

more. Many of these powers have not been manifest in more than 800 years, as only Andrathath used the *mask* to its full ability. (He is the only owner verified in history to do so.) Many wizards theorize that Andrathath's intellect remains in the mask to manipulate the wearers, as he was found dead and spiritless in the ruins of Dlardrageth Keep. *Andrathath's mask* is famous in the City of Brotherhood as the everpresent headgear of the Masked, one of the fabled Seven Wizards of Myth Drannor. The previous elf to claim the title of the Masked was Lord Speaker Lhombaerth Starym, the rebel noble who dared oppose the Coronal and Court with spells and intrigues. After a short time in the possession of the human armathor Elminster Aumar, the *mask* was given in secret to an elf (or half-elf) female of some mystery; she has since adopted the title of the Masked and has served the city with dignity and grace. Still, some doubt her motives and character due to her insistence on remaining masked at all times; like the seven known others who have worn *Andrathath's mask*, the enigmatic sorceress offers little explanation for her reticence beyond a desire for privacy.

The Arcstaff of Khavoerm

The most powerful arcane artifact among the many in House Irithyl's (and thus, the Coronal's) possession is the *Arcstaff of Khavoerm*. This wizard's staff has never been used by the Coronal due to his path as a warrior, even though his position as the Coronal (and the drawing of the *ar'cor'kerym elfblade*) grants him knowledge of High Magic. Still, he and the Srinshree both know the command word that summons the *Arcstaff* immediately to hand from the Irithyl vaults. Its powers in combat are legendary.

Arcstaff is its simplest title in Common, though its elven title is *Ar'N'Ehalaer* — "The Great Staff that is Not." When viewed outside the hold of a mage, it seems to be merely a twisted length of lumpy, tarnished metal about four feet in length. When held by a wizard or High Mage, the *Arcstaff* comes to magical life and its full glory: The metal brightens to a reflective silvery sheen and contorts to become an undulating wingless and legless dragon that constantly coils and twists about an invisible staff. The wizard's hand alternately appears to grasp this magical metal dragon or nothing at all, though his grip remains true. Around and within spaces in the dragon's coils, sparks and crackles of energy abound which flash brighter and change color when they contact other magic. So, this great staff appears to be a constantly moving, small silver dragon wrapped around a field of magic with no solidity at all.

The powers of the *ar'n'ehalaer* are varied, but any spell effects manifested by the *Arcstaff* act as if cast by a 12th-level caster unless otherwise noted. Four of the staffs powers are constant and take effect automatically without activation by the wielder; these are *feather fall*, *identify*, *shield*, and *shocking grasp* (total damage 1d6+9 including weapon damage, delivered by mere touch of the staff).

The *Arcstaff's* remaining powers require activation with a command word. The command words are ancient gold elf words, and their exact inflection and pronunciation are key;

in other words, if the bearer is not an elf capable of speaking the command words, no further powers can be used by that bearer.

These powers do not drain charges from the item and can be activated at will: *affect normal fires*, *blink*, *detect magic*, *detect undead*, *hold portal*, *knock*, *light/darkness 15' radius*, and *protection from evil/good*.

The following powers drain one charge per use: *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*.

The following powers drain two charges per use: *cone of cold*, *globe of invulnerability*, a barrage of 12 *magic missiles*, and *spell reflection* (spells reflected back to source as a *ring of spellturning* or a *spellblade*).

The *Arcstaff's* two great powers are these:

- The metallic dragon that entwines itself along the *staff* can be unleashed with an expenditure of 10 charges. It grows within one round to become a full-sized adult silver dragon with maximum hit points and full statistics, though it lacks its normal spellcasting ability. Like a *figurine of wondrous power*; the conjured dragon is fully under the influence of the *Arcstaff* - wielder. The staff-wielder also can manifest the staff's powers as breath weapons from this dragon. Should the wielder and the *Arcstaff* stray more than 100 yards from the animated dragon, it immediately begins to shrink and *blinks* into the staff again; otherwise, the dragon can remain active for up to four hours. Once the dragon returns to the staff, this power cannot be activated again for one month.
- The *Arcstaff* absorbs spell energy like a *rod of absorption*, though there are no limits to the amount of spell energy the staff can absorb. Within one round of the staff absorbing a spell's energy, the wielder can opt to unleash the same spell (with effects and damage as originally cast) at the target of his choice at a cost of three charges. Otherwise, the absorbed spell energy recharges the *Arcstaff* at a rate of one charge per two levels of spell energy (i.e., a 6th-level spell restores 3 charges). If the *arcstaff* ever reaches one charge, this power automatically activates, absorbing the first energy it can; until the staffs charges rise above four, only its constant abilities can be used. If encountered, the *Arcstaff* will contain 5d20 charges.

Elfblades

The origins of these blades are told in songs and legends dating back to the founding centuries of the realm of Cormanthyr. Like the ancient *moonblades*, these blades were constructed for the ruler and the two highest lieutenants of the new unified domain. Made at the behest of the Coronal Oacenth of Jhyrennstar, the three *elfblades* were all long swords of great power. This is all the elven folk know of the *elfblades* of Cormanthyr, unless they are scholars of ancient weapons and weapon rites.

By the current day (650 DR), these weapons have become nigh-forgotten relics of the Coronal and his Court. In fact, with the loss of the two lesser *elfblades*, most elves have

overlooked or disregarded the fact that the Coronal still has his *Ruler's Blade*; this is propagated by the fact that the Coronal wears his blade rarely (even for an elf), and the High Mages conceal much of the lore of the *elfblades*.

In truth, the *Ruler's Blade* is what determines the worthiness of he or she who would be Coronal, even though the ceremony of recognition is secret and kept so by the High Mages. Thus, the in-fighting among the elves to kill the Coronal and replace him before the Opening and the rise of the mythal was moot. Even one who would have gained the right to claim the throne could not have done so without passing the blade-rite ritual. Many would-be rulers learn (to their personal shame) that they do not have the temerity to risk their lives to prove their own worth, and most prove themselves unworthy merely by their ruthless paths to the throne.

The Blade-Rite Rituals

The blade-rite rituals are invoked whenever a new wielder is chosen for any of the *elfblades*; as are most potent magical rites and those dealing with the foundations of Cormanthyr, these ceremonies are attended and closely (but secretly) governed by High Mages. During the blade-rite rituals, High Magic interacts with the inherent magic in the *elfblades*, enhancing the testing process. The blade-heir (the attempted wielder) is put through tests of talent (measuring the elf's ability in leadership, battle, or magic), mind (the elf's Intelligence in terms of the same), and heart (the elf's character and wisdom in wielding this talent).

These tests occur within the mind of the tested elf, though all effects are suffered as if the tests were real; only the tested elf and the two High Mages of the ritual are privy to the scene of the test. If the elf passes all the blade's tests, he or she is a true blade-heir and rises to the station of Coronal, Arms-Major, or Spell-Major as befits the *elfblade*.

Mechanically, the tests are checks on 1d20 with -5 penalties, but penalties increase to -8 if the wielder is not of the same alignment as the blade. The checks are made against the character's level, Intelligence, and Wisdom scores; if all are successful, the tester becomes the new blade-wielder. Penalties for failing the tests are described for each blade.

When a wielder dies, an *elfblade* is rendered inert and non-magical until drawn in a blade-rite ritual or drawn at a place of power (such as the Dancing Place or hidden places in Cormanthor or Evermeet). If an *elfblade* is stolen, any who attempt to hold it unsheathed immediately suffer the penalties of failing the blade-rite ritual. Many N'Tel'Quess (nonelves and drow—half-elves can attempt to wield a blade) that dare to try wielding an *elfblade* are struck dead (2d12 hp of permanent damage and succeed a system shock check at half normal Constitution score or die).

The Secrets of the Elfblades

- All three *elfblades* are magical long swords with these bonuses: +4 to attacks and damage; +2 AC bonus; +2 initiative bonus. They all flicker with light effects, though each is different; these light effects can be snuffed entirely

or increased until the wielder is surrounded by a 30-foot radius of light equal to the daylight of highsun.

- Like a High Mage's initiation ritual, the *elfblades* add life to the worthy wielder. The Ruler's Sword extends life by 1d6x100 years; the Warblade brings the wielder back to his peak of life (first year of adulthood without penalties: age-boosted Int/Wis stats remain, though any stats reduced by age are restored); and the Artblade reduces physical age by 1d6x100 years (no loss of Int/Wis stats, though any stats lost due to age are restored). An elf is never reduced to less than the first year of adulthood.
- All three *elfblades* are intelligent weapons (Int 16) which audibly and telepathically speak elvish and have good alignments. While the blades are individually strong-willed, they are not conscious entities unless drawn from their scabbards. They see their duties as serving the realm of Cormanthyr first and the wielder second.

Should a wielder ever change alignment, race, or sex without the *elfblade's* consent or knowledge, the blades can immediately impose a blade-rite test upon the wielder, with any appropriate penalties. Alternately, the blade may choose simply to inflict random bursts of pain (1d4 hp damage while in hand) upon the corrupted wielder, or the weapon can attempt full ego domination in order to force the wielder to either abandon the blade or return the blade to the High Mages or the Coronal of Cormanthyr (Ego 30).

- The *elfblades* bond with their wielders during the blade-rite ritual. If a wielder is accepted, the individual *elfblade* will maintain a magical link with its wielder, allowing it to be *summoned* directly to the wielder's hand despite any distances or physical barriers, provided both blade and elf are on the same plane. *Wards*, *antimagic shells*, and other magical barriers interfere at the DM's discretion.
- All *elfblades* have two powers, activated by command words, usable three times per day, plus one power usable at will as often as desired. Each has a core power unique to that blade with special conditions for the power.
- Finally, the greatest powers granted by the *elfblades* are the ranks that are assigned to their wielders upon successfully claiming the swords: the Coronal of Cormanthyr and the leaders of its armies of warriors and wizards.

Ar'Cor'Kerym

The Rulers' Blade

"Great King's Sword"

This blade appears to be made of raw iron, its surface pitted and craggy and appearing from afar as if it were a long sword carved from stone. An ancient elven crown rune is stamped in gold at the seat of the blade just above the quillons. The blade glows with golden light, which crawls and crackles along the sword like an arc of lightning or electricity.

Alignment: Lawful good

Active Powers: Heal 3 times/day; detect lie at will.

Core Power: Thanks to the two *selu'kiira* bonded to the ends of the quillons (black gems) and a single one on the tang button of the pommel (a red gem), the wielder becomes Coronal and holds the power and knowledge of three High Mages (in addition to any abilities of his own). This allows him to conduct Rituals of Solitude or Complement entirely on his own, and all known rituals are at the Coronal's disposal through the knowledge of the *selu'kiira*.

Blade-Rite Risks: If even one of the ritual's three tests is failed, the *ar'cor'kerym* consumes the unworthy elf in arcane golden fire; within one round, not even ashes remain of the elf or his carried possessions. Because this is the only blade for which failure of its tests is immediate death, High Mages believe this penalty to be the result of the presence of three High Mages' *selu'kiira* on the sword, and that the combined presence of the blade and the former High Mages in the gems cause the consumption of the unworthy.

Location and Notes: The *ar'cor'kerym* is kept safe by the Coronal in a hidden location similar to the Vault of Ages. Only he and the Srinshes are privy to its whereabouts and even the knowledge of the chamber's existence; of all the noted sages and powers of Myth Drannor, only a half-dozen folk even recall the existence of the *ar'cor'kerym*. The Coronal has not wielded this *elfblade* in over 500 years, and most Cormanthyran barely remember the blade at all.

Ary'Velahr'Kerym The Warblade, "Noble Warrior's Sword"

This long sword shines like polished silver at all times, its blade perfectly reflective and glistening no matter what punishments ring down upon it. Blue and silver flames lick incessantly along the sword, quillons, pommel, and harmlessly around the elf's hands whenever drawn. Visible at the seat of the blade is an elven rune meaning "weapon," which is commonly used as a sword mark.

Alignment: Chaotic good

Active Powers: *Strength* 3 times/day (can exceed normal elven racial limits for the spell duration, though *Strength* cannot exceed 19); *detect evil/good* at will.

Core Power: By sacrificing all attacks for two rounds and performing a complicated blade-dance with the *Warblade*, the wielder can conjure a *blade barrier* that remains for 2d6 rounds. Once the *blade barrier* appears at the end of the two-round summoning, the wielder and the *elfblade* can move beyond its stationary boundary.

Blade-Rite Risks: Should a wielder fail to pass the blade-rituals, his grip around the sword's pommel suddenly feels as if he is gripping the unsheathed blade, and he suffers damage equal to his own *Strength* score plus 1d6 points. This damage cannot be healed by any magical means and can be healed only naturally and slowly; deep palm scars remain forever, despite any later healing or magics.

If the failed wielder is a N'Tel'Quess or of evil alignment,

the blade also becomes a *dancing sword* and attacks the unworthy user. The *elfblade* pursues and attacks such a victim for 1d6 turns, trying its best to slay the usurper.

Location and Notes: When the Lord Orym Hawksong fell in battle at the siege of the Twisted Tower in the Year of Shadows Fleeting (-331 DR), the *Warblade* sprang up and defended him fiercely for a time. The magics of the drow managed to paralyze the *blade*, however, and both the body of the great hero and his arcane sword were stolen into the darkness beneath the Twisted Tower. In the ten centuries since the Arms-Major's *elfblade* was lost, more than 120 elves have sought it, but none have returned.

Ary'Faern'Kerym The Artblade, "Noble Sorcerer's Sword"

This sword appears as a long sword forged from solid darkness, the void of nonreflective blackness feeling as solid as stone yet slick as oil. When drawn, the *Artblade* crackles like lightning breaking across a metal shield. When swung, it emits a sharp buzzing sound similar to that of an angry bee; this sound can be muted by the will of the wielder. When struck against objects or weapons, the blade's clash is utterly silent, no matter how much strength is behind the blow. Along the razor-sharp, bevelled edge of the blade glows a crimson beam of energy that encloses the darkness, the source of the *elfblade*'s magical light. In contrast to the dark blade is a brightly glowing, crimson elven rune embossed near the pommel that is often used to signify a thing of magic.

Alignment: Neutral good

Active Powers: *Dispel magic* 3 times/day; *detect magic* at will.

Core Power: This *elfblade* allows its wielder to forego standard spellcasting and use the sword to do so. Spells are cast mentally through the sword and made manifest via sword slashes (somatic) and the droning buzz of the blade (verbal), with no need for material components. Using the *Artblade* to cast invocation/evocation spells boosts the effects as if spun by a caster one level higher than the wielder.

Blade-Rite Risks: Upon failure of any test, the elf becomes wrapped in a dead-magic zone and is unable to wield any magic, whether spell, item, or High Magic, for 3d6 years.

Location: The current location of this *elfblade* is unknown. Its last known wielder, the boy-mage Zaos Durothil, was carried off by the red dragon Edallisufanxar the Burning Blaze during an attack on its Cormanthyran lair in the Year of the Corrie Fist (450 DR). Both figures had good cause to keep the weapon safe: The sorely-wounded Zaos had the *Artblade* in his possession and was its youngest wielder at only 122 winters, and the dragon had spent 250 years attempting to acquire the sword from the boy's father, to no avail. The final fates of Zaos and "Edall-Blaze" have never been recorded, though the dragon and its captive were last sighted winging south and west into the Giant's Run Mountains.