, Shamans, Shugenja, Sohei, Spirit Shamans, and Wu Jen**

Eytan Bernstein

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**Dedication:** I'd like to thank a number of people who contributed throughout the run of this column. Thanks to Ed Greenwood for information on Shou settlements and general encouragements. Thanks to Eric Scott de Bie for helping to make the warlock article one of the best in the series. Thanks to Brian Cortijo for his expertise in all matters Kara-Tur (as well as matters of the Realms). A special thanks to Eric Boyd for extensive assistance and Realmslore checking for several of the articles. Finally, thanks to George Krashos, who graciously reviewed the majority of these articles, always providing honest and helpful suggestions and corrections. To all of these gentlemen, thank you for your tireless efforts and the love you put into the Forgotten Realms. It is truly inspiring.

The 20-level classes presented in books other than the *Player's Handbook* have become popular choices for players and DMs. Earlier articles in this series discussed how to import the classes from *Player's Handbook 2*, the Complete series, *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, *Miniatures Handbook*, *Heroes of Horror*, *Magic of Incarnum*, *Tome of Magic*, and *Tome of Battle*. This final installment focuses on Eastern classes -- the samurai, shugenja, wu jen, shaman, sohei, and spirit shaman. This article does not go into extensive history regarding Kara-Tur. Rather, it deals with how Kara-Tur classes have spread to the Realms via cultural diffusion.

### Eastern Classes in the Realms

The Eastern-themed classes of the Complete series and *Oriental Adventures* sometimes seem at odds with the pseudo-medieval and renaissance feeling of the Realms, but they do offer options for those that wish to expand their games to include an Asian feel. With the exception of the spirit shaman, all of the other classes come to Faerûn by way of the East. The majority of characters with levels in these classes are from the massive continent of Kara-Tur. Kara-Tur consists of a number of provinces that have similar cultures to real world nations: Shou Lung (China), T'u Lung (China), Wa (Japan), Kozakura (Japan), Tabot (Tibet), Koryo (Korea), Ra-Khati (Nepal), Bawa (Taiwan), the Horse Plains (Mongolia), Malatra (Laos, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam), and a number of smaller nations and principalities. Individuals from these nations -- most commonly the Shou and T'u -- have settled along the Golden Way, an enormous length of road running from Teiflamm all the way to Shou Lung. They have set up Shou Towns, small enclaves with Eastern architecture, customs, and organizations. Through the settlement of citizens of these nations, Kara-Tur cultures and classes have spread to the Unapproachable East and the rest of the Realms.

While the majority of characters with these classes are Kara-Tur, the Eastern schools do occasionally accept Western students. In addition, individual Kara-Tur mercenaries and ronin occasionally venture into Faerûn. Sometimes this is to make a name for themselves, but in other instances, these individuals leave to escape angered patrons or bounty hunters. They often ally themselves with Westerners, who in turn, sometimes acquire levels in Eastern classes.

Spirit shamans are unique among the classes presented in that they do not originate in Kara-Tur. The spirit shamanic tradition arose in Rashemen, a land of great splendor and full of nature spirits. It is also found in Osse, a region of ancient aboriginal people with strong connections to their land and ancestors.

### Shou Towns

Small Shou Towns and enclaves have sprung up in a number of major metropolitan areas in the Realms. These are somewhat akin to real-word Chinatowns, but perhaps smaller and more insular. The most well known of these is found in Elversult, but there are enclaves or embassies in Zindalankh (Murghôm), Shussel (Unther -- the newest of the established enclaves), Vaelen (Var the Golden), and Sheirtalar. The ever-enterprising Shou are also busy with intrigues behind the scenes to establish enclaves or embassies in Athkatla (Amn), Chavyondat (Estagund), and the island-nation of Tharsult (in the Shining Sea).

### Samurai

Most samurai serve Wa and Kozakura lords making diplomatic trips along the Golden Way. Sometimes they also serve Wa (and occasionally Shou) generals who are leading armies against Tuigans, bandits, or monstrous forces. Their strict code of conduct and respect for authority often takes them beyond where most citizens of Kara-Tur ever dream of going.

The Golden Way can be a perilous place, especially when one travels far from Thesk and into the plains. There are a variety of reasons samurai might venture into the Realms -- forces they serve are sometimes defeated, their warriors taken prisoner; sometimes lords defect or are banished, taking their retainers with them; occasionally a samurai is dishonored or banished, becoming ronin. Regardless of the reason, most samurai look for a new patron to serve for their Bushido code. Those who do not become ronin.

Following the Tuigan invasion and the increasing number of Shou Towns popping up along the Golden Way, more and more samurai are serving Shou leaders. Samurai tend to follow their leaders without question. Thus, they can be found among both benevolent and corrupt Shou leaders. Samurai are found serving town elders, and ronin often bodyguard high-ranking yakuza of the Nine Golden Swords.

In addition to their presence in enclaves and embassies, Samurai and ronin are often sent on missions to far-flung corners of the Realms. They make connections and forge ties with Western characters, spreading their traditions, albeit slowly. Ronin sometimes act as mercenaries, working in Thay, Thesk, and even locations as far as Sembia.

Samurai rarely form organizations. They are almost always in the service of a feudal lord, Shou elder, or another person in a position of authority. Ronin often join mercenary companies, but it is almost unheard of to find them congregating together. More often, when ronin meet each other (or a samurai), only one ends up leaving the meeting alive.

### **Samurai Weapons**

The classic image of the samurai wielding katana and wakizashi is exclusive to the nations of Wa and Kozakura. An equivalent character from Shou Lung would wield a jian (longsword) or yari/uma-yari (spear/horse-spear or lance) as ancestral daisho. While the concept of the samurai in the real world is innately Japanese, it's quite possible to establish warriors that serve lords, lieges, or other powers in any of the areas of Kara-Tur. For that matter, such characters are even possible in the Unapproachable East where Eastern concepts often meld with Western ideals.



### **Shamans**

In many ways, shamans are the druids of Kara-Tur. They channel the spirits of nature, respecting and reflecting the will of their ancestors. Whereas shugenja tend to serve as spiritual advisors among nobility, shamans tend to be local leaders, acting as healers, elders, and midwives. Shugenja are common among the nobility of Shou Lung, T'u Lung, Wa, Kozakura, and Koryo. Shamans are fairly common among the local populace of these nations but are more prevalent in Tabot, Ra-Khati, Bawa, and Malatra. Shamans are also found in the Northern Wastes, where they act as natural guardians and as the crafters of minor amulets and fetishes of protection and healing.

Shamans are rarely hired as healers on noble expeditions traveling the Golden Way. The noble classes tend to find them unrefined and desire the more cultured and elegant ways of the shugenja or wu jen. Occasionally, shamans travel into the Realms at the behest of a dying man from their land, offering comfort in the last days of his life. Sometimes the family calls for a shaman to comfort them following a death or to perform an exorcism. When the spirit world is out of balance, shamans may be the only hope for restoration. They are commonly found in the poorer areas of Shou Towns and refugee camps, especially among those displaced by the Tuigan hordes.



Shamans also sometimes travel individually or on pilgrimages to learn about the spirit world in the West. They may sense great spiritual disturbances but more often are driven to adventure because of clues from the spirit world. Ancestor spirits often have goals and desires -- rights to wrong and things left undone in life. As a cleric takes on quests for her god, so too does a shaman take on quests and follow paths dictated by spirits. This can take a shaman anywhere in the world -- spirits traverse both space and time.

Shamans might also be found outside of Kara-Tur among the Uthgardt barbarians who worship totems of animals and magical beasts. Other naturalistic and animistic cultures may also possess a form of shamanism. Whether this is shamanic tradition or a spirit shamanic tradition varies depending on dogma and philosophy (see below).

Shamans should not be confused with spirit shamans. The former are limited to less civilized populations of Kara-Tur (and occasionally tribal populations of the Realms). The latter are more common among spirit folk of both Kara-Tur and the Realms, the continent of Osse, and the Witches of Rashemen. Both groups hold many similarities, but Eastern shamans tend to be more focused on community and ancestors than those of the West. Western spirit shamans are more focused on the individual's spirit quest than any sort of relationship between ancestors and community.

### **Shugenjas**

Shugenja are the priests of Kara-Tur, spiritual guardians who focus on tapping into and balancing the natural elements. Like samurai, they usually come from the noble class, but some are also orphans adopted by noble families or inducted into the priesthood at a young age. Shugenja enter the Realms in similar ways to samurai. They act as priests and spiritual advisors to nobles along the Golden Way. When travelers from Kara-Tur found

Shou Towns, Shugenja bring the old ways to the new world. They help to make small oases of tradition in very foreign environments.

Unlike samurai, shugenja are not bound by a strict code of morals. They do not need to serve a particular master, thus they can travel the world as they see fit. They are drawn to disturbances in the elemental balance of the world. This leads them on adventures to right environmental wrongs, destroy blights on the land, and keep the balance of the elements.

Shugenja of Shou Lung are known as dang-kai and are adherents of an elaborate religious philosophy known as *The Way*. As part of their belief system, they reject notions of good, evil, chaos, and law and instead focus on manipulating natural, universal energies toward a desired end. (More information on the dang-kai appears in the Kara-Tur boxed set, particularly on page 28 of Volume I.)

Because of the greater freedom allowed to shugenja, it is more common to find them in the company of Western adventurers than to find samurai. In recent years, shugenja have been drawn toward the disturbances caused by the rage of dragons, rain of fire, and the transformation of the High Moor. While still uncommon, the proliferation of Shou settlements along with a shugenja's inherent attraction to natural imbalances has greatly increased the presence of this class in the Realms.

### Sohei

Sohei are similar to monks in their ascetic pursuit of bodily perfection while secluded in monasteries, but they are less academic, favoring zeal over philosophy. As a paladin is a hybrid of fighter and cleric, sohei are hybrids of monks and clerics, monastic warriors working for a temple or a monastery and performing whatever missions and duties are required of them.

Unlike samurai and shugenja, sohei come to their paths from all social classes and backgrounds. Those who show a talent for the martial and academic arts become monks. Those that have the physical prowess but lack a contemplative bent (or think more through faith than reasoning) make perfect sohei. Westerners often remark that sohei seem more driven by anger and passion than the relatively calm and dispassionate monks they've encountered.

Sohei enter the Realms on missions while serving their monastic or temple leaders. This might involve a religious quest, a diplomatic mission, a military effort, or any number of other possibilities. They might settle in a Shou Town with displaced or refugees, acting as defenders of the people or bodyguards to elders. They often participate in long-term military conflicts if those wars are supported by their temples or monasteries.

While lawful and disciplined, some Sohei have been known to venture into the Realms after their tour of duty ends, after the death of their master, or their temple's dissolution. They love to test their mettle and prowess, and adventuring provides the thrill of battle. Unlike monks, Sohei rely on both prowess and rage, thus monsters, villains, and epic wrongs can drive their destinies. Because of their unpretentious origins, they tend to work well with Western parties -- they're lawful natures encourage unity and discipline, but their humble beginnings make them less judgmental and more tolerant.

It is possible to adapt Sohei to the Realms. In such cases, they are likely to be temple guards for lawfully-aligned martial churches such as Helm, Hoar, or Red Knight. They always possess Weapon Focus in their deity's favored weapon (granted to them as a bonus feat when they take their 1st level in the class).

### Spirit Shamans

Spirit shamans are uncommon in the Realms and Kara-Tur. In Kara-Tur, shamans channel and mediate with spirits, acting as the spiritual guide for more primitive populations. Only spirit folk in Kara-Tur follow the path of the spirit shaman and rarely go adventuring. Shamans of Kara-Tur have more of a connection to people and ancestors, whereas spirit shamans are more connected to spirits of the land and the land itself. In the Realms, spirit shamans are found among the witches and independent male divine spellcasters of Rashemen. They are also found among the spirit folk of Rashemen and Thesk (those brought from Kara-Tur along the Golden Way). Finally, a small number of spirit shamans travel the Realms, having come from the distant land of Osse.

Spirit shamans in Rashemen are divided into two contingents. The first is a section of Hathrans -- the exclusively female divine spellcasters of the land. These Hathrans commune solely with spirits, leaving communion with deities to the other casters. To make Hathran magic more unique, some DMs may wish to make all members of this group spirit shamans. Barring that, DMs can limit spirit shamans to the subsection of Hathrans



that only commune with spirits. While only male spellcasters are required to go on a *dajemma* (spirit journey or pilgrimage), many female spellcasters also go. This is almost universal among Hathrans who take up the path of the spirit shaman. This is the most frequent way that spirit shamans venture into the Realms.

There are also male spirit shamans in Rashemen. While all arcane spellcasters are either roped into the Vremytonni or banished, male divine spellcasters have no such limitation. There are male clerics and druids in Rashemen, but many independent male Rashemi spellcasters are spirit shaman hermits. Some whisper that they are driven mad by their connection with the spirits, especially without the social framework provided by Hathrans and Wychlara.

The spirit folk of Rashemen and Thesk sometimes take up the path of the spirit shaman. Their spirit ancestry makes them an obvious choice, and they often have great facility with the abilities of this class. The spirit shamans of the Rashemen tend to be of the mountain and river variety, whereas those that come from Kara-Tur can be of any type, especially bamboo. Few outside their populations take the time to understand the magic of the spirit folk, assuming it is something innate rather than something studied. Spirit folk spirit shamans adventure for a number of reasons -- to find their way in the world, because of wanderlust, or because of special missions known only by them and the spirits with which they commune.

Osse is a mysterious continent far from Faerûn. Its population shares much in common with the aboriginal populations of real-world Australia and New Zealand. The people are deeply in touch with their natural world and believe that everything has a spirit -- rocks, trees, air. They are in touch with their ancestors and venerate them along with nature. While travelers from Osse are few and far between in the Realms, those that are encountered frequently follow the path of the spirit shaman. They go on quests to find their way in life, balance wrongs in the spirit world, and help maintain the world's natural beauty.

### **Wu Jens**

Wu jen are akin to wizards in a land where there are no wizard colleges and mentorship is hard to find. Some reject the structures and traditions of their societies, becoming hermits or traveling mystics in distant lands. These are most likely to be found acting as makeshift shamans for the tribes of Purang in Malatra.

Many wu jen powers are similar to those of the shugenja. Where they differ is in their relationships to people. Shugenja are rooted in society, serving as spiritual leaders and advisors. Wu jen are often withdrawn and solitary, focusing on personal power and self improvement. Nevertheless, they serve important roles as advisors to the emperor of Shou Lung.

Like samurai and shugenja, wu jen often enter the Realms via caravans and diplomatic missions from Shou Lung, Wa, and T'u Lung. They act as magical support in the same manner as wizards of the Realms. Unlike samurai and shugenja, however, wu jen frequently leave their employers to venture into the world. Their chaotic natures lead them to abandon ties to hierarchies, instead going off on their own to expand their personal power.

Wu jen in service to the Emperor are another story altogether. They enter the Realms in many of the same ways that other service-based characters do. They frequently serve on missions for the Emperor or another Shou noble. Sometimes, even these wu jen 'defect', but it is more unlikely than among their unaligned brethren.

Wu jen are among the most likely classes to have members that originate from outside of Kara-Tur. The vast majority of wu jen learn their craft from a single mentor. The rejection of social stricture by many wu jen means that they are more willing to teach non-Eastern students than are members of other Eastern classes. There is even talk in a few major wizard colleges of studying the nature of the five elements system to see if there is validity to the method. Such discussions are currently occurring at Candlekeep and at wizard colleges in Waterdeep, Gheldaneth, Silverymoon, and even in Thay. The Thayans have seen the ease with which wu jen manipulate the energies of their spells and seek to learn the secret behind this facility.



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### **About the Author**

Eytan Bernstein hails from exotic Long Island and spends his days writing and editing projects for numerous game companies. In addition to his work on [Dragons of Faerûn](#), the [Magic Item Compendium](#), and numerous other projects, Eytan serves as a partner and PR & Marketing Manager for Silven Publishing. Eytan enjoys hunting for gems and minerals in rock quarries, studying religion and theology, composing music, and playing with his many pets. For more information about Eytan, check out [www.eytanbernstein.com](http://www.eytanbernstein.com). [Send questions and comments for Eytan here.](#)

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