

Drol and Cillian Valek – two and a half brothers

1. Backstory

In the frigid reaches of the North, beyond the bustling city of Borrsted, lies the secluded village of Pinegrove. Here, two brothers, Drol and Cillian, were born into the noble House Valek. As scions of this ancient lineage, they grew up overseeing a modest population of no more than a hundred souls, their world confined to the snow-capped peaks and dense forests surrounding their ancestral home. Although not adventurous yet, their minds and dreams were already guided by tales and myths told by their father, Pleor. Their longing to make a mark in history for themselves lead them to take up the arts of combat. Trained at an early age, they both soon developed interests in different fighting styles.

Unbeknownst to them, their family heir was tainted by dark magic many generations ago. Their great-great-grandfather, Mikkell, desperately trying to bring back his beloved from the grasps of death, unleashed a darkness that will follow the family's heritage for all time to come - tempting all future generations to follow their ancestors' path and plunge themselves into the madness of demonic rituals. Some say that most succumbed to this temptation and that the family's welfare and riches are mainly due to past grim ventures. After having suffered unnatural droughts and waves of illness, rumours amongst the common folk spread like wildfire. It was said that the sinister goings on hidden behind the Valek manor walls were the reason the Prime deities left this land to its demise. Although never taking any action against their lords the resident populace abandoned their trust towards the "house of demons", as they called it – respect making way for fear. Following their ancestors, the brothers' parents, Vila and Pleor Valek, cultivated their families' perilous heirloom, only this time, forever altering their legacy.

On the night of the annual tithe banquet, one of Vila and Pleor's rituals went awry, unleashing a balor named Girath'nax—a fearsome general of the Abyss—from its planar tether. Immediately having to find a host to sustain its form, Girath'nax ravaged the castle halls possessing every soul it deemed worthy and mighty enough. Drol and Cillian had to witness every grown man, then grown woman and finally the elderly die before their eyes. Finally, the demon desperate to remain in the material plane, split its essence into two aspects—one of searing flame and the other of biting frost. These spectral fragments sought out the only suitable vessels left: the two teenage boys. Coming back to their senses, witnessing the lifeless bodies of everyone they ever held dear, they realized that life was about to change for them. From one fiery dark scarlet eye gazing into one resembling a deep-frozen roiling lake. As the demonic essence merged with their beings, their names changed to reflect their new nature. Drol became

Drol'Girath, and Cillian transformed into Zilia'nax—each name a haunting reminder of the balor that now resided within them.

Now, a decade has passed since that fateful night. Drol'Girath, possessed by the frost aspect, has become a sturdy and steadfast warrior, wielding a sword and shield with resolve, often coating his metal armor in a layer of magical ice. Zilia'nax, imbued with the fiery aspect, has mastered the art of archery, his arrows searing through the air with unnatural speed and deadly precision.

They have spent years roaming the northern wilderness as monster hunters, their true identities hidden behind carefully crafted personas. Their shared secret and newfound powers have bound them closer than blood ever could. As the story unfolds, we find Drol'Dor and Zilia'nax on their way westward, pursuing a new contract near Lake Morrigan. The journey takes them further from their past and deeper into unknown territories, where new challenges and mysteries await.

The brothers' quest for redemption continues, each contract bringing them closer to understanding the nature of their demonic passenger and perhaps finding a way to rid themselves of Girath'nax lingering presence. As they approach Lake Morrigan, they remain vigilant, knowing that their unique abilities may be both their greatest asset and their most dangerous liability in the trials to come.

2. Joint motivations

Each half manifests itself in the characters through the ethereal colouring of one eye, their respective personality, and the way they manifest their abilities during combat.

To remain in the material plane, strengthen its vessels, ensure their survival and lead them to an artifact of old that, with the right ritual, could reunite its split essence and ensure its independent existence. The characters, unaware of this artifact and ritual, and after having searched for ways to exercise the demon at first, decide to keep their demonic passenger as for more reason than one it serves more good than evil: While bound to them, the balor can't harm others directly, the additional strength and abilities help them to their individual goals, that for the biggest part has overlapped up to this point. Drol being the firstborn is set to redeem the family name Valek and reinstate him and his family into nobility. Cillian, having less stakes in their heritage, focusses on the evil he can eradicate from the plane by hunting monsters terrorising the surrounding populace.

As means to an end their day-to-day motivations are coin to ensure a well-stocked equipment and component pouch, a full belly, and a good night's rest. Broadening their knowledge of

everything “Evil” roaming this side of the land is of course, also always on the agenda. In all their ventures, and even stemming from nobility, they do not regard themselves to be better than the average citizen. Their etiquette and well-mannered demeanour however do set them apart from the commonfolk somewhat.

3. Mechanics

Taken and adapted from Van Richten’s Guide to Ravenloft (Dark Gifts - Symbiotic Being)

Possession by the Infernal

A powerful demon has bound itself to your soul and body, sharing a twisted coexistence with you. It manifests physically in some way—a brand, a mark, or an unsettling feature—and relies on your survival to remain tethered to the mortal realm. This infernal bond grants you dark insights and fiendish powers, but the demon’s agenda often runs contrary to your own. Ignoring its desires risks backlash, as it may attempt to take control or influence your actions in subtle—and sometimes, not-so-subtle—ways. Severing this connection is nearly impossible; even drastic measures, such as ritual purification, fail as the demon’s essence simply reconstitutes at midnight. If you die, so does the demon. However, if you are returned to life, the demon is restored as well.

Infernal Manifestation

Ethereal blue and red eye that increase in intensity when tapping into the demonic abilities and when surrounded by death and chaos. (*often during combat*)

Infernal Bond

Your demon companion is a distinct personality bound to you, unable to exist without its host. It is not a separate creature but has its own intelligence and agendas. The demon has Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, which the DM determines:

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)

It can see and hear through your senses and speaks, reads, and understands two languages: one you speak and one appropriate to its infernal origins (*Abyssal and Common*).

Fiendish Insight

Choose one of the following skills: Arcana, Deception, History, **Intimidation**, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Religion, Perception, or Persuasion. You gain proficiency in that skill if you don't already have it, representing the demon's knowledge and insights into dark and esoteric matters. *Our charisma scores are low so this is not a huge plus, however it would be flavorful to let us intimidate though our sheer "demonic" aura.*

Hellish Endurance

The demon's survival is entwined with yours, and it will step in when death is close. When you fail a saving throw, the demon can expend one of your Hit Dice, adding the result to your roll to potentially turn a failure into a success. If it does this on a death saving throw, you automatically succeed and regain 1 hit point, as the demon pulls you back from the brink.

Once you succeed on a saving throw this way, the demon cannot use this feature again until you complete a long rest. *This is very similar to the inherent feature of Orcs but a hit die has to be spent on it.*

Infernal Agenda

Your demon has an insidious agenda that it expects you to pursue. How forcefully it pushes its desires depends on its personality and level of influence (work with your DM to define these details). When an opportunity arises to advance its goals and you ignore it, the demon may attempt to compel you. You must succeed on a Charisma saving throw (DC 12 + the demon's Charisma modifier) or be charmed by the demon for 1d12 hours. While charmed, you must follow the demon's commands. If you take damage from another creature, you may repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Binding with an Artifact

A legendary artifact (such as an ancient demonic weapon, a cursed tome, or a soul-binding relic) holds the power to reunite the halves. By channeling their combined energies through the artifact, they can reforge their original form. This might require both halves to make a pact or for a third party to wield the artifact and bind them together.

Narrative Twist: The artifact's influence could linger, giving it control over the demon general, or leaving the merged demon with unexpected weaknesses. Alternatively, the artifact's wielder gains limited power over the reunited demon, leading to uneasy alliances or future conflicts.