

RAVENLOFT ARCHETYPES II: CORE DOMAINS ADVENTURER'S GUIDE



Investigate the Core Domains of Dread, from Barovia to the Sea of Sorrows, in this campaign sourcebook for the world's greatest roleplaying game

Ver1.2

Ravenloft Archetypes II: The Core Domains Adventurer's Guide

By Jeremy Forbing

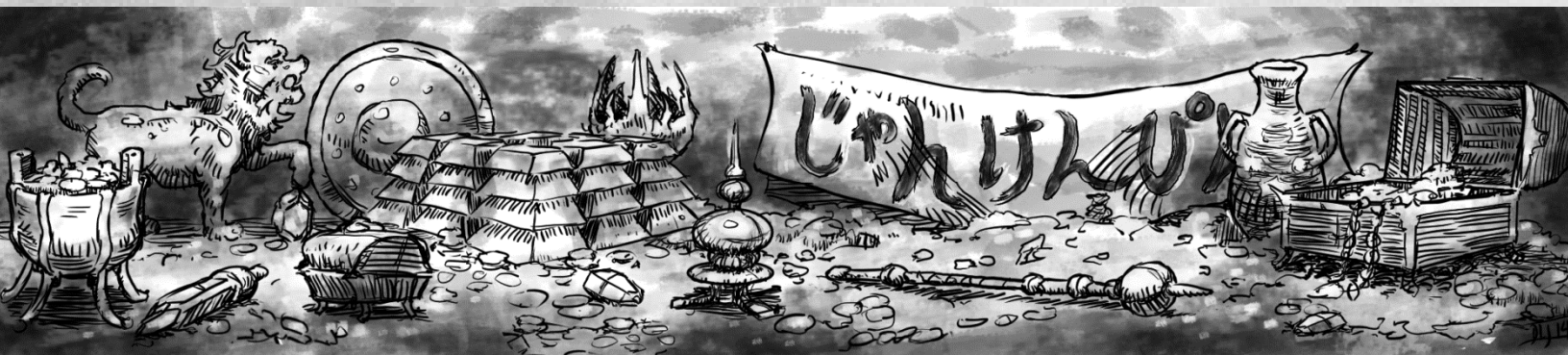
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Preface

"NO MAN KNOWS TILL HE HAS SUFFERED FROM THE NIGHT HOW SWEET
AND DEAR TO HIS HEART AND EYE THE MORNING CAN BE."

--BRAM STOKER, *DRACULA*

In the year 351 of the Barovian calendar, Strahd von Zarovich made a pact with Death—a pact that sealed his fate and created a land of nightmares known as Ravenloft. In the year 1990 of the Gregorian calendar, TSR—the company that owned D&D at the time—published *Ravenloft: Realm of Terror* as a setting for D&D adventures flavored with Gothic horror. It took Tracy and Laura Hickman's classic adventure, I6: "Ravenloft" (1983), and expanded it into entire campaign world of its own, a new part of the growing D&D multiverse. Just as the realm of Barovia was both prison and dominion to the Count Strahd von Zarovich, the lands just across its borders were more of these Domains of Dread—each reflecting and imprisoning the darklord who ruled it. As I6: "Ravenloft" riffed on Stoker's *Dracula*, these other realms reflected horror inspirations of their own—Lamordia's Victor Mordenheim and his monster paralleled *Frankenstein*, Nova Vaasa's darklord was a medieval version of Jekyll & Hyde, the domain of Tepest remixed Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the Jacobean era of witch hysteria that inspired it, while Vlad Drakov of Falkovnia was based on the historical (and, so far as we know, not undead) Vlad the Impaler. These separate domains were brought together into a demiplane by the mysterious force called the Dark Powers. *Ravenloft: Realm of Terror* became a beloved classic, known as the "Black Box."

Yet the boxed set was not the first expansion to the original Ravenloft adventure. In 1986 TSR had published I10: "Ravenloft II: House on Gryphon Hill", a sequel outlined by the Hickmans and handed off to other authors. Set outside Barovia in the dark moors of Mordentshire, it had a dreamlike, furtive relationship to the original—later explained to be the result of Strahd and the undying archmage Azalin's failed attempt to escape Ravenloft, instead pulling Mordentshire into the demiplane as a new Domain of Dread. Three families that would later be a part of many Ravenloft domains: the d'Honaire, Timothy, and Weathermay bloodlines—are seen here for the first time as well.

The setting was not only deepened by future supplements and revised versions of the "Black Box," but by a highly regarded series of Ravenloft novels. Many of the novels' authors—such as Christie Golden, James Lowdr, Elaine Bergstrom, P.N. Elrod, and *Anite Blake: Vampire Hunter* creator Laurell K. Hamilton—went on to wider fame as the writers of other bestselling fantasy and horror novels, but Ravenloft benefitted from the creativity of their early careers. Ideas from these novels fed back into the RPG materials, adding verisimilitude and a growing sense of personal horror to the classic setting.

Under the stewardship of new owners Wizards of the Coast ("WotC"), D&D released its 3rd Edition, and for part of this era, the Ravenloft setting was licensed to the horror-focused RPG publisher White Wolf. Through their

Sword & Sorcery and Arthaus imprints, they released revised editions of the setting with detailed support materials, continuing the work of developing and detailing a living, breathing world of Gothic fantasy.

Before, during, and after the White Wolf years, groups of creative individuals who loved the setting acted as its custodians. A mix of prolific Ravenloft fans, professional RPG writers, and fans-turned-professional-RPG-writers formed groups devoted to the setting, named for secret societies in the setting (see the Secret Societies chapter for details on the in-game equivalents of these). The original TSR writing team called the Kargat begat the Kargatane, who contributed to the White Wolf materials and operated the official Ravenloft website. In 2003, the Fraternity of Shadows, whose Mistipedia wiki remains the greatest repository of Ravenloft lore, took up this stewardship.

Given the iconic stature of the original I6: "Ravenloft", it is no surprise that the first mega-adventure produced in-house by WotC for fifth edition Dungeons & Dragons would be Chris Perkins' *Curse of Strahd*, an "ultimate" version of the module produced in collaboration with Tracy and Laura Hickman. It inaugurates a new era for the classic campaign setting in the latest edition. It also occasioned a new renaissance of Ravenloft content (with the document you are reading playing its own humble part), as WotC opened up the setting to freelance authors everywhere as part of the online DM's Guild.

Ravenloft Archetypes II: The Core Domains Adventurer's Guide aims to do everything for Ravenloft that the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide* did for the Forgotten Realms. It provides a broad look at the continent called the Core, which includes Barovia and the most classic domains, along with a general overview of the entire setting. Chapter 1 is a primer on the nature and metaphysical rules of all the Domains of Dread, with details on history and religion along with a special section for using this document with *Curse of Strahd*. Chapter 2 describes the Core as a region, with special emphasis on ten of its domains (including Barovia). Chapter 3 describes how the D&D races fit into Ravenloft, and includes new subraces and variants, and a new race. Chapter 4 does the same for classes, introducing new archetypes and an entirely new class, the Metaphysician. Chapter 5 describes eight of Ravenloft's many secret societies, with all the rules necessary to portray their members. Chapters 6 and 7 also discuss new character options, focusing on new spells (48 of them!) and new feats, respectively. Speaking of spells, the following notations appear throughout this document:

*=This is a new spell described in this document.

**=This spell appears in the *Elemental Evil Player's Companion*.

***= This spell appears in the *Sword Coast Adventurers Guide*.

As described above, this document is just the latest handling of a torch passed many times, from the Hickmans' home campaign and now—as ever—on to DMs and players like you. Welcome to Ravenloft—or, for long-time fans, welcome back. To quote *Dracula* again:

"ENTER FREELY, AND OF YOUR OWN WILL..."

Chapter 1:

What are the Domains of Dread?

Ravenloft is the name of a castle in Barovia, but to some, it has also lent its name to the entire world in which it stands—a world unlike any other, composed of many Domains of Dread. Though the domains' borders are often impassable, they are not completely separate from one another. Taken together, they form a terrifying realm all their own, which sages refer to by various names. To some, the domains are one Demiplane of Dread, to others they are merely the darkest parts of the benighted plane called the Shadowfell. Whether you call it the Domains of Dread, the Realm of Terror, the Land of Mists, or simply Ravenloft, this world is unique. It is a construct, an artificial demiplane that at times seems to float in the Ethereal Plane, at other times appears as part of the Shadowfell, and may exist on the borders of both. The implacable Dark Powers constructed their realm from the hidden fears of innumerable worlds, from Eberron to the Forgotten Realms of Abeir-Toril, shaping their realm's reality to reflect their own sinister sensibilities.

Barovia was the first Domain of Dread, but there are dozens or more lands much like it—all once part of another world, now drawn into the Mists by the unknowable Dark Powers to become places of relentless horror. *Darklords* like Strahd von Zarovich rule each one of them, cursed for their dark deeds to reign over a domain that reflects their particular sins but which they can never leave. Barovia is its heart, and from that point the others have spread like a great stain, which continues to grow even now. In fact, Barovia and many others share a single landmass, a continent with a mostly temperate climate dominated by rugged, forested geography. This accursed land, of which Barovia is but one part, is simply called **the Core**.

Beyond the Core, there are other independent Domains of Dread, divided from the Core by the impenetrable Mists. Tiny worlds unto themselves,

scholars refer to these isolated realms as their own **Islands of Terror**. These domains are continually forming and disappearing, so no complete listing of them can be established, but some of the Islands of Terror are touched on in these pages. At times, they cluster together, coalescing into larger islands that contain multiple domains.

Sometimes, within another domain, tiny pocket domains appear, isolated incubators where the Dark Powers allow the promising evil of a potential Dark Lord to grow.

Though many inhabitants of the Land of Mists come from other worlds, and lands and structures may be taken from them as well (though some sages believe they are merely recreated), once a domain is created, it is no longer part of the mortal realms from which it was drawn. It exists as a microcosm unto itself, a solid and physical domain, apparently somewhere around the border between the Shadowfell and the Ethereal Plane, and it follows its own set of mystical laws.

The Realm of Terror is neither ancient nor stable. As near as sages can tell, none of the Domains of Dread have existed as such for much longer than 400 years. Over time, individual domains have expanded, condensed, coalesced, moved, or disappeared altogether. It is much smaller than the Forgotten Realms or other worlds such as Oerth, Krynn, Mystara, Athas, Aebrynis, or Eberron—though it has pulled parts of itself from all those worlds. Though natives of many realms walk its benighted paths, Ravenloft is not a cosmological crossroads, like the extra-planar city of Sigil. Rather, it is sealed off from other worlds and planes by the Dark Powers that rule it, and it is far easier to enter the Realms of Terror than to escape them. Unlike the worlds listed above, this place has no fixed size. It grows, and at times contracts, as its misty tendrils creep into other worlds to absorb or copy both people and places.

Most travelers who end up in the Domains of Dread do not seek them. They are drawn in by the clutching tendrils of the Mists.

THE MISTS

Exactly what the Mists are or how they function is unknown. It is for this reason that commoners in most domains of Ravenloft refer to the Mists in much the same way that children might speak of a bogeyman. Here, anything unknown and threatening is generally ascribed to the Mists, whether any connection actually exists or not.

When most people think of the Mists, they envision swirling clouds of white fog that roll out of the ground to consume evildoers. This belief certainly has a great deal of merit, for the Mists do appear to be the agents of the dark powers.

Other worlds have mists and fog, to be sure, which can bedevil travelers by obscuring their environs and concealing hazards. Yet these Mists are a separate and much deadlier phenomenon than any mere weather. In many ways, they define the Domain of Dread.

In other worlds, unenlightened folk often imagine (incorrectly) they live on a flat surface, and that if they walked far enough, they could reach the end of the world. Most mortal realms, however, are in fact spheres, and inhabitants could walk around the world in a straight line and find themselves back where they started. In the Domains of Dread, however, a creature who traveled far enough actually *would* reach the end of their world. And at the edge of that world, they would find the Mists.

The Land of Mists is so-named for a reason. The Mists surround all of it, all the time, and sometimes creep in to define the borders between landmasses or even individual domains. These thick supernatural vapors reveal nothing to even magical divinations. They radiate no magic, alignment, or sign of life. To living senses, they are indistinguishable from natural precipitation.

The Mists often reach into other worlds and planes, unpredictably, traveling to various places without any apparent cause, and even randomly transporting individuals to one of the Dread Domains. When they do this, the Mists are as likely to affect those who are good or neutral as those who are evil. Some say that a grim purpose lurks behind these apparently chaotic abductions. The truth will almost certainly remain unknown until the true nature of the Dark Powers is revealed.

However, it is known that when an individual's deeds, or even just their desires, are dark enough, such evil is more likely to attract the Mists than any other behavior. While the Mists usually steal only a single person or a small group, some say they have seen entire armies vanish into a sudden fog—perhaps these were the Mists as well. Once the Mists come for you, neither magic nor cunning nor strength of arms can stop them. There is no defense.

While there are many ways to reach the Domains of Dread, routes out of that mire of evil are far fewer. Indeed, many think true escape from Ravenloft is impossible. They say that those who manage to leave the Demiplane will be drawn back one day, since the

Mists never forget anyone they have chosen to embrace. However, whether escape from Ravenloft is permanent or temporary matters little for the purposes of this discussion.

Even once you are within the Domains of Dread, the Mists are not done with you. In addition to forming the borders of the demiplane itself and separating its various regions, they can rise from the soil or sea in any individual domain. Sometimes they merely comprise a confusing obstacle, an isolated pocket of blindness, but other times they are an impassable barrier. In Barovia, when Strahd wants to seal off the borders, they become a choking, life-draining fog, and those who enter them must turn back or die.

At other times, adventurers can step into the bordering mists of other domains and wander for a time, moving through a bewildering dream world where time and space seem to twist and tangle. This is dangerous, as other creatures wander into the Mists as well, and outcasts and monsters lurk within. Eventually, however—often not long after the impulse that first sent them into the Mists passes—adventurers are returned to one of the Domains, and not always the one they left.

In fact, this is often a behavior of the Mists within the domains themselves: they rise and transport someone another domain who is powerless to stop this effect. The Mists do as they will.

Where the Mists Do Not Go

For some reason, the Mists never travel to the Outer Planes, nor to dimensions of pure energy or elements, such as the Elemental Chaos or the individual Elemental Planes. Exactly why this is, none can say. While some insist that the powers of those planes are so awesome that they are able to hold the Mists back, this seems unlikely. If a *gate* spell can pierce the borders of these otherworldly realms, it seems impossible to accept that the Mists could not do so if they wished. The most obvious answer is that it is mortal souls—even those souls that have transformed beyond the limitations of humanity, mortality, or even material flesh—which seem to interest the Dark Powers, not angels created to be good nor devils born to absolute evil, nor seemingly mindless creatures of the pure elemental energy.

THE DOMAINS OF DREAD

The name “the Domains of Dread”—as a sobriquet for the whole of the larger demiplane some call Ravenloft—is apt, for it is composed of scores of small pocket “nations” not too far removed from planes themselves, like the cells of a honeycomb—or the cells of a prison. Each of these artificially constructed countries, called domains, is the prison

of a singular evil entity: its darklord. A domain may stand alone, an "Island of Terror" surrounded by the Mists of Ravenloft, or it may join seamlessly with other domains in "clusters" to form a continuous landscape, the greatest of these clusters being the subcontinent known simply as the Core.

Every aspect of a domain, from its climate to the creatures that call it home, is a subtle reflection of its darklord, offering painful reminders of the transgressions that forged the darklord's doom. The size of a domain may range from a single room, to a lonesome manor and its grounds, to an expansive dominion containing numerous towns and a thriving culture. Some occult sages believe that a domain's size may be a measure of the darklord's force of personality, their squandered potential, or even of the tragedy of their tale. However, the Dark Powers may grant a less compelling darklord a vast but sparsely populated domain, furthering their isolation, or they may trap a powerful darklord in a smaller domain, concentrating their evil.

Domain Borders

In regions like the Core—landmasses made up of multiple Domains of Dread—the edges of a domain may be recognized as political boundaries, or they may be indicated only by physical landmarks: a brook, perhaps, or the edge of a forest. In some cases, however, a traveler may have no way to tell that they have crossed into a new den of evil.

Even worse, that traveler may find escape impossible, even if freedom is just a few paces away. Almost all darklords can "close" the borders of their domains at will; if a darklord cannot close their domain, the cause often lies in the nature of the curse that binds them to the land. When a darklord closes their domain, immensely powerful supernatural effects manifest at the borders to prevent passage. As an example, many travelers in the Core have heard tales of the poisonous vapors that sometimes surround Barovia, choking anyone who attempts to leave. This is, in fact, the will of Strahd von Zarovich himself, who can even call upon the Mists to close off the village of Barovia itself within his larger domain. No mortal magic can overcome the effects of a closed domain border, nor can any character ability, trait, or feature.

THE DARKLORDS

Just as Strahd von Zarovich is the one true master of Barovia, his fellow darklords are the seed of evil at the heart of every Domain of Dread. Yet few denizens are aware that they even exist. Heroes have no infallible means of detecting whom or what is the darklord of a given domain. Some darklords control their domains openly, acting as political rulers, while others skulk in the shadows, their very existence a secret. Indeed, the very concept of a "darklord" isn't one of which the average citizen of a domain is aware.

Most domains are inhabited by a single darklord, though on rare occasion the Dark Powers may grant a single domain to a small group of evildoers. These darklords are usually linked by both blood relation and their crimes.

Mindless, slaving beasts do not become darklords. Mere evil is not enough to earn a domain. Despite their corruption, darklords share the same motivations as countless other folk: they hope for love, crave respect, or even yearn for mere acceptance. Yet darklords are not poor, misunderstood souls damned through no fault of their own. Their selfish natures pervert simple wants into obsessive lusts, and they earn their domains through horrid crimes. Darklords are all the more monstrous for the empathy one might feel for them, not in spite of it. Even when forced to face their transgressions, most darklords remain obstinately blind to their own failings, lashing out at the world for perceived wrongs. A darklord is both the warden and the ultimate prisoner of their domain.

A darklord can trap others in their domain by closing the borders, but they can never leave. Some of the Realm of Terror's darklords have spent centuries striving to escape from their Mist-veiled prisons, to no avail. The curse that binds them to the land offers them little rest; not unlike Tantalus in the underworld, they are tormented by their greatest desires.

Should a darklord be destroyed, their domain



ceases to serve a purpose. If another evil creature in the domain has earned damnation, the Dark Powers may appoint it the domain's new darklord. A domain in a cluster may be absorbed by its neighbors, expanding the prisons of other darklords. If neither of these events occurs, the domain dissolves back into the Mists from whence it came. The fate of those who dwell in a vanishing domain is not clear.

Count Strahd Von Zarovich

The prototypical darklord, ruling the first of all the Domains of Dead, Lord Strahd is the darklord of Barovia. He rules his domain from Castle Ravenloft as Strahd IX, a descendent of Strahd I. In actuality, Strahd I and Strahd IX are the one and the same—a vampire. As a mortal, Strahd fell in love with Tatyana Federovna, the bride of his youngest brother Sergei. In his jealousy, Strahd murdered his brother and became the Darklord of Barovia, which was swept away into the Demiplane along with its ruler. Since then, Strahd is cursed to seek incarnations of Tatyana for eternity.

USING *CURSE OF STRAHD* WITH THIS BOOK

The adventure *Curse of Strahd* is explicitly set in the year 735 BC—before the Grand Conjunction that changed the face of the Core forever in 740 BC, before Barovia annexed the once adjacent domain of Gundarak, before the Requiem and other strange events of 750 BC. However, this document describes other domains much as they were from 756-760 BC. The decision to do so was made because much of the richest material on the other domains in previous publications was set in that later period. If the timeline is important to you, you may wonder how best to reconcile these pages with that latest and most detailed retelling of the original Ravenloft story. Two options for DMs running campaigns set in the Domains of Dread are described here.

The first is simple: Set *Curse of Strahd* twenty or more years later. Part of the unique nature of Strahd's damnation to the domain that imprisons him is that life (and unlife) there doesn't change very much. Barovia in 735 BC and 760 BC aren't that different, so the different setting would only matter in terms of minor details.

A second solution, and one less likely to transgress any of the existing continuity of Ravenloft lore, is based the unique cosmology of the domains themselves. When a domain enters the Realm of Terror, changes in their lands are often smoothed over by the denizens of the new domain (and sometimes neighboring ones) receiving false history. Ruins of an ancient civilization that were not present

in a particular nation when it was in the Forgotten Realms may now dot its landscape. Residents may now recall their grandparents telling them that those ancient structures were built by their ancestors, the Thunder Lords—even though before they were brought over by the Mists, there was no mention of any group called the Thunder Lords. In light of this false history, consider the following equally eerie phenomenon: There is evidence (though this is no settled matter) that when Madame Eva's troupe of Vistani visit Barovia, their visits do not happen in linear time. When they cross the boundaries into Barovia, the Mists choose when in Barovia's dark history since Strahd's fall from grace they arrive. They could meet a party of adventurers in 700 BC and greet them as old friends, because from their perspective they met them during a previous visit—despite the fact that, from the point of view of the adventurers, they've never seen a Vistana before. Then, in 701 BC, Madame Eva's troupe seemingly returns from time away from Barovia, and the adventurers meet her again from their viewpoint—but Madame Eva seems not to recognize them, and asks strange questions she should already know. From her point of view, she is meeting them for the first time. Every time this particular group of Vistani enters Strahd's domain, they end up in a different time. From this phenomenon, one can surmise that when Strahd closes the borders of his domain, he truly seals those within off from the outside world, changing their relationship to time as well as space. In this suggested scenario, 735 BC is part of a period which Barovians and their neighbors call the Long Isolation, when Strahd von Zarovich would close his borders for years at a time. Perhaps this was due to a series of adventuring parties who entered his realm during this time, each of whom eventually tried and failed to defeat the darklord. Believing that he could be freed from his cursed imprisonment if he could find a worthy successor to rule Barovia in his stead, Strahd spent years testing and toying with adventurers, seeking his own replacement from among their number. After all, adventuring is one of the quickest routes to wealth and power available, a lifestyle that appeals to individuals of both great potential and questionable morals. No doubt, such persons would do anything they could to escape Barovia, and so Strahd may have simply kept his borders closed to entrap them. In any case, when and if the characters of players participating in *Curse of Strahd* finally leave the domain—either because they somehow defeated the darklord or (more likely) because Strahd/the DM

allowed it—they find themselves in the late 750's, rather than in the year 735 BC when they left. If they never return to Barovia, they likely will not notice the difference. If they ever do return, however, they find that twenty or more years have passed in Barovia as well. Their previous deeds in the domain are now (depending on the particular deeds) the stuff of legend or long infamy. Those they met are much older or no longer among the living. Plans they set in motion either proceeded without them or petered out without their guiding hand. Barovia has annexed its former neighbor, the Domain of Gundarak, growing larger and gaining a large new ethnic minority. (For other details of how Barovia changes after 735, see the Barovia and the Grand Conjunction sidebar in the Barovia section of the Gazetteer of the Core Domains chapter). Worst of all, depending on the nature of the adventurers' departure, Strahd still rules from Castle Ravenloft, and is now even more wily and powerful than before. Whether the passage of time has created an opportunity to defeat or destroy the hated darklord forever is up to the Dungeon Master.

What are the Dark Powers?

Ravenloft first appeared in print in 1983, and became its own larger campaign setting "world" in 1990. Since that time, there have been many theories and explanations put forth to explain the true nature of the Dark Powers that rule over the Domains/Demiplane of Dread. All sources purporting to reveal details on these forces have been revealed as idle fantasies.

All that is really known is that they rule and likely create all the Domains, that within the Domains of Dread they seem to be functionally omnipotent and likely omniscient, that they intervene in their realm much more directly than the deities of most known worlds, and that they lord over and toy with the darklords in the same way the darklords mistreat ordinary mortals. They seem to have some perverse sense of "justice," though it seldom manifests as anything more than precisely designed horrors to poetically torture those in their clutches. They have some connection to the vestiges in the Amber Temple of Barovia, but the scope and particularity of their activities are far too great for that to be the end of the story.

The darklords don't even seem to understand them: Strahd himself speaks of the force that torments him as "Death," understanding it as the source of voices he hears from his mortal life, friends and family whose words seem to mock his failings. The death knight Lord Soth is said to have studiously ignored the Dark Powers during his time as ruler of Sithicus. The powerful Azalin, who rules the domain of Darkon, plans and executes massive schemes to comprehend and outwit the Dark Powers, yet they all seem to fail. Falkovnia's darklord, the ambitious would-be conqueror Vlad Drakov, seems oblivious to the fact that a higher power dooms all his military expeditions to fail. The

Dark Powers dangle enough hope before their playthings to keep them struggling, but most don't perceive any larger force behind the fact that pursuing those hopes leads only to constant disappointment and anguish. Are the Dark Powers as wicked and powerful as they seem? Are they actually good powers punishing evil, or just evil powers who delight in tormenting the good and evil alike? Is the realm they've created a real place, just a nightmarish dream-world, or some kind of purgatorial afterlife? Are they a single entity, or multiple powers as they've always been named? What is their relationship to the gods of other campaign settings? Can they be escaped, as it is said the former darklords Vecna and Lord Soth eventually did, or did the Dark Powers choose to expel those two?

In the early 21st century, in the *Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide* for the 3rd Edition of the game, a small sidebar finally revealed the exact nature of these entities once and for all:

"Now, let the truth be told. The Dark Powers are a mystery, a secret. They are inherently unknowable, and no theory will ever fully explain them. In other words, the Dark Powers are a creative device for the Dungeon Master. They're whatever you want them to be in your campaign, and no book will ever contradict you."

A TIMELINE OF BAROVIA AND THE DOMAINS OF DREAD

The timeline on the following pages is included for a number of reasons. An obvious one is to give a sense of the sweep of events within the Land of Mists and its changing geography. Another is to give context to events in Barovia specifically, against the larger historical tapestry of the Domains of Dread that formed around it. Additionally, it shows the various domains' relationships to one another over time, making it clear that Ravenloft is not merely a unique challenge for outlander adventurers, but a living world with its own large societies and cultures. All dates here are given in the Barovian Calendar that starts with the ancient Von Zaroviches unifying what will become Barovia. This event denotes year 1 BC (for Barovian Calendar), which has been adapted by sages in many domains.

A Grand History of the Domains of Dread

BC 1 On a world whose name is not known, the ancestors of Strahd von Zarovich forge independent city states together into the nation that will become Barovia.

BC 168 Church of Andral founded. After Barovia enters the Mists, this faith will largely vanish as a separate religion of its own.

BC 230 The Neureni, a horde of raiders worshipping the demon lord Irlek-Khan as a god, invade ancestral von Zarovich lands. They are stopped by a legendary von Zarovich warrior-princess.

BC 277 Barov von Zarovich, future father of Strahd, is born.

BC 283 Ravenia Van Roeyen, future mother of Strahd and wife of Barov, is born.

BC 299 Strahd von Zarovich is born to Barov and Ravenia.

BC 312 Sturm von Zarovich, the first of Strahd's two younger brothers, is born.

BC 314 The War of Silver Knives, a feud of assassination and public brawls between the noble families of Dilisnya, Katsky, and Petrovna, all subjects of Barov, begins.

BC 316 Barov forces a peace to end the War of Silver Knives, appeasing all sides with land grants, but the region of Barovia is now weak.

BC 320 The Tergs invade Barovia, conquering the von Zarovich ancestral lands.

BC 321 Strahd von Zarovich leads the armies of Barovia in battle against the Tergs for the first time.

BC 324 Sergei von Zarovich, the youngest of Strahd's brothers, is born.

BC 333 Tatyana Federovna, future betrothed of Sergei von Zarovich, is born.

BC 347 Strahd drives the last of the Terg warlords from Barovia, claiming the throne as his reward.

BC 349 The construction on Castle Ravenloft—rebuilt from an existing fortress according to Strahd's specifications—is complete, and Strahd makes it his residence and the capital of his rule.

BC 350 Count Strahd von Zarovich, Commander Alek Gwilym, Sergei von Zarovich, and Lieutenant Falov lead a military strike force to defeat Red Lukas and his gang of bandits. Red Lukas is later executed. This same year, the Ba'al Verzi fail to assassinate Strahd.

BC 351 The wedding of Sergei von Zarovich and Tatyana turns into a massacre, beginning with the treachery of Leo Dilisnya. Barovia is claimed by the Mists, becoming the first Domain of Dread. Sturm von Zarovich, Strahd's other brother, did not attend the ceremony. Therefore, he survives to continue the family line elsewhere.

BC 398 Strahd hunts down the traitorous Leo Dilisnya and condemns him to eternal torment.

BC 400 Strahd encounters Tatyana's first reincarnation.

BC 470 The Vistani appear in Barovia for the first time. Their leader, Madame Eva, forges an alliance with Count Strahd.

BC 475 Earliest records of the Cult of the Morninglord.

BC 499 After an assault on Castle Ravenloft by a party including an elven vampire called Jander Sunstar, Strahd von Zarovich is not seen for many years.

BC 525 Lyssa von Zarovich, granddaughter of Sturm and grandniece of Strahd, is born.

BC 528 Powerful outlander heroes assault Castle Ravenloft. It is believed they are killed.

BC 542 Azalin enters Ravenloft, forming an uneasy alliance with Strahd.

BC 547 Forlorn is drawn into the Mists. Azalin investigates on Strahd's orders, but finds nothing of value to either of them.

BC 550 Forfarian survivors from the domain of Forlorn stream over the border into southeastern Barovia, settling in the isolated village of Immol. Lyssa von Zarovich becomes a vampire in an attempt to gain the power to defeat her great-uncle Strahd.

BC 551 The domains of Har'Akir and Paridon appear.

BC 564 The domain of Sebuia is formed.

BC 579 A joint attempt by Azalin and Strahd to escape the Domains of Dread fails and draws Mordent into Ravenloft. In Mordent, a mysterious man known only as the Alchemist conducts strange experiments on the nature of the soul. Azalin leaves Strahd's service. The domain of Darkon appears, with Azalin as its ruler.

BC 580 A Barovian militia established by Boyar Yersinia Wachter and led by Aldrick Wachter repels an invading cohort of undead from Darkon.

BC 581 Illithids spawn the domain of Bluetspur.

BC 585 From Bluetspur (which at this time is part of the Core), another wave of refugees, the desperate Thaani, immigrates across Barovia's southeastern borders. Like the Forfarians, they settle in Immol.

BC 586 "Bloody Jack" strikes Paridon for the first time.

BC 588 Keening appears.

BC 593 A domain known as Gundarak appears. A century and a half later, it will be annexed by Barovia.

BC 590 Pharazia is formed.

BC 600 Vechor appears.

BC 603 Invidia takes shape under its first darklord.

BC 607 Sanguinia is formed.

BC 611 Shadowborn Manor enters Ravenloft.

BC 613 Strahd brutally beats a werewolf he finds rampaging across Barovia and drives him into the Mists. Kartakass appears that same year.

BC 615 Nidala is formed.

BC 620 Timor appears.

BC 625 Valachan takes shape.

BC 630 The Sea of Sorrows appears, becoming the western coast of the Core.

BC 635 Souragne is formed. Graben appears.

BC 637 Frederick van Richten, father of Rudolph van Richten, establishes the Richten Haus estate on the outskirts of Rivalis in Darkon.

BC 646 Avonleigh appears in the Phantasmal Forest.

BC 650 The Faith of the Overseer is founded in Darkon.

BC 666 Yakov Dilisnya suffers a seizure while riding; he writes the First Book of Ezra while recovering.

BC 670 Sri Raji is formed.

BC 671 Rudolph Van Richten born, son of Otto and Mrs. Van Richten. An incident involving a magical statue causes Baron von Kharkov of Valachan to go into hiding for a time.

BC 680 Starting this year in Valachan, the depredations of the Baron's retainer Lady Adeline cause several rebellions over the next fifty years.

BC 682 Nova Vaasa appears. The Nova Vaasan Prince Ingemar Bolshnik describes the appearance of Barovia, Arak, the Nightmare Lands, and the Mists upon the frontiers of his land with the words: "howling fear to the west, stone death to the north, shapeless nightmares to the east, and nothing but ominous swirling to the south."

BC 683 Lamordia is formed. In Nova Vaasa, Sir Tristen Hiregaard becomes an officer of the Kantora City Guard and begins the hunt for the Signature Killer. He will rise to be the Constable of the Kantora City Guard by 717 BC.

BC 684 Borca appears.

BC 685 Construction begins on the Great Cathedral of Levkarest. The Church of Ezra is spreading across Borca.

BC 686 In the Sea of Sorrows, the *Doma Odana*, piloted by Captain Johan Werner and his crew, crashes into the hidden Isle of Demise. Most perish instantly, but Captain Werner and his men explore the Isle. They come to a path underground, eventually leading to a labyrinth. All are slain but Werner, who escapes blinded, but he escapes, as commented about in his journal. His final fate remains unknown.

BC 687 Camille Dilisnya marries Klaus Boritsi. Praesidius Yakov Dilisnya, founding prophet of the Church of Ezra, presides over the marriage.

BC 688 The Crimson Death, a lethal plague, spreads across Darkon in the winter, killing 1 in 5 people in the domain; Rudolph is driven even more deeply into his medical studies by the death of his great aunt.

BC 689 Vlad Drakov and his Talons of the Hawk enter the Mists and come out in Darkon. They immediately put the Darkonian villages of Pound, S'Realm, and Glymshire to the torch. The undead retaliate, and Vlad's mercenaries are expelled into the Mists. In Borca, Ivana Boritsi and Ivan Dilisnya are born on the same night.

BC 690 Falkovnia appears.

BC 691 The domain of Tepest appears. Falkovnia faces two threats in Silbervas: a rising thieves' guild and an infestation of wererats. They are both led by the Clawed. The period of Falkovnian history known as the Years of Impaled Rats begins.

BC 692 Rudolph and Ingrid van Richten's son Erasmus van Richten is born. In Tepest, this is the second year of massive crop failure, starvation, and particularly harsh winters, but the nobility of Darkon and Nova Vaasa, especially Tristen Hiregaard, contribute supplies to help the Tepestani people survive. Rudolph Van Richten marries his childhood sweetheart, Ingrid

BC 694 Richemulot appears. By this year, Borca has transformed into a major hub of trade. This is due, in part, to the arrival of the Dilisnya Family over the past decade and the utilization off their social and economic ties. Also this year, Vlad Drakov has driven the wererats out of Falkovnia. Meanwhile, Sir Tristen Hiregaard serves as prince of Nova Vaasa.

BC 695 Falkovnia invades Lamordia in the Winter War. Due to freakishly cold weather, they retreat in January of the following year. Daniel Foxgrove, future husband of Alice Weathermav and mavor of Mordentshire. is born.

BC 696 The Brotherhood of Broken Blades, a group of monster hunters based in Kartakass, is founded. They theoretically fight all evil, but in practice specialize in hunting evil spellcasters. Though they are not mindless killers, they are sometimes much too zealous in viewing all magic as evil.

BC 697 Camille Boritsi poisons her husband Klaus and his mistress. Boyar Nicu Moldonesti survives a botched assassination attempt against him by remnants of the Ba'al Verzi. Yakov Dilisnya is among those poisoned by Camille. Blame upon her for the murder of their leader spreads far and wide among Ezra's faithful. Borca's streets erupt in open violence. Under advice, Camille quells the riots by building a monument to Yakov on church grounds and demonstrating great acts of mourning. However, the construction of a statue of Yakov, a mortal man, upon Ezran holy ground causes dissidence within the Church of Ezra. The First Schism splits the faithful.

BC 698 Markovia is formed. Camille Boritsi poisons most of her family during the Dinner of Death.

BC 699 Felix Wachter pens the *Second Book of Ezra*, founding the Mordentish sect of Ezra's church.

BC 700 Drakov invades Darkon and is repelled by undead, in what is called the First Dead Man's War.

BC 702 Yagno Petrovna attempts to sacrifice his nephew to Zhakata, but he is foiled and exiled into the Mists.

When he exits the Mists, the land has revealed his domain, G'Henna, to him. Falkovnia and Lamordia make a nonaggression pact.

BC 704 Drakov invades Darkon again and is repelled yet again in the Second Dead Man's War.

BC 706 Dr. Rudolph van Richten vows to battle the forces of evil after the deaths of his wife Ingrid and son Erasmus.

BC 707 Dementlieu appears. Falkovnia invades it but is repulsed.

BC 708 Othmar Bolshnik, future prince of Nova Vaasa, is born.

BC 709 George Weathermay is born. The Dementlieuse Sect of the Church of Ezra is established in Port-a-Lucine with Joan Secousse's discoveries. Secousse completes the Third Book of Ezra, passes the Rite of Revelation and is recognized as the Bastion of Dementlieu

BC 711 Camille Boritsi is murdered; her daughter Ivana inherits control of Borca. Drakov invades Darkon a third time (the Third Dead Man's War) and is repelled. Dr. Van Richten meets Gedlan Ironheart, a fearless dwarven innkeeper in Corvia. Gedlan becomes a frequent hunting companion.

BC 712 Dr. Van Richten meets the mage Shauten; they bond when they are attacked by one of Azalin's patrols. Shauten opens Van Richten's eyes to the existence of the Lich.



BC 713 A shadowy crime lord known only as "the Brain" surfaces in Port-a-Lucine. Falkovnian investors fund the building of the Spider House inn, in Briggdarrow, Tepest, to capitalize on and bolster increased merchant travel between Nova Vaasa and Falkovnia.

BC 714 Hazlan takes shape. Dr. Van Richten moves to Mordentshire, sensing it is politically unsafe for him to remain in Darkon.

BC 715 Dorvinia appears.

BC 718 Tara Kolyana is born in Barovia. Not long after, her parents flee with her to Hazlan.

BC 720 The death knight Lord Soth arrives in the Domains of Dread. He slays a Vistani tribe, and encounters Strahd in Barovia. After he enters the Mists, the new domain of Sithicus joins the Core.

BC 722 Falkovnia fails to invade Darkon, again, in the Fourth Dead Man's War.

BC 724 Drakov invades Dementlieu and Richemulot, resulting in the Executioner's Campaign. The Sithican elf Jameld of Hroth and Dr. Rudolph van Richten meet and team up to defeat the Bog Monster of Hroth in Sithicus.

BC 725 An attempted Falkovnian invasion of Dorvinia results in the Gold Claw Massacre.

BC 726 Dr. Van Richten visits Sanguinia with George Weathermay and Arametrius; they meet Claudia DeShanes; Claudia becomes Rudolph's assistant. His later writings hint at certain unspoken feelings for her.

BC 727 Merilee Markuza, the Child Vampire, kills Claudia. Van Richten pursues the creature relentlessly, but loses her in Lamordia. Van Richten later teams with Jameld of Hroth to disband the mummy-worshipping Seekers of the Seven Scarabs.

BC 729 The Treaty of the Four Towers, a mutual defense pact against Falkovnia, is signed by Mordent, Dementlieu, Richemulot, and Borca. Othmar Bolshnik assumes the title of Prince of Nova Vaasa. Bakholis of Invidia is killed by one of his captives, Gabrielle Aderre, and an Invidian peasant revolt topples his regime.

BC 730 Verbrek takes shape. Gedlan Ironheart killed while battling evil spirits.

BC 731 Vorostokov is formed. The Weathermay-Foxgrove Twins are born to Alice Weathermay and Daniel Foxgrove.

BC 732 The domains of I'Cath and Nosos appear.

BC 733 The White Fever strikes Sithicus. A part of outlander adventurers stumble through the Mists into Forlorn. They discover Castle Tristenoira and are massacred within, with only the cleric of Bragi called Svendar surviving.

BC 734 Prince Othmar refuses to relinquish his title, breaking the Cycle of Stewards in Nova Vaasa.

BC 735 The Vistani seer Hyskosa records his Dire Prophecy predicting the Grand Conjunction. Van Richten is forced to kill his old friend Shauten in self-defense, after he is nearly sacrificed in Shauten's attempt to attain lichdom. In Barovia, the Mad Mage of Mount Baratok confronts Strahd—and loses. Later that year, adventurers drawn into Barovia by the Mists confront Strahd von Zarovich. They encounter Van Richten's protégé, Ezmerelda d'Avenir. It is unknown how they fare against Strahd, but the Vistani leave Barovia for a time. Also, that year, the first of Van Richten's books, *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires*, is published, whether by the man himself or one of his associates. (The events of **Curse of Strahd** are assumed to take place in this year.)

BC 736 Ezmerelda d'Avenir, having remained in Barovia, confirms that Strahd is active in the domain again after his confrontation with adventurers. Madame Eva's Vistani troupe returns and the burgomasters re-fortify their villages (including Ismark Kolyanovich, new burgomaster of the village of Barovia). *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* is published—as with all his books, it is unclear if it is published by him or by others after his death or disappearance. In Gundarak, the ruler, Duke Gundar, is assassinated.

BC 737 *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich* is published. A falling star lights up the night sky in eastern Falkovnia before crash landing near the thorp of Delmunster. The falling star proved to contain a doppelganger plant that would devastate the community.

BC 738 Odiare enters Ravenloft. *Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts* is published. A plot by a priest of Set in

Har'Akir results in the mummy Ankhtepot's seventh awakening.

BC 739 *Van Richten's Guide to the Created* is published. Lyssa von Zarovich conspires with mind flayers to create a vampiric version of their race, but the subjects are too mad to be controlled.

BC 740 The Grand Conjunction rocks the Land of Mists to its foundations, reshaping the domains, especially in the Core. The Shadow Rift appears. Rokushima Taiyoo appears. The domains of Saragoss, Sri Raji, and the Wildlands join together to form the cluster of domains called the Verdurous Lands. Tepestanis organize an inquisition against the fey in response to the formation of the Shadow Rift. *Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead* is published. Barovia annexes the former domain of Gundar, adding the Gundarakites to their mix of ethnicities. The Gundarakites are treated poorly by native Barovians, partly due to ancient hatreds—like the Neureni invaders of old, some immigrants from Gundarak worship the demon lord Irlek-Khan.

BC 741 Hazlik builds the village of Ramulai to house a school of wizardry. Gennifer Weathermay Foxgrove is mauled by a wolf. Her uncle George Weathermay shoulders the blame and leaves Mordent. *Van Richten's Guide to Fiends* is published.

BC 742 Dr. Van Richten has either disappeared or retired by this time. His *Guide to the Vistani* is published. "Bloody Jack" resurfaces in Paridon for his thirteenth killing spree.

BC 743 The popular bard Harkon Lukas is elected Meistersinger of Skald. The domain of Markovia, thought destroyed in the Grand Conjunction, is rediscovered in the Sea of Sorrows.

BC 744 Paridon and Timor merge to form the Zherisia cluster. Lord Soth's magical slumber in Sithicus is disturbed.

BC 745 The demon Malistroi attempts to conquer G'Henna with a fiendish army, battling Yagno Petrovna.

BC 746 Har'Akir, Pharazia, and Sebua join together to form the Amber Wastes cluster.

BC 747 Malocchio Aderre, born to Gabrielle Aderre and a mysterious father, is revealed to be a *Dukkar* (see the Vistani Sorcerers sidebar under Humans in the Races chapter) and seizes control of Invidia. Avonleigh, Nidala, and Shadowborn Manor form the Shadowlands cluster.

BC 748 A Lamordian colony on Markovia vanishes, leaving no remnants of the colonists' existence. The roots of the Gundarakite separatist movement in Barovia begin with Ardonk Szerieza fanning the flames.

BC 749 Sanguinia joins with Vorostokov to form the Frozen Reaches cluster.

BC 750 The Mists capture Vecna and Kas the Destroyer and make them the darklords of the Burning Peaks cluster. Dr. Rudolph van Richten's complete disappearance is confirmed. The twins Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove vow to continue his work shortly after the Bright Blade vanishes from their possession; Ezmerelda d'Avenir has separately made the same vow. Strahd von Zarovich poisons his vampire

grandniece Lyssa via a conspiratorial plot, causing her to sleep well past sunset and remain active only a few hours each night. Forty-six druids of the Rowan faction in Forlorn attempt to storm Castle Tristenoira with hired mercenaries, and are almost completely annihilated, making the Oak faction the domain's dominant druid group. A massive burst of negative energy now known as the Requiem transforms Il Aluk in Darkon into a city of the undead. Azalin is thought destroyed. The Mists reveal the Nocturnal Sea.

BC 751 Teodorus Raines pens the Fourth Book of Ezra. Drakov invades Darkon once again, thinking Azalin gone, yet the dead still rise to repel his forces, though they make it as far north as Nartok. A prince of the shadow fey attempts to reopen a portal to the Plane of Shadow, nearly freeing a monstrous entity of immense power.

BC 752 Azrael usurps control of Sithicus after its darklord, his former master the death knight Lord Soth, disappears in the Hour of Screaming Shadows. Writings of Ezmerelda d'Avenir are published describing the phenomenon of human children being born as calibans due to the influence of dark sorcery.

BC 753 The Weathermay-Foxgrove sisters print new editions of the Van Richten Guides, sometimes in compilations of multiple guides. The former servants of Azalin begin to receive mysterious visitors. When burgomaster Shalthis Vosrovna of Teufeldorf goads adventurers into killing one of the Vistani, Count Strahd executes him personally.

BC 754 Gregor Zolnik kills his wife and mother in a mad rage. His sisters disappear.

BC 755 Heroes restore Azalin to power in Darkon, foiling a traitorous attempt to enslave his spirit. "Bloody Jack" strikes Paridon once again with another killing spree.

BC 756 The newly returned Azalin hires a scholar to write detailed gazetteers describing each of the Domains of Dread. In her writings, she gives her name only as "S."

BC 757 Traveling to all of the domains as part of her gazetteer research, "S" enters Lamordia on New Year's Day. In Tepest, repeated attacks by unknown parties on Nova Vaasan efforts to build a road through Tepest into Keening and Darkon cause tensions with Nova Vaasa.

BC 758 Nova Vaasan royal forces of Prince Othmar build up near the border with Tepest, either as a warning about attacks on their roadbuilding efforts or the beginnings of an invasion to ensure cooperation. Also in Tepest, S encounters the fiendish being—a disguised incubus, perhaps—known as the Gentleman Caller, believed to be fathering children around the Domains of Dread for some sinister purpose. The Hiregaard family sponsors an expedition to fight piracy on the Nocturnal Sea.

BC 759 Draconic humanoids first spotted sailing around the Nocturnal Sea. Writings of Ezmerelda d'Avenir about a variety of tiefling native to Ravenloft are published.

BC 760 Present day.

RELIGION IN THE DOMAINS OF DREAD

The Domains of Dread are home to numerous religions, ranging from widespread, organized churches that build towering cathedrals to honor their faith to skulking, nocturnal cults that perform their sacrifices in hidden catacombs. Because the Mists draw in creatures and realms from so many different worlds, practically any deity in existence is worshipped by someone in these lands. However, certain faiths have gained a foothold among larger populations in one or more domains. Some even form theocracies reinforcing the rule of local governments or the darklords themselves.

This section presents a sampling of particularly notable or notorious religions in the Ravenloft. Player character clerics and paladins, as well as religious characters of other classes, can choose any of these faiths, as long as they are compatible with any alignment restrictions the DM chooses to impose.

The gods of Ravenloft do not form a single, continuous pantheon. Rather, they are divided into numerous, henotheistic religions. The followers of a given religion usually recognize the existence of other deities, but often dismiss them as inferior beings or the disguises of fiends.

BANE

The Lawgiver, the Iron Tyrant, the Black Lord
Bane, often called the Lawgiver, is a deity of rulership, strength, and conquest. His ethos is simple: the strong have not just the right but also the duty to rule over the weak. His religion rewards

blind obedience and asserts the divine providence of kings. Those born into wealth and power deserve to rule; those born into poverty deserve only what they earn through dutiful service to their masters.

Bane's faith is known as the Church of the Lawgiver in Hazlan and Nova Vaasa, where it is also the state religion. In the latter, Prince Othmar uses it to justify his own regime. The Lawgiver's clerics attempt to enforce the rigid stratifications of Vaasi culture wherever they go. Clerics drawn from different social classes do not mix, and the Church forbids marriage between different ethnicities or races. All rites must be performed in Vaasi, and all sacred texts must use its script.

It is said that Bane also favors those who exhibit drive

During the Grand Conjunction, clerics of Bane lost their spellcasting abilities for a time. This troubling lapse has opened a minor schism among the clergy. On one side stand those who believe the lapse was meaningless, or a test; a minority opposition believes that Bane was somehow incapacitated. Although the Church of the Lawgiver ruthlessly purges them, a handful of heretics even whisper that Bane the Lawgiver died in the cataclysm, that all his clerics now worship is a litany of empty titles.

BELENUS

The Shining One, the Zenith Lord

In many other worlds, Belenus is just one member of a pantheon of deities worshipped by Celtic tribes. In the Land of Mists, Belenus has become a central god in the religions of two otherwise unrelated cultures, one in Tepest, the other in the Shadowlands. Unfortunately, both branches of the Belenus faith have developed a troubling common element: intolerance.

Belenus is a sun god, like the Morninglord, and the master of fire. Many of his adherents set aside time to pray to him directly at noon, which is considered a sacred hour. His followers claim that Belenus bestows the life-giving light and heat of the sun on those who please him and withholds it from those who earn his wrath, cursing them with icy cold and darkness. Solar eclipses are seen as dire omens. Belenus's symbol is a stylized golden sunburst (as seen in Celtic art), or a bearded face in the center of such a sunburst.

In more rural places, Belenus encourages the construction of standing stones to measure the progress of his sun, as well as sacred groves where his priests may meet and build great bonfires to him. Mid-way through spring, Belenus encourages his worshippers to drive cattle through special

SYMBOL OF BANE



festival fires, looking down on this with favor and raising the overall quality of the livestock.

In Tepest, Belenus worship exists as a rustic folk religion, and his clerics also venerate other patron deities from his pantheon. The faithful here often mingle their legends or Belenus and other gods with time-honored tales of shadow fey, ravenous goblins, and fiendish hags and witches. For generations, Tepestani clerics were content to watch over their small congregations, but this changed in the wake of the Grand Conjunction.

Believing that the domains of G'Henna and Markovia had been destroyed by the fey, a Tepestani village priest, a man named Wyan, organized an inquisition to fight back against the fey. Years later, the inquisition continues. It has sadly gained a reputation for being over-zealous. The clerics execute any "fey" they can catch and may include elves, half-elves, gnomes, calibans, sorcerers, and especially warlocks in their pogrom. Clerics of Belenus or other non-evil deities in his pantheon are the only spellcasters considered beyond suspicion. In the Shadowlands domain of Nidala, Belenus worship takes a markedly different turn. Here, a powerful organized religion honors Belenus, their "one true god," in a huge and glorious cathedral. In the matriarchal society of the Shadowlands, only women can join the priesthood, and they must all make vows of chastity. Men can serve the church, but only as guardians or enforcers. Worship of any other religion is ruthlessly persecuted — as are countless other transgressions. The priestesses of Belenus all gratefully obey the edicts of their nation's great protector, the holy warrior Elena Faith-hold.

EZRA

Our Guardian in the Mists

Anchorites, the clergy of Ezra, have a unique relationship with the Mists of Ravenloft. They believe their goddess dwells in the Mists as a protector, interceding against the evil of the Dark Powers. The Church of Ezra was born almost roughly a century ago, when a son of the notorious Dilisnya dynasty claimed that a divine entity, Ezra, had given him a message to spread to the entire world. According to most traditions in the church, Ezra was a virtuous mortal woman who, despairing of the evils of the world, forever surrendered her mortality to the Mists to become an eternal guardian of humankind. However, the fractious sects of the Church of Ezra have been debating the true nature and teachings of their ascended patron for decades. Ezra herself is depicted as a tall, slender woman in flowing, white robes. Her raven hair and eyes contrast sharply with her pale skin. Revered as both protector and healer, she is usually depicted holding an alabaster kite shield and a slender sword of similar construction. The shield is often adorned with a sprig of wolfsbane in recognition of her role as a healer. Members of the church are expected to protect others from harm, always coming to the aid of individuals in distress despite any personal risk involved. Similarly, they must always be ready to give aid and comfort to the sick or injured. One of the most common sayings in the church is "Today I care for you as tomorrow you will care for me." Although members of the church are not required to identify themselves in any way, many wear holy symbols to show their faith. These are most



**SYMBOL
OF BELENUS**

**SYMBOL
OF EZRA**



frequently small tokens in the shape of wolfsbane sprigs or tiny replicas of the sword and shield that Ezra is said to carry. During church services, which are held every five days, members of the church must wear white clothing.

The Church of Ezra has no fewer than four distinct sects. Each of these has its own objectives and methods, although they all recognize the authority of the central church.

- All sects of the Church of Ezra recognize the authority of the Great Cathedral in the city of Levkarest, in the domain of Borca. This is the original, lawful neutral sect, also called the Home Faith. It teaches tenets mostly accepted by all the sects, such as the idea that Ezra cannot protect those who do not accept her into their hearts.
- The lawful good sect in Mordent also teaches that anchorites must convert as many souls to Ezra's flock as possible for their own good.
- The mystical, neutral Dementlieu sect claims that Ezra was a goddess who abandoned her callous fellow gods to offer mortals succor, and spends its time studying the true nature of their goddess.
- Lastly, the lawful evil sect, centered in Nevuchar Springs in the domain of Darkon, prophesies an imminent Time of Unparalleled Darkness, when the unfaithful will be consumed by darkness.

In addition, the practices of the churches in each domain differ from one another. Thus, a church in Barovia will differ from one in Falkovnia, even though they technically belong to the same sect. Any follower can worship at any church, but outside of their own domain and rite they will find subtle and sometimes disturbing differences in the practices. Ezra's clerics are called anchorites. Each is charged with the protection of the weak, the care of the sick, and the general betterment of the human condition. The exact manner in which each of the four sects enacts these tenets varies, but the basic teachings of the church remain the same.

Anchorites of any alignment frown upon mistreatment or needless suffering of the innocent. They help the injured and show some degree of mercy to their enemies. Their healing powers are used without call for compensation or the need for obligation. Lastly, an anchorite avoids combat when possible, although they are certainly not pacifists, recognizing the need for battle from time to time. Any anchorite has the ability to seek shelter and safe haven in any temple dedicated to the worship of Ezra. The exact interpretation of "safe haven" varies

depending upon the similarities in the alignment of the anchorite and that of the temple clergy who shelter them. In general, however, the anchorite is fed and clothed, their wounds tended to, and their presence within the temple kept secret. Greater levels of cooperation might even allow the anchorite to receive special equipment or information that will help them in their work.

Anchorites

For many members of Ezra's clergy, their goddess's patronage allows them to call on the Mists of Ravenloft for aid. A special spell, available only to clerics and paladins of Ezra, represents this aid. Those who take the Favored Anchorite feat gain new options and true mastery of this powerful blessing (as described in the Optional Feats chapter), but all clerics and paladins sworn to Ezra add this spell to their cleric or paladin spell list.

Shield of Ezra

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You call on the shield of Ezra, a film of luminous mist that envelops your body. You gain advantage on Constitution saving throws against spells and a +2 bonus to your armor class. You may also gain an extra form of protection, dependent on your alignment. If you are not one of the alignments listed below, you do not gain this extra benefit, otherwise you gain the benefit your alignment indicates for the duration:

- Lawful good: Attack rolls made against you with metal weapons are made at disadvantage
- Lawful neutral: Gain resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage;
- Neutral: Gain advantage on Dexterity and Strength saving throws against spells;
- Lawful evil: Gain advantage on Wisdom and Charisma saving throws against spells.

This spell ends at the end of your turn if during your turn you made an attack roll or cast a spell that requires a saving throw, otherwise it lasts for the full duration.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the bonus to armor class increases to +3. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the duration increases to concentration, up to 10 minutes.

HALA

The Goddess, the Last of the Nine

According to Hala's holy texts, Tales of the Ages, nine gods created the world from the roiling mists of Chaos. The gods then withdrew, intending to allow mortals to fill their world with acts both good and evil. But the mortals lacked wisdom, and the world was soon filled with pain and anguish.

Just one of the Nine Gods, the goddess Hala, returned to the world to ease its suffering. She gathered together thirteen women and thirteen men and taught them the secrets of the Weave, an ancient form of magic. Unfortunately, this brand of magic is also known as witchcraft and provokes widespread, superstitious fear. Witchcraft's wretched reputation is largely due to hags, the most infamous practitioners. Although witchcraft is not inherently evil, it is thought to be rife with occult dangers. According to folklore, witches who lose control of their magic may be permanently transformed into hags.

The Church of Hala is a secretive and highly mystical faith. Her clerics – who call themselves witches – operate a number of hospices scattered throughout Ravenloft where they offer rest and healing to anyone who comes to their door. The church does not actively seek new followers, however, and nowhere is the Church of Hala the predominant religion. Many of Hala's priests are not clerics at all, but actually druids of the Circle of the Equinox (introduced in the Druid section of the Classes chapter) favoring the Autumn aspect.

Hala's witches often face hostility when beyond the doors of their hospices. Any witch of Hala unwise enough to encounter the inquisitors of Tepest, for example, should count herself lucky to escape with her life.

THE MORNINGLORD

The Rose-and-Gold God, Inspiration's Dawn, the Sunstar, Lathander

The Morninglord is the god of the rosy dawn that marks the end of every night. Accounts of the age and history of the Cult of the Morninglord vary. Some say that he was worshipped in Barovia before the curse of Strahd, but this may be a reference to

Andral (now remembered as St. Andral by Morninglord worshippers, but previously a god with a cult of his own). Most sources indicate this church was born late in the fifth century BC, when a founder (or new prophet) emerged to proclaim the faith. He claimed that when he was a young boy, the Morninglord appeared to him in physical form and protected him from the roaming menaces of the Barovian night. Based on this singular encounter, the Morninglord is usually depicted as a luminous, sylvan humanoid. Although he is formed of soft, golden light, his face is smeared with blood. The cult teaches that this strange detail may be a sign that even the greatest good may hold some evil stain, and even the most depraved evil may yet contain a spark of good.

The deity asks little of his followers, save that they treat each other with kindness and retain hope in their hearts. This humble faith holds great appeal for those who have little more than hope and kindness to offer, and the cult is spreading rapidly among the downtrodden Gundarakite minority of Barovia. Its simple teachings conceal a message of intense hope. No matter how bleak the future may seem, no matter how dark the night, the dawn will come.

Many followers speak of a prophecy that, someday, the Morninglord will return once again to lead the world into the daylight. As may be surmised, most ceremonies of the Morninglord are held at dawn. Actions taken and contracts agreed to at dawn are considered "blessed" by the god. Funerals are held at dusk, followed by a wake that lasts until dawn. The cult may hide more than its optimistic message. One of the cult's founders was a cleric who secretly hunted the undead by night. It is possible that even to this day, the cult's clerics are trained in the methods of battling vampires.



SYMBOL OF THE MORNINGLORD



DEITIES OF THE DOMAINS OF DREAD

Deity	Alignment	Domains	Symbol
Bane	LE	Rulership*, War	A black hand or a stout iron spear bound in coils of bronze
Belenus	NG	Light, Rulership*	Stylized golden sunburst, sometimes surrounding a bearded face
Ezra	LN	Life, Rulership*	An alabaster kite shield adorned with a sword and a sprig of belladonna
Hala	N	Life, Nature	A ring formed by either four or thirteen serpents, each devouring the tail of the one before it
The Morninglord	NG	Life, Light	A simple, rose-tinted disc of gold.
Mother Night	N	Hunting*, Trickery	Unknown
Spirits of the Elements	N	Air**, Earth**, Fire**, Water**	Various pictograms representing single elements or their combinations
Yutow	LN	Hunting*, Rulership*	A silver circle split by a vertical diamond

*=A new domain introduced in the Cleric section of the Classes chapter

**=A variant domain introduced in the Cleric section of the Classes chapter

MOTHER NIGHT

A mysterious goddess, worshipped in Barovia and other places, representing the darkness of night, the same way the Morninglord represents the light of the dawning day. She is considered by the dusk elves of Land of Mists to be their hidden patron. Little is known of her, but her worshippers say her presence is felt most strongly between dusk and dawn, although nighttime prayers to her go unanswered. It is widely believed that she has forsaken the Barovian people and sent the devil Strahd to punish them for the sins of their ancestors. Other than that, few outside of Barovia know much of her faith; even her symbol is unknown.

SPIRITS OF THE ELEMENTS

Air, Earth, Fire, Water

In more primal domains, where the relationship between mortals and nature is closer, there may be no organized worship of gods, or their deities may little more than half-remembered myths. Many in such realms venerate the living elements as they manifest in the world. Elemental priests may serve these sullen and fierce spirits. They have a special kinship with the primal elements, a connection so close that it's as if they stand in two worlds: that of mortals, and that of raw elemental power.

Many elemental priests revere the nameless, formless principle of all living elements together, making no distinction between one manifestation over another. Many heroic elemental priests are

leaders of a village or tribes. Some elemental priests instead follow a monastic or ascetic tradition (becoming monks practicing the monastic tradition called the Way of the Four Elements), instead of the more common tribal or village traditions of elemental worship.

YUTOW

The Peacebringer, the Dead God

The Valachani people state that their land was originally inhabited by a race of dark-skinned humans who lived at one with nature, and were guided by a green sylvan deity called Yutow. Their peaceful days ended when the tan-skinned Vaasi people invaded and brought "civilization" with them. Yutow, being a nature god, was powerless to help his people until the panther, the wisest of all animals, suggested that Yutow merge the two people into one. Yutow accomplished this, creating the Valachani of today, but in doing so caused his own life to end. The Valachani state that Yutow is indisputably dead, yet still conscious and guiding his people from the moon.

The Dead God's holy weapon is a sickle, and his servants are panther spirits and those who bear their blood. The religion is monotheistic, and other religions are called false by Yutow's worshippers. The religion states that followers of Yutow must not question his motives or mandates; they must uncomplainingly undergo trials in their lives to prove themselves worthy to him. Those who do so are granted immortality as a nature spirit, while those who fail are reincarnated to suffer again until they learn their lessons. Followers of Yutow believe that in worshipping him they are protected from the fury of nature, while unbelievers will have to face nature's wrath. Unnatural things such as undead or arcane magic are considered the worst form of blasphemy.



SYMBOL
OF YUTOW

Chapter 2:

Gazetteer of the Core

The subcontinent known as the Core is the whole world for those who inhabit it, though sages know it as part of a larger realm. Here, Strahd von Zarovich rules Barovia, and other darklords—such as the deathless archmage Azalin, the tyrant Vlad Drakov, and the vengeful Red Wizard Hazlik—rule over the domains that are their prisons.

The Core is the most densely populated and well-traveled region in the Land of Mists. There are more known domains here than there are beyond it, lending weight to the claims of sages who call it the center of the world. Some domains that once existed are now gone, having vanished entirely, been absorbed into another domain, or been separated by the Mists into their own Islands of Terror. New domains have arisen to expand the Core as well. Some years ago, an event known as the Grand Conjunction changed the land in startling ways, yet by and large its geography remains the same.

A rugged and mostly temperate land, the Core is characterized by bustling villages separated by vast stretches of trackless wilderness. The dominant feature of the subcontinent is the Balinok Mountains, which run roughly north to south across the center of the Core. The Shadow Rift, a yawning chasm nearly the size of Barovia, has interrupted the Balinoks near the very middle of the subcontinent since the Grand Conjunction in the year 740 BC.

To the west of the Core lies the Sea of Sorrows, and the Mists have revealed a second body of water—the Nocturnal Sea—east of Nova Vaasa and Darkon. At the northern end of the subcontinent, the borders of the northernmost domains—Darkon and Lamordia—vanish into a never-lifting of endless Mists. The Mists similarly cut off the frontiers on the southern end of the landmass, surrounding the entire Core and encircling even the far sides of its eastern and western seas. What lies beyond the Mists is unknown—perhaps the emptiness of Ethereal Plane, or some part of the Shadowfell.

Although the landscape varies from domain to domain with the Core, some generalizations can be

made about the subcontinent as a whole. Ranging north and south of the Core's most infamous landmark, the Shadow Rift, the spectacular peaks of the Balinok Mountains soar to extremes of nearly ten thousand feet. To the west of the Balinoks, densely forested river valleys and floodplains cover lands sandwiched between the mountains and the western end of the continent. To the east of the peaks, dominated by the nation of Nova Vaasa, sweeping grasslands and barren wastes stretch out in an upland plateau to the shores of the Nocturnal Sea.

The temperate climate has a regular cycle of seasons, though weather extremes are common in many domains. Only one major road crosses the Balinoks: the Old Svalich Road in Barovia. Other crossings through the Balinoks are possible but treacherous.

The northern Core is dominated by the kingdom of Darkon, which fills nearly a third of the Core's total landmass. Darkon is unusual in that arcane magic is generally trusted, and nonhumans—such as elves and dwarves—are relatively common. Nonhumans are extremely rare in most domains and are seldom welcome. In fact, two of Darkon's neighbors, Falkovnia and Tepest, are both particularly hostile toward nonhumans, though for vastly different reasons. Falkovnian soldiers imprison nonhumans, treating them as chattel, while the clerics of Tepest are consumed with an inquisition against all “fey” creatures. The bottomless Shadow Rift and its black fog separate these two domains.

In the northwestern Core, shipping on the Sea of Sorrows and treaties forged to defend against Falkovnian aggressions have both led to the free trade of goods and ideas. From stormy Lamordia and cosmopolitan Dementlieu, down through sleepy Mordent and decadent Borca and Richemulot, these lands are regaled as having entered an age of enlightenment. The new inventions being produced here, from moveable type to primitive steam engines, may one day reshape life throughout the Core.

To the south, the lands west of the Balinoks remain thickly forested. Rustic folk here often face quiet derision from their northern neighbors. These are lands thick with superstition and mistrust. Woodsmen in Verbrek warn of monstrous wolves, while fearful villagers in Barovia shutter their windows and hide when the sun dips below the horizon. Supported by Falkovnian coffers, the despot controlling Invidia has initiated a pogrom against the Vistani, and his raids into neighboring domains have raised the specter of war. The southwestern

Core is also notable for Kartakass, home to a richly musical culture, and Sithicus, a politically unstable realm of reclusive elves.

On the far side of the Balinoks, the grasslands of the southeastern Core are divided between Nova Vaasa and Hazlan, both home to byzantine governments, rampant crime, and the methodical oppression of the poor. Nova Vaasa's aristocrats vie for control of the throne, while the wizard who rules Hazlan has recently founded the Core's largest school of arcane magic.

The Sea of Sorrows stretches out to the west of the Core, mirrored by the Nocturnal Sea to the east. These seas seem to defy navigation, and sudden storms have bested many good ships, but captains who brave these waters can make a tidy fortune supplying the small, rugged settlements on the islands that dot both seas.

Three major rivers run through the lands north and west of the Balinoks: the Vuchar, the Musarde, and the Arden. The Vuchar travels from east to west across the northern plains of Darkon. The Musarde River flows from tributaries in Forlorn and Hazlan, carving a lush valley. The Musarde and the Arden are major trade arteries of the Core. The Arden River flows out of Valachan, tracing a northerly path through Sithicus and Verbrek before passing back into Valachan and on to Mordent.

Barovia has loose trade pacts with some nearby domains in the Core, such as Invidia and Kartakass. Most trade between these domains takes place via the Musarde River and its tributaries. Otherwise, domains have few political ties or conflicts, aside from periodic invasions of Darkon by Falkovnia.

Ironically, though Falkovnia's military ambitions are so obvious that some of the other Domains of Dread have mutual defense pacts against it, it is also something of a breadbasket for the Core. The domain possesses huge grainfields, and these harvests are transported to Falkovnian merchant enclaves in other domains and sold there. Once, Darkon was an even larger source of food and trade goods, its tyrannical order a stabilizing factor both within its boundaries and around them, but the internal chaos caused by the fall and return of its Darklord has spread to other realms of the Core as well.

The Core is a region of both prosperity and misery, where a host of tyrants skulk in their dark manses and plot endlessly against one another. The villages hum with thriving commerce and intrigue, while cunning predators, both nature and aberrant, stalk the wilds.

DOMAINS OF THE CORE

The Core domains are the darkest of the dark. Indeed, when anyone speaks of the Domains of Dread, they are almost certainly thinking of the Core. Nineteen domains are currently recognized by sages as comprising the landmass of the Core, not including the Nocturnal Sea and the Sea of Sorrows, bodies of water which are both Domains of Dread in and of themselves, but which also contain separate domains as islands in their waters.

The known domains of the Core include Barovia, Borca, Darkon, Dementlieu, Falkovnia, Forlorn, Hazlan, Invidia, Kartakass, Keening, Lamordia, Mordent, Necropolis, Nova Vaasa, Richemulot, Sithicus, the Shadow Rift, Valachan, and Verbrek, plus the two seas and the island domains within them. Of these, the lands of the Core described in more detail in this document include:

- **Falkovnia**, a military police state ruled by a bloodthirsty and truly sadistic mercenary lord;
- **Hazlan**, a microcosm of the Forgotten Realms nation of Thay ruled by the vengeful and tyrannical Red Wizard Hazlik;
- the cold and bleak coastal realm of **Lamordia**, a civilized barony inhabited by practical folk with a scientific worldview;
- the **Nocturnal Sea**, a body of water too wracked with storms and clouds to be safely navigated, but full of populated islands and ripe for exploration;
- **Nova Vaasa**: Named for the nation of Vaasa in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, from which the population and the uncaring feudal lords who rule them descend, this grassy plateau is known for its stark class divisions, crushing urban poverty, and the wealth of its five noble families.
- the **Sea of Sorrows**, a darkly cold and fog-bound sea that is vast and sparsely inhabited;
- **Sithicus**, a kingdom of unfriendly and fractious elves, first ruled by an infamous death knight before a cruel dwarven dictator came to power;
- the stormy forestlands of **Tepest**, caught in the hysteria of a witch-hunting Inquisition, even as darker threats loom in the windswept mountains;
- and **Valachan**, rugged home of the dark-skinned, self-sufficient Valachani people, who are bedeviled by the supernatural baron who rules them and the White Fever that drains their life and blood.

And of course, we begin with additional information about **Barovia**, as a supplement to the detailed descriptions existing in **Curse of Strahd**. The domains which do not receive their own section here have been thoroughly depicted in Ravenloft materials for previous editions of the Dungeons & Dragons rules. All are briefly summarized at the end of this chapter.

BAROVIA

The first Domain of Dread to appear, Count Strahd von Zarovich's realm of Barovia, has been described thoroughly and repeatedly elsewhere, especially in various versions of the original adventure *16: Ravenloft*. However, a few details of note are added here, as a supplement to the most recent and detailed version of that adventure, **Curse of Strahd**.

Barovia and the Grand Conjunction

Curse of Strahd is explicitly set in the year 735 BC. In 740 BC, the Grand Conjunction—also called the Great Upheaval—alters the Core in dramatic ways. Some domains vanish, or are absorbed by others, and a massive chasm opens in the center of the Core. However, Barovia itself is not impacted as significantly by this cataclysm as other lands. In many ways, it benefitted. The land's chokehold over east-west trade was greatly strengthened by the cutting of the Timori Road. The disappearance of Markovia from its northern frontier would have been welcomed if only it had been replaced by something less ominous than the Shadow Rift. The disappearance of Bluetspur from its southern frontier was an indisputable boon. And the relocation of Hazlan from its central eastern and southern eastern frontiers to its southern frontier did little more than change the direction of travel from Immol to Toyalis.

BAROVIA BEFORE STRAHD

Little is known for sure of the true history of the land of Barovia before it was claimed by the Dark Powers. Few written records survive. Those that do are strangely incomplete.

As described in **Curse of Strahd**, the Barovian calendar is used across the entire domain. It abbreviates years as BC. (The same calendar is also used in domains across the Core.) The Church of Andral's founding in 168 BC is considered an important event, yet the worship of the god known as Andral either died out or was absorbed by the faith of the Morninglord later. Believers in Vallaki now know of St. Andral as divinely favored mortal of ancient times, rather than a deity.

The cult of the Morninglord is also a murky area of history. Barovians believe it to be an ancient faith as old of the land, but sages are certain it was started

by a gold elf from the Forgotten Realms who worshipped Lathander, long after the Mists had brought Barovia to the Realm of Terror.

In 230 BC, an invasion by a horde of raiders called the Neureni, who worshipped the demon lord Irlek-Khan as a god, occasioned great glory for the von Zarovich warrior-princess who opposed them. A corruption of their name, *neuri*, persists to this day in Barovia as a word for werewolves or sorcerers who change their shape. However, as with other events before Strahd's fall from grace, there is little evidence of this great conflict beyond cultural memory. It's as if the Mists themselves have clouded both the memories of the people and the very history of the land since stealing Barovia from the world that was once its home.

One event that is well-recorded from before Strahd's reign is a bitter war between three noble families of Barovia: the Houses of Dilisnya, Katsky, and Petrovna. It was a long-simmering feud that boiled over when Izabella Dilisnya was assassinated in a dispute over a silver mine. Years of covert murder, acts of bloody vengeance, and chaotic misrule undermined the reign of Strahd's father, Barov von Zarovich.

The Ba'al Verzi, a cabal of assassins notorious for being as devious and brazen as they were remorseless, thrived during this period, which later historians called the War of Silver Knives. At first remaining above the fray, the von Zaroviches finally forced an end to the conflict, but not before weakening the kingdom to the point where it became easy prey for invading enemies. The defeat of those invaders was Strahd's own path to greatness and, later, his dark fall from grace.

The patriarch of the Dilisnya family, Leo Dilisnya, was also secretly the leader of the Ba'al Verzi during that time. During Strahd's crusade against the Tergs, Leo served as a minor officer in the von Zarovich army, awaiting the opportunity to assassinate Strahd and make himself the ruler of Barovia. Yet Strahd was too canny and suspicious.

The Ba'al Verzi

The Ba'al Verzi (*bay-al vayr-tzee*) was a legendary guild of assassins before Strahd von Zarovich's rise to power. They operated openly, but used disguise and deception to kill, and it was said that anyone could be a Ba'al Verzi. The paranoia the assassins' legend instilled made their work all the easier. Thriving amid the game of betrayal and vengeance waged by three of Barovia's most powerful families during the reign of Strahd's father, the cabal later declined, but never vanished completely. In 350 BC

The signature weapon of the Ba'al Verzi is a curved dagger, with a hilt wrapped in black, red, and gold. One

such dagger was used to kill used to kill Strahd's brother, Sergei von Zarovich. Though they enchanted these weapons and many of their other tools, the Ba'al Verzi assassins relied on merciless cunning, not sorcery, for their deadly edge.

The Ba'al Verzi is all but forgotten in present-day Barovia because Strahd has gone to great lengths to exterminate the order and, for the most part, has been successful. Strahd's vendetta against the guild stems not only from the bitter memory of events surrounding his brother's death, but also from his particular hatred of the Ba'al Verzi named Leo Dilisnya.

The remaining Dilisnyas spent over two centuries hiding themselves from Count Strahd von Zarovich. Small cohorts of Dilisnyas have kept the traditions of the Ba'al Verzi alive along with their bloodline.

Other Ba'al Verzi leaders were trapped in Barovia when it was claimed by the Mists, but the cabal has only recently resumed its activities. The Ba'al Verzi are described in detail in the Secret Societies chapter of this document.

When Ba'al Verzi hired by other enemies of Strahd (said to have been dusk elves of the family now called Velikovna) attempted his assassination in 350 BC, they failed. Only a year later, on the day when Strahd's brother Sergei would marry his beloved Tatyana did Leo dare make his move, smuggling mercenaries into Castle Ravenloft to assist Ba'al Verzi masters of murder. To cover his tracks, Leo excused himself, and was not present when Strahd became a vampire. His absence saved his life, as Leo's forces were slaughtered by the newly risen undead lord, and only a handful of guests survived that night. For decades, Leo orchestrated the concealment of both the remaining Ba'al Verzi and his own noble kin. Yet members of the Wachter family, whose kin were slain by Leo's henchmen, helped Strahd track down this hated enemy and enact a terrible vengeance.

The House of Dilisnya

Ironically, members of the Dilisnya family can now be found all over the Land of Mists, except in the land of their bloodline's birth, Barovia. Many of them have become wealthy rulers in various parts of the Core. Others make their living as mercenaries. Vistani even hire Dilisnya killers to wreak vengeance upon those in that domain that have wronged them. Dilisnyas made aware of their background collectively have an almost uncanny ability to find each other, but such knowledge may come at the cost of knowing new enemies.

AFTER THE MISTS

The history of Barovia since the Dark Powers claimed it is better recorded, but lacking the glorious deeds that gave Barovians pride. The victorious lords of the past have been replaced by centuries of bleak tyranny. For weeks, months, or years at a

time, the choking Mists rise up the seal the borders of Barovia, barring trade or news from other lands, and no one can protect these occasions.

At two points when the Mists were not raised as a barrier, the southeast of Barovia saw two waves of immigration. Both were refugees from other domains, and both were secretive groups with their own strange and deeply held beliefs.

Around 550 BC, survivors of a secretive order of druids came from the neighboring domain of Forlorn. Called Forfarrians, they settled in a tiny village called Immol, at the foot of Terestrâu ("Mount Sawtooth"), the second highest peak in Barovia. Adjacent to a lake in the furthestmost southeast corner of Strahd's domain, Immol grew to accommodate these settlers, and then grew even more in 585 with the arrival of the Thaani.

The Thaani claimed to have come from a place of incomprehensible madness, a land ruled by inhuman subterranean creatures who fed on the minds of mortal creatures. They identified that wasteland as the domain of Bluetspur, known for its cyclopean mountains and endless lightning storms. The tales they told horrified even Barovians who had seen much terror of their own, and they also bore a potent tradition of mysticism that sits uneasily beside the druidic beliefs of the Forfarrians and the dwindling faith of the native folk.

The people of Barovia may be ethnically diverse in places, but as a group they are a gruff, suspicious lot. They tend to be brusque with outsiders, and even the most amicable Barovian natives are no-nonsense and severe. The dour attitude that seems to dominate Barovia may be partially attributed to the rampant fear of the supernatural that permeates the realm. The folk here are terrified of the creatures of darkness; doors and windows are securely locked at sundown, and most Barovian settlements resemble ghost towns by early evening.

Although it is not formally isolationist, Barovia has limited contact with other realms. The rustic character of the land, combined with the count's reclusive and tyrannical nature, does little to stimulate outside interest in the realm. The borders of this realm are closed off by the Mists far more often than most other domains.

However, trade alliances between merchants in Barovia, Kartakass, and Invidia are maintained. It is widely believed that Azalin Rex, the undying archmage who now rules the vast domain known as Darkon, once lived in Barovia and served Strahd. It is also believed that, despite the distance between their realms, Strahd hates Azalin bitterly.

Immigrants to Barovia: The Thaani

The Thaani are humans who escaped Bluetspur, a mountainous realm ruled by a subterranean enclave of mind flayers. These humans had been experimented upon, and many gained psychic abilities as a result. They carry in their minds not only their own memories, but also those of fallen kin who were killed by illithid cruelty and torture. The Thaani employ meditation techniques to keep their minds from fracturing as a result. Not all of them succeed. If a Thaani character appears in your game, they may (or may not) have special psionic powers. Some of the new Optional Feats introduced in this document—such as Living Poltergeist and Mind Reader—grant the kinds of wild psychic talents a Thaani might be born with. If your game uses the feat rules, a player character Thaani may begin as the Human (Variant) from the core rules, choosing one of these feats at character creation, or may develop such abilities later.

Immigrants to Barovia: The Forfarians

The human population of the domain of Forlorn has mostly abandoned that realm to live in nearby domains like Barovia. The Forfarians left behind a great deal of horror, just as the Thaani did, though they are less haunted by these tragedies. Unlike the Thaani, their horrific past did not change the very nature of the Forfarians. They still live much as they did in their homeland, and honor the same beliefs. Their culture is interwoven with the ways of druids, and Forfarian druids usually practice the Circle of the Equinox (described under druids in the Character Classes chapter).

THE VILLAGE OF IMMOL

Not often featured on most maps of Barovia (including the map in *Curse of Strahd*) due to its location in the extreme southeast of the von Zarovich lands, Immol has been a place where uprisings against Strahd have occasionally occurred, always mercilessly suppressed. It lies in a shallow dale at the foot of Mount Sawtooth, on the Warlock's Road that leads south beyond Barovia's borders to the adjacent domain of Hazlan. Ancient watchtowers surround a horseshoe shaped urban area dominated by the Keep of the Scarlet Cross. Once the stronghold of a knightly order, this keep now serves only as the home of the local burgomaster.

What makes Immol unique among villages in Barovia is the overwhelmingly large population of two distinct groups of immigrants: the Forfarians and the Thaani. The fair-skinned, redheaded Forfarians are descended from natives from the haunted land of Forlorn to the south. The Thaani, who exhibit a staggering variety in their physical features, are said to be the descendents of refugees, slaves escaped from a hellish underground captivity.

The Forfarian neighborhood is full of herbalists, healers, apothecaries, midwives, and other wise folk

who practice druidic beliefs. There are fewer Thaani than there are Forfarians, but their dwellings are easy to spot, and places where they live and gather seem haunted by an ancient sadness.

Also near Immol is a monastery inhabited by members of secret abbey of lawful good monks called the Order of Contemplative Power, who seek to explore their own psychic potential. Strahd knows of the monks' existence, but tolerates them for some reason, perhaps out of curiosity. These monks practice the Way of the Boundless Mind (a new monastic tradition introduced in the Monk section of the Classes chapter.) Records of the monastery's founding are contradictory, but many believe it was started by Thaani, seeking to understand the mental abilities they had developed as a result of the horrors of Bluetspur. If so, they are not the only secret society founded by the Thaani in Barovia.

The Unnaturally Long Life and Terrible Undeath of Leo Dilisnya

Strahd's hatred of Leo Dilisnya drove him to slay the man, but never to let him enjoy a final rest. A skilled necromancer who had slowed his own aging with spells and wards, Leo knew that Strahd would find him eventually, and he planned for it. At an abandoned monastery, he actually managed to trap Strahd in a specially warded chamber. The vampire's unlife was saved only by the monks in his thrall. Once freed, Strahd overpowered and captured Leo Dilisnya, but decided death was too good for such a traitor.

He bestowed the curse of vampirism on Leo and entombed him, condemning the assassin to starve for eternity. During the time of *Curse of Strahd*, he is being tortured by the darklord by being incapacitated by a spell cast on the casket in which he is bound, trapped in a starved, skeletal form, as if he were nothing more than dead bones. But Count Strahd likes to vary the torment. After the time of *Curse of Strahd*, Leo Dilisnya is once more consigned to a black coffin kept in a locked tomb. He falls into hunger-maddened torpor for long periods, but always awakens with the same endless thirst. His powerful undead limbs claw desperately at the interior of his sarcophagus. The curse of vampirism undid the necromantic spells that kept Dilisnya young before it granted him immortality, and he will forever be a withered man of seventy years even if he does drink blood, but for now, he looks like little more than a lifeless skeleton. If Leo Dilisnya is ever freed, his every thought will be bent on vengeance. It is for the DM to decide if a freed Leo Dilisnya seeks to regain control of the Ba'al Verzi, rely on the accumulated political clout and military prowess of his family, or act on his own in pursuit of bloody reciprocity. The adventure "Fair Barovia" by Claudio Pozas in *Dungeon Magazine* issue 207 tells one version of what might ensue if the one enemy who has come closest to destroying Strahd once and for all is ever set free.

FALKOVNIA

Falkovnia lies in the northwestern quarter of the Core, a sinister realm crushed by the iron fist of military tyranny. It lies south of Darkon and east of Dementlieu. Forests blanket large portions of this domain. Falkovnian timber is towering and black, unlike the trees in any other region, and locals call these trees *vigila dimorta*, or “sentries of death.”

Falkovnia is a military state, pure and simple. Vlad Drakov, the mercenary-king, rules Falkovnia with an iron hand. There is no civilian government or police force. There is no true aristocracy; soldiers are the highest social class. Drakov's army not only maintains the peace, but also oversees nearly every aspect of public life. Military tribunals conduct all trials, and justice is universally swift and harsh. Punishments are usually shocking public displays of torture and execution, crowned with the unspeakable practice of hanging the bodies of slain criminals to rot on city walls.

In eastern Falkovnia, where the Balinoks thrust toward the heavens, many trees have died. The bark and leaves are gone, but the naked cores still stand, bleached almost white, like driftwood. According to legend, one tree dies for every person Vlad Drakov executes. Some even claim that the trees actually ignite, the bark bursting into flames spontaneously. Large areas of this dead forest have been cleared to make room for wheat fields. The dense wood is extremely difficult to fell, and clearing roads makes young men old before they reach age thirty.

Over the last several years, Falkovnia has become the region's largest source of grain, exporting it to virtually every other domain in the Core. The road between the towns of Silbervas and Aerie is lined by swaying fields of gold in late summer, punctuated by small farmhouses with thatched roofs. Falkovnian merchants—guarded by Falkovnian soldiers, of course—maintain trade outposts throughout the domains of the Core. The exportation of cereals generates a king's ransom for Drakov, which he then uses to fund the maintenance of the army.

Falkovnia's cities are dark and unfriendly, free of any aesthetic sensibility whatsoever. Homes and shops are squat, efficient structures of unfinished timber and brick stacked densely next to one another. Stone city walls and fortresses are towering, gray, and featureless. Garbage, offal, and mud cover every surface, and the air swarms with horseflies and yellow jackets. Falkovnia's climate is one of extremes, characterized by bitter winters and hot, humid summers.

Every sizable settlement in Falkovnia is linked by roads that are wide and well maintained for troop movement. Lekar, the Core's largest city, lies in the western part of Falkovnia. Over fifteen thousand people live within the walls of this heavily fortified settlement, and nearly a quarter of them are soldiers. The city's location and the domain's excellent roads make Lekar a natural center for trade. Merchants fill the streets, handling wares from all the bordering domains. As traders bustle past, beggars glean what they can. They crouch in every doorway, pleading, their arms reaching up to those who walk by. Many beggars, crippled by the soldiers, cannot even stand. Most of Lekar's citizens live in squalor. The twisting alleys in the laborers' quarter are filled with sewage, mud, and dung.

Falkovnia has three other sizable towns, each with some degree of fortification. Stangengrad, home to sixty-five hundred people, perches on the northern border, near Darkon. Aerie, a village on the southern border, has a population of two thousand. Morfenzi, in the eastern foothills, is home to some fifteen hundred people. Another five thousand Falkovnians live in Silbervas, on the eastern shore of Lake Kriegvogel. The summer palace of the domain's tyrannical lord sits on a hill in the Upper City. When the wind blows off Lake Kriegvogel, the city gets relief from the hot summers of this land. When the wind blows from the north and Lord Drakov is in residence, the screams of the victims he has tortured for his amusement can be heard throughout Silbervas.

Falkovnians are fair skinned and usually visibly underfed and overworked. Dark blond to medium brown hair is typical, as are hazel to deep brown eyes, though green eyes are not unheard of. Men wear their hair in savage crew cuts, while women grow their hair long, wild, and unkempt. Falkovnians dress in deliberately drab clothing; to stand out is to draw the attention of the realm's soldiers, which can mean death or worse. Dull earthen colors are common, with men favoring tunics and breeches and women blouses and long skirts. Most commoners wear rag wrappings instead of shoes. Folk who do not belong to the soldiery are usually filthy with mud, dung, lice, and fleas.

All Falkovnians are branded on their foreheads at birth with the ruler's seal, a hawk's head. This clearly identifies Falkovnians in other lands and reminds every citizen of his true status: property.

Falkovnians are a downtrodden lot. Overtaxed and overburdened, they have little to look forward to but death. The unending horrors of military brutality

have eroded any sense of beauty or hope they once harbored in their hearts. Some acquire a brutal personality, taking on the qualities of their military oppressors. Most Falkovnians, however, are simply passive and just a little paranoid. They tend to be reticent and inhumanly jaded to violence and gore.

If life in Falkovnia is cruel for humans, it is a nightmare for nonhumans. Although Falkovnia has almost no native nonhuman races, all those who pass through the region are slapped into irons. Such "subhuman" races are considered state property, to be treated as chattel slaves. To breed out the taint of nonhuman blood, racial intermarriage is encouraged by the state, though Falkovnian custom forbids it. Those unfortunates with only one human parent are also deemed state property. The folk despise Drakov, but dare not curse him in public; they do not have the strength to overthrow him. Traveling to another domain is forbidden to all but a few. Foreigners can cross the borders, but not without harassment.

In the cities and towns, people wear drab clothing. Even perceptive foreigners adhere to this custom, because no one wants to stand out from the crowd. To attract notice is to put one's life in danger. In more remote areas, life is still hard, but Drakov's squads are less oppressive.

Soldiers represent the highest class of Falkovnian citizens, and only humans can be soldiers. Falkovnia's elite are all military men fiercely loyal to Drakov. Officers pay no taxes, travel without restriction, and can carry weapons. Citizens who arm themselves have committed a capital offense, for which their entire family must suffer. Not every individual in the army is a warrior. Bureaucrats and other civil servants also receive military commissions and titles. Falkovnians, however, reserve their greatest hatred and fear for the Talons, Drakov's elite soldiers. Shock troops with a fanatical loyalty to their lord, the Talons are themselves cruel sadists and are whispered to possess nearly supernatural battle prowess.

The domain's lord, Vlad Drakov, colors all aspects of life in Falkovnia with his brutality. However, of late something resembling an armed resistance has begun to form. Rumors tell of a mighty white-haired human warrior named Gondegal, who leads a secret knighthood that has partially infiltrated Drakov's military government. Others claim that through brilliant hit-and-run tactics, a troop of kobolds have more or less driven Drakov's troops from a region at the heart of the domain. This is not the first time someone has had limited success against Drakov, nor will it be the last.



Drakov demands at least one execution each night, at the dinner hour. He takes his meal while observing the prisoner's slow death. On special evenings, as many as forty people are impaled on tall, thick stakes for his enjoyment. Occasionally he calls in an orchestra to accompany their screams. If Ravenloft is a prison for the damned, then few deserve to be here more than Drakov.

More than even this torture, Drakov's true love is conquest. The mercenary-king has tried his hand at invading every bordering realm at one time or another, but without success. Nearly every campaign has met with disaster — some spectacularly so — which only enrages Drakov further. It may be that Falkovnian conquest is destined to fail. Regardless, the realms of Mordent, Dementlieu, Borca, and Richemulot have agreed to a mutual defense pact to safeguard against future Falkovnian aggression.

Falkovnia holds very few undead, but the living are horrid enough. The forests are rich with deer and wild boar, as well as predators such as wolves. Near populated areas, half of all encounters are with soldiers, equipped with scale mail, spears, and shields. Elite fighting men have banded mail and swords or polearms.

HAZLAN

Hazlan lies south of Barovia and Nova Vaasa, in the southeastern corner of the Core. Hazlik, an evil archmage sometimes known as the Red Wizard, rules this domain undisputedly. Every inhabitant knows that he is the absolute dictator. His small council of governors (basically killers) enforces his rules.

The eastern half of this domain spreads into lazy, rolling hills that are grassy and easy to travel. In the west, the Balinoks rise up, making the terrain rocky and rough. The northern part of the land is largely uninhabited wilderness, although a small village has sprung up on the estate of the land's ruler, Hazlik. Hazlik ordered the settlers to build this remote village at the base of his mountain, so that he could teach the arts of magic to a few chosen ones. The village, named Ramulai, is currently home to Hazlik's apprentices and roughly two hundred fifty others. Should Hazlik continue to train mages, Hazlan may well become the center of arcane arts in the Core.

Hazlan has two major towns, Toyalis and Sly-Var. Toyalis houses eight thousand people, and conducts limited trade with Immol in Barovia; Immol produces pottery and finely crafted bowls and other implements needed for certain magical rituals by the growing number of wizards in Toyalis. Sly-Var is home to about forty-five hundred people, mostly farmers and herders. Both towns consist of simple, white-washed wooden homes with red tile roofs.

The village of Ramulai is somewhat more impressive; built to the specifications of Hazlik, it is a compact settlement of stone buildings with slate roofs. The stones are quarried through magical means on the nearby border with Barovia and Forlorn, and the construction of the town is an example of the practical applications of magic. Hazlan's wilder areas are a cornucopia of strange plants and monstrous creatures, many of them misshapen by magical experiments.

The folk in Hazlan are sharply divided into two groups: the ruling class and the lower class. Outlanders familiar with the land of Thay recognize Hazlani social structure as nearly identical to that nation of wizards. This division is made primarily along racial and ethnic lines.

The majority of the population is of Rashemi stock. They are a tough and sturdy people, averaging a little over five feet in height, with dusky skin and dark eyes. The men often wear bushy beards. The women tend to be slightly shorter than the men are,

and they wear their black hair long, often in elaborate braids. Rashemi of the lowest social class are not permitted to cut their hair at all. The Rashemi dress simply—in baggy trousers, tunics, or smocks. Jewelry is rare, though an occasional earring, bracelet, or ring can be seen. Both genders are hard workers and make good warriors—a necessity, as they are the working class of Hazlan, subservient to the other ethnic group in the domain, the Mulan. Rashemi of greater means or social position cut their hair short, to differentiate themselves from their less affluent kin, but by law they cannot shave their heads.

The Mulan are tall and fine-boned, with sallow complexions. They shave their heads and whatever other body hair they have, usually replacing it with elaborate tattoos. By tradition, men's tattoos consist of geometric shapes and stylized representations of dragons and legendary monsters. Women are tattooed with cryptic runes and abstract designs. Receiving one's first tattoo is a sign of adulthood among the Mulans. Due to the Mulan affinity for tattoos, Hazlan is home to the Core's finest tattoo artists. The Mulan own most businesses, pay more lenient taxes, and are the only ones who may sit on Hazlik's ruling council. None of this is surprising if one realizes that Hazlik, himself, is Mulan.

Unlike domains with similar splits between ethnic groups, no linguistic or religious barriers divide the Hazlani peoples. They all speak a tongue known as Thayvian, which shares similar linguistic roots with the language spoken in Nova Vaasa. A Vaasan and a Hazlani can understand each other's native tongues as long as both parties speak clearly and slowly.

The only legal religion is that devoted to the god Bane, often referred to as the Lawgiver. While priests and worshipers are drawn from both ethnic groups, they worship in separate churches; further, the heads of the church are all Mulans. These Banites are the only priests who can safely serve their gods openly in Hazlan. The church of the Lawgiver preaches that those who rule do so through divine providence. Bane punishes most severely all who would attempt to reach above their station. It should come of no surprise that the doctrine of Bane holds that he is the highest of all gods worshipped in the Domains of Dread.

During the Grand Conjunction, Bane temporarily ceased to grant spells to his priests. The debate over why this happened has caused a minor split in the church. Some believe Bane was punishing his priests for not preventing the catastrophic reshaping of the world, while others believe that Bane was

somehow incapacitated by the event. Whatever the reason, however, the Church of Bane is actively watching for signs that another such event is about to occur. If they believe someone or something might be attempting to force such a cataclysm, they will move swiftly to stop it from happening.

In Hazlan, there are two things in which Mulans and Rashemi are perfectly equal. The first is that they basically devote all their efforts to pleasing Hazlik, and he is a tough man to satisfy. The governors relay his commands, and the folk obey each instantly. Noncompliance means death or a trip to "the tables;" simple misunderstandings may even mean the same. "The tables" are where Hazlik and his apprentices perform their evil experiments. Fear of this fate makes Hazlani natives paranoid and distrustful. Second, Hazlik's apprentices are drawn from both ethnic groups. The only requirements to study magic under Hazlan appear to be an aptitude for the art and status as a native Hazlani. This has sent shockwaves through Mulan society. They do not understand how their leader could betray Mulan superiority in such a fashion. For years, the study of arcane arts was forbidden in Hazlan. Then Hazlik changed his thinking, and became obsessed with training powerful apprentices.

Hazlik, the Red Wizard, has been the most important figure in this realm since the Mists revealed it over thirty-five years ago. However, in their own way, his small, faceless council of Mulans are perhaps just as important. Since no one is sure who sits on this council, powerful Mulans are generally careful about speaking ill of their ruler. They never know who may be part of his inner circle.

A young Rashemi woman has come to the forefront recently. Eleni is the most skilled student at Hazlik's academy. Exceedingly fair of visage, she has shocked Rashemi and Mulan alike by shaving her hair and tattooing herself in Mulan fashion. Eleni has even been seen around Hazlik's court. The designs on her tattoos are unknown to all, thought by some to be magical sigils known only to Hazlik.

LAMORDIA

Lamordia is a bleak coastal domain in the northwestern section of the Core. A relentless, cold wind usually blows out of the northwest, lashing Lamordia with its fury. In winter, ice floes clog the harbors, and great frozen slabs rear up on the rocky shore. It is not uncommon for Lamordia to be consumed by a blizzard while adjacent domains experience only a slight drizzle or no storms at all. In late spring, Lamordia's roads become rivers of deep,

clinging mud. In the short, warm summers, clouds of mosquitoes drift across the domain, plaguing the deer and elk. A forested ridge called the "Sleeping Beast" stretches along the eastern border of this domain, sheltering Falkovnia from most of Lamordia's storms. Lamordia reaches far into the Sea of Sorrows, and several islands off the northern tip of the domain are included in this domain.

Notable are the frozen Isle of Agony and rocky, forsaken Demise. The Isle of Agony is the largest of these islands, and Lamordians fear and shun it. Some claim it is home to a man-eating sea monster. Others call it "the devil's domicile." No natives, not even adventurous young boys, will explore the island willingly. During low tide in summer, a muddy causeway links the islands to the mainland. At that time, it is possible to walk the causeway, but progress is slow, and the mud can swallow a full-grown man to his waist or deeper if he is not careful. Seabirds add to hikers' worries by diving, harassing, and sometimes even attacking them.

When the tide is high, water covers the causeway, but in winter, jutting slabs of ice link the isles to the mainland. Travelers still need ropes and ice picks to cross the ice safely. The interior is a region of towering forests where the black trees grow massive and dense. The woods are forlorn and eerily still, but travelers often have the impression that they are being watched from the shadows. Each spring, woodsmen inevitably find thawed corpses deep in the wilderness, their forms mangled beyond recognition. The terrain is rugged in the north, especially along the rocky uplands of the Sleeping Beast. To the south the mighty *Riefa Spandwäs* ("Cobweb River", the Lamordian name for the Musarde River and its four branches here) forms a river delta known locally as the Heath of Tears when it meets the Sea of Sorrows. Lamordia has two major settlements: Ludendorf and Neufurchtenburg, each housing fewer than one thousand people. As in other domains, travelers will encounter isolated huts in the wilderness, but the region's harsh conditions attract very few immigrants.

Lamordians are lean, square-shouldered folk tall in stature and wiry in physique. Their skin is exceptionally fair but tinted ruddy from the numbing wind that seems to blow across the domain constantly. Eye color is almost always a shade of green or blue. Their straight or wavy hair is light blond to dark brown, though fairer hair is slightly more common. Men cut their hair to a medium length, usually to just above the neck, and keep it styled back. Women grow their hair long and either

pin it up or weave it into twin braids. Mustaches and beards are never seen on men, but muttonchops sideburns are quite popular. Clothing is exceptionally well made in Lamordia, but modest and somber. Men wear collared shirts, vests, and trousers, with wealthier men adding a waistcoat and scarf. Nobles often wear pointed black caps as well. Women prefer modest woolen dresses with high collars and frequently wear tight, white bonnets. Color is almost unheard of in Lamordian garb; black, white, and shades of gray are the only hues to be seen. Jewelry is never worn, even among the nobility, though noblemen carry accessories such as canes and pocket watches (made with the advanced technical know-how for which Lamordia is famous)..

Lamordians are extremely hardy, independent folk accustomed to the domain's savage winter storms and generally treacherous environment. They have learned to withstand the winters in good spirits, pursuing humble crafts and savoring the simple joys of life. Blizzards may keep them indoors, but snow itself is no hindrance. They travel on skis, sleighs, and snowshoes. Unlike many folk in the Land of Mists, Lamordians are not at all superstitious.

In fact, Lamordians are rational almost to a fault and believe in tackling every problem with a common-sense solution. Churches are rare, and no particular faith has been able to gain a major foothold here. The domain reflects this attitude, as it is relatively free of undead, lycanthropes, and fey, especially compared to its neighbors in the Core. A practical people, most Lamordians are skeptical of anyone who promises easy answers through faith or magic, which they see as crutches for a weak mind. They tend to hold one of two viewpoints: Either the gods created life and then withdrew from the world, or gods are the manifestations of superstitious, hopeful minds looking toward an external source for release from their troubles. Lamordians always look for the down-to-earth explanation. While the domain has churches and a small clergy, no true clerics are native to this land. Even they assume that the gods have no care for the mundane existence of mortals. Instead, they see their duty as preparing the spirits of their parishioners for the afterlife.

Lamordians are almost exclusively human, and rarely become adventurers, who are seen as shifty mercenaries without an honest trade. They also tend to look down on the dwarves of the Sleeping Beast mountain range, seeing them as natural abnormalities, flawed branches on the Great Tree of Life, the top of which is crowned by humanity. When they encounter a rare nonhuman traveler of another

race, they see them in much the same way. Yet they do not hate nonhumans. Most Lamordians reserve their disdain for Victor Mordenheim, a somewhat shady surgeon and scientist who conducts strange experiments on his estate in northern Lamordia.

Several trappers live in isolated areas of the domain, as do a few miners, and some shepherds winter their animals on the leeward side of the Sleeping Beast. However, most Lamordians are artisans. They spend the winter months carving furniture and building musical instruments. As soon as the snow melts and the roads are passable, their work is exported to other lands. The goods bring an excellent price, a third of which goes to the Baron of Lamordia. The local diet is rich in protein and fat. Special pudding thickened with sheep's blood is a local favorite, and goat cheese is a dietary staple.

Schloss Mordenheim, the estate of Victor Mordenheim, is north of Ludendorf, on the coast. The estate stands on a cliff, which is dotted with small caves. In spring and summer, the waves crash against the rocks below. The tragic Dr. Victor Mordenheim toils endlessly in his castle, his family estate falling into disrepair around him. Those who have managed to get close to the doctor know that his wife was horribly mangled many years ago when one of his experiments went awry.

The manor has a reputation for being haunted, and locals avoid it. Related are rumors that the doctor will occasionally lose control of his strange experiments and accidentally allow deformed beasts to escape from his laboratory. Nearby residents tolerate the doctor, but neither like nor trust him.

Baron von Aubrecker, a dying aristocrat whose family has ruled Lamordia for as long as anyone can remember, maintains his seat of power in Schloss Aubrecker, a castle perched on the Sleeping Beast, several miles south of Ludendorf. His 30 year-old daughter Gerta prepares to succeed him. As always, the Baron still reigns with a light touch, collecting taxes through local mayors. Mayors otherwise rule the towns as they think best and quartering small garrisons of the baron's soldiers. Von Aubrecker maintains a token army, equipped with muskets and broadswords, near the Falkovnian border.

Monsters are few in Lamordia, and folk are peaceful and law abiding, so Ludendorf and Neufurchtenburg need only maintain small police forces. Whenever some particularly violent or heinous crime is perpetrated, the people often take justice into their own hands. Nonetheless, should the need arise, troublemakers are dealt with swiftly by both town militias and the baron's enforcers.

Science and Magic in Lamordia

Owing to the stoic, pragmatic, and rational demeanor of its people, Lamordia is undoubtedly the most technologically advanced Core domain. Many members of the Metaphysician class (a new class described in the Class chapter) call Lamordia home. However, due to the skeptical Lamordians' denial of the supernatural, almost all native metaphysicians are of the Savant archetype. Perhaps reflecting its denizens, Lamordia is also the home to large areas of *dead magic*, especially in settlements. Within these permanent areas—which range in size from a few square feet to over a square mile—all creatures are considered to be within the area of an *antimagic field* spell. Every year, the dead magic areas grow a little bigger. In Ludendorf, the leading social club, the Syndicate of Enlightened Citizens, extols the virtues of science. See the end of the Secret Societies chapter for more information on the Syndicate and Ludendorf itself.

THE NOCTURNAL SEA

The Nocturnal Sea is a frigid body of water east of Nova Vaasa and Darkon. Until shortly after the Grand Conjunction, it was completely hidden by the Mists that surround the Core, although daring ships had been setting out from Egertus before the Mists retreated. Early on, several islands were discovered, and new islands are actually being discovered in the Nocturnal Sea continually.

Although the Nocturnal Sea is no longer hidden, sailing it is even more dangerous than sailing the Sea of Sorrows. Perpetual cloud cover hangs over the dark, choppy waters; no sun, moon, or stars ever penetrates these clouds—although some of the islands enjoy sunny days. This makes navigation all but impossible for ships that do not carry magnetic compasses, and banks of fog rise from the cold waters almost without warning, completely engulfing vessels and causing them to lose their way. At night, the sea is plunged into an inky blackness that even the sight of elves cannot penetrate. Further, jagged rocks hide beneath the waves near virtually every island, and sometimes in what appears to be open water. The skeletons of great ships mark the locations of some of these hazards while others remain undiscovered.

Nonetheless, the lands in the Nocturnal Sea have all proven either interesting or profitable enough to spur both the adventuresome and greedy to keep looking for new lands across the sea and in the Mists. Some think explorers found the eastern shore of the Nocturnal Sea with the domain of Vechor; others maintain Vechor is just a large island.

Others claim that the sea has no boundaries, and that if a brave sea captain plots a straight course

east into the Mists, he will eventually emerge in the Sea of Sorrows. However, no captain who plies the Nocturnal Sea is known to have attempted this, and certainly no one is known to have succeeded. Most consider the idea wishful thinking on the part of the merchants in Martira Bay and along the Core's west coast, since more islands with inhabitants willing and eager to trade were discovered in the Nocturnal Sea's first few years of exploration than have been discovered in the Sea of Sorrows in over a century.

The most noteworthy of the islands are **Vechor** (a place of wild magic and madness that is the easternmost and largest island in the Nocturnal Sea), Graben Island (seventy-five miles off the coast of Nova Vaasa, the second largest island in the Nocturnal Sea, home to four insular villages and ruled by a wealthy merchant family of nobles who share their name with the isle), the **Isle of Ravens** (inhabited by many birds and one sorceress, who may have turned treacherous sailors into the titular ravens), Knammen (immediately west of Graben, containing the small fishing village of Meerdorf), **L'île de la Tempête** (a ten-mile long kidney shaped island surrounded by the world's most treacherous shoals and dominated by a deceiving lighthouse), **Liffe** (a large and well-inhabited island of rustic farmers and musicians, with a deep water port and shipyards, ruled by the highborn bard Baron Evensong), and Todstein (sixty miles east of Graben and forever surrounded by icy storms, an island where no one is known to have ever safely landed).

Furthermore, rumors say a fog-bound archipelago somewhere between Todstein and Vechor, in the far north of the Nocturnal Sea, is home to a mysterious race draconic seafarers occasionally glimpsed at sea. Whether that island chain is part of a larger domain or a new one all its own remains to be seen.

In addition to the islands mentioned above, rumor has it that somewhere within the Nocturnal Sea is a place known as **the Nightmare Lands**. This island reportedly is a point where dreams and reality intersect. So far, no mariner has been able to navigate to it, although Captain Onid Rhelarian once claimed to have sailed the famed scholar Rudolph van Richten and Dr. Gregorian Illhousen there.

Dragonborn of the Nocturnal Sea

Around 759 BC, sightings of reptilian creatures sailing ships of unique design in the Nocturnal Sea began. They were never seen on a clear day, always emerging from a bank of fog or other precipitation. Outlanders from worlds beyond the Realm of Terror say they greatly resemble a draconic race called the Dragonborn (see that portion of the Races chapter for details.)

NOVA VAASA

Named for the nation of Vaasa in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms—from which the population and the ruthless feudal lords who rule them descend—this grassy plateau is known for its stark class divisions and the wealth of its five noble families. Situated on a great plateau in the southeastern Core, Nova Vasa is a large realm dominated by sweeping grasslands and crushing urban poverty.

The plains are rocky and trackless, but the grasses that cover them are short, tamed by the constant grazing of horses. The wind whistles eerily across the steppes, which are dotted with rocky uplands and copses. For the most part, however, the domain is exceptionally flat, stretching from the Balinok Mountains in the west to the Nocturnal Sea in the east. The dry, flat plain fittingly has a dry, flat name: it is known simply as the Vaasi Plateau, or the *Vaasimark*.

Crumbling stone ruins and humble horse ranches break up the landscape. Broad rivers meander across Nova Vaasa's steppes, cutting deep gorges through the plateau where they reach the Nocturnal Sea. The domain enjoys access to numerous important waterways, including the Dnar, the Borchava, the Ivlis, and the Saniset. Besides the rivers, the only major bodies of water in Nova Vaasa are the Three Sisters, a trio of lakes northwest of where the Ivlis and Volgis rivers meet. The eastern coast is rugged and adequate natural ports are rare; the flat plateau drops down to treacherous bluffs and narrow, rocky beaches.

Near settlements, the plains are cleared for vast farms needed to feed the domain's swelling population. The soil is rocky, and the cleared fields are bordered by crude, ancient-looking stone walls. Abandoned, roofless stone huts grouped in circles mark the habitats of forgotten families, and the tombs of a forgotten civilization are carved into the bluffs in the northern part of the domain.

The cities are nightmarish scenes of dreadful urban squalor. The streets throng with beggars, and the ditches are piled with refuse and plague-bloated corpses. The press of people and beasts of burden is positively suffocating.

The class divide in Nova Vaasa is wide and deeply entrenched. The poor make up the vast majority of the population. These people are truly destitute and miserable, afflicted by hunger, disease, and crime. The aristocracy, meanwhile, is comparatively tiny in size but extremely wealthy. A very small middle

class has begun to emerge in recent years, composed of civil servants, merchants, and underworld types.

Five noble houses—the Bolshniks, Chekivs, Hiregaards, Rivtoffs, and Vistins—own nearly all property in the domain. Four of these families (the Hiregaards, the Chekivs, the Rivtoffs, and the Vistins) live in castles on the grasslands and have the right to tax the peasants who live along the Dnar, Little Borchava, Volgis, and Ivlis rivers respectively. Each of those four houses pays tribute to the dominant fifth family, the Bolshniks, who live in a castle in Kantora and control the Borchava River farmlands.

Despite its wealth and size, Nova Vaasa has the feeling of a society on the brink of decline. Vice and violent crime are rampant in the overpopulated cities, while the nobles become wealthier each day on the backs of the poor. The commoners are concerned only with surviving and drowning their misery in vices. Most nobles dwell in their own arrogant, anodyne world, believing that commoners are subhuman beasts of burden to be used and abused at whim.

Surprisingly, rebellion and unrest are unheard of, due primarily to the doctrines of the church of Bane, also known as the Lawgiver, the official religion of Nova Vaasa. No other major faiths exist in these lands. The tenets are the same as the church in Hazlan, but the Nova Vaasan church has avoided the schism that has troubled Hazlan's clergy since the Grand Conjunction. Here, as in Hazlan, clerics preach that those who rule do so through divine providence. Bane is the supreme god, a deity who punishes anyone who seeks to rise above their appointed place in the world. The clergy are all aristocrats, of course, and the actions and teachings of the Church serve primarily to support the interests of the nobles.

Settlements have only weak civic government, run by those who have proven themselves loyal to the local family. Each noble family maintains a small private army that includes cavalry, though the forces of Prince Othmar's Bolshnik family are by far the largest and best equipped.

Buildings are constructed of reddish beige brick on foundations of rough gray stone, with tiny windows and gabled roofs of golden-yellow shingles. Even newer buildings in Nova Vaasa are commonly made of stone. Nova Vaasan lumber often rots in just a few years; as a result, timber for construction is usually imported from other domains. Nova Vaasa's

weather can be brutal during winter, but spring always brings mild warmth and wildflowers.

Prince Othmar Bolshnik, the patriarch of the Bolshnik family, is the current ruler of the land. Traditionally, Nova Vaasa's leadership passed from the head of one noble family to the next every five years. Unfortunately, Othmar has not relinquished his mantle in over twenty-five years, a fact that has caused undeniable tension among the five ruling families. Such is Othmar's military and political power, however, that none dares attempt to oust him.

Othmar is a vain and ruthless ruler focused on cementing the Bolshniks' dominance among the noble families and maintaining the status quo in Nova Vaasan society at large. Each noble family governs its lands independently, however, and Othmar only rarely steps in to collect tribute. The other noble families pay their tribute to Othmar, though some grudgingly. The Hiregaards and Chekiv families support Othmar's rule; they feel that if Othmar did not have Bane's blessing, he would not be ruling. The Rivtoffs and Vistins are less pleased with Othmar and wish to return to the traditional rotation system. Nobles rule harshly and without pity, though the Hiregaard family treats the commoners in its lands relatively fairly.

For the most part, law and justice do not exist in Nova Vaasan society as they do in other realms; there is no recourse for those who have been wronged criminally or privately. Nobles care nothing for issues that do not directly involve their interests. Thus, the streets and plains of Nova Vaasa are largely lawless.

In other parts of the Core, this domain is known mostly for its horses. The best mounts on the continent come from Nova Vaasan bloodlines, called *Vaasi* horses. They are prized for their speed, strength, obedience, and beauty. Although the noble families have legendary stables and lineages, the finest horses seem to come from tiny rural ranches. Most *Vaasi* horses run wild, particularly along the eastern ranges that spread out flat to the horizon in grassy plains. Commonly, herds of twenty to fifty black steeds thunder across the open range, spirited and free. Some claim that by night, herds of nightmares replace the mortal creatures of the day, running in herds across the plateau, their fiery manes lighting the darkness around them. Catching a glimpse of them is supposed to herald death or misfortune for the viewer or her loved ones.

Vaasi Horses

Nova Vaasans have a saying: "The Lawgiver meant for Nova Vaasans to ride, and He provided a horse for each of us." The average *Vaasi* horse is deep black in coat and mane and tall at the shoulder, usually 16 to 18 hands in height, but distinct breeds among the horses vary from this description. *Vaasi* horses can be divided into five major bloodlines:

- *Jernryge* ("iron-backs") are the largest of the *Vaasi* horse breeds, considered the strongest horses in the Core. They also tend to be relatively docile and thus are suited mainly as draft horses and pack animals.
- *Rødbuge* ("red-bellies") make superior warhorses and cavalry mounts. Strong, intelligent, spirited and radiating a noble beauty, these fiery steeds boast distinctive reddish splotches on their chests and barrels.
- *Vindhåre* ("wind-manes") are famous for their speed. Though ill-tempered, they are the most popular horses for racing, and are known for the white markings on their face and lower legs, streaks of white in their manes, and coats ranging from blue roan to black.
- *Gedfode* ("goat-foots") are the smallest breed, but also the surest of foot, and some swear they are the smartest and most loyal of the *Vaasi* horses. The *Vistani* in Nova Vaasa prefer *gedfode* mounts and pack animals.
- Finally, *vaamgaære* ("heat-walkers") are a rough, rugged breed, unpopular in the Core since they lack the beauty of the other *Vaasi* horses. They are nearly tireless, can go long distances without food or water, and are little bothered by extreme temperatures, being naturally adapted to both hot and cold climates. *Vaamgaære* are colored in a unique reverse bay pattern, with a black body and brown socks, manes, and tails.

Nova Vaasa is a significant regional economic power in the larger Core. Most trade is conducted with Barovia, Tepest, Hazlan, and the islands of the Nocturnal Sea. Demand for Nova Vaasan goods, however, spurs merchants to trek through the *Balinoks* each spring from the western Core. Yet the wealth generated from its resources benefits only the five noble families. Thus, while trade with other lands expands, the crushing poverty that most Nova Vaasans endure only gets worse. Gambling, liquor, and flophouses have also begun to take their toll on the domain's productivity. Under the direction of a mysterious and seemingly unstoppable criminal overlord known as *Malken*, underworld activity has become organized. It may be only a matter of time until even the nobles begin to feel its pinch.

Regardless of the stark differences between classes, Nova Vaasans both high and low share the same physical attributes. They are rugged people of average stature with wide hips and stout limbs

gained through generations of horsemanship. Their facial features are distinctive, featuring angular chins, prominent cheekbones, and wide, full-lipped mouths. Skin color is generally fair and ruddy, but Nova Vaasans with pale olive or sallow skin are not unusual. Eyes are almost always dark green or gray. Hair color ranges from dirty blond to black, though darker colors are most common. Women grow their straight hair exceptionally long, often past their waists, and young girls work these tresses into two long braids. Men, meanwhile, prefer to keep their hair cut to just below the shoulder. Men of all stations grow long mustaches, which they wax into stiff curls.

In contrast to their basic physicality, Nova Vaasan clothing varies greatly with social class. The garb of commoners is simple and often poorly maintained. Men wear trousers and long shirts, sometimes with a vest. Women wear blouses with culottes and often cover their heads with kerchiefs. Commoner clothing is never dyed, only natural dirty white or brown, and is patched repeatedly. Most commoners wear cloth wrappings instead of proper footwear.

Aristocrats stand out from the unwashed masses in their brightly colored, meticulous vestments. Male nobles wear flared riding breeches with tall black boots and finely tailored coats trimmed with lace. Most men wear neckerchiefs bearing their family crests, and felt caps are popular among older men. Women go about in velvet riding skirts with black boots and billowing blouses. Noblewomen never wear hats, instead wrapping themselves in gauzy scarves trimmed with tinkling bells and coins. Clothing dyed in vibrant shades of red, blue, and purple predominates, and stripes and spiral patterns are quite popular. Jewelry is usually limited to thick bracelets and earrings.

The city of Kantora lies near the center of the domain. It rivals Lekar in size, with sixteen thousand people, mostly peasants living in squalid conditions after being driven off their lands by exorbitant taxes. Egertus is about half that size, being home to nine thousand. Egertus has been the termination point for merchant caravans from Falkovnia and other nations further west. This cosmopolitan city is the center of education in Nova Vaasa and rivals Port-a-Lucine in culture. It is the location of some of the finest boarding schools, colleges, and medical institutions of the Core, including a Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. Although much of its staff—including medical pioneer Dr. Gregorian Illhousen—vanished mysteriously some years ago, the facility continues

to be on the cutting edge of treating insanity and mental disorders. The smaller towns of Liara, Arbora, and Bergovitsa house about two thousand people each.

None of the three major forests in Nova Vaasa are particularly large by the standards of other Core domains. All lie in western Nova Vaasa, on the border with other lands. The Dyrskov (“Beastwood”), in northwestern Nova Vaasa, grows on the edge of the Shadow Rift; the Graenseskov (“Borderwood”), in central southwestern Nova Vaasa, spills over the border of Barovia; and the Skyggeskov (“Shadowwood”), in south-southwestern Nova Vaasa, straddles the border with Hazlan and recedes into the Mists. The Dyrskov provides the only timber in Nova Vaasa suitable for building, but proximity of the Shadow Rift is disconcerting, and sortvingebute (“black fairies”) are rumored to beguile lumberjacks and carry them off into the Rift. The Graenseskov spills out from the shadow of the Hills of Bleak Vistas in Barovia, called the Howling Hills by Nova Vaasans. The name is apt, as the Graenseskov is the most wolf-infested of Nova Vaasa’s forests, and said to be haunted by vampires and werewolves from Barovia as well. The Skyggeskov, despite its somewhat sinister name, is not as feared as the other two forests. Because of its closeness to both the Saniset and the trade route into Hazlan, Nova Vaasans have a better familiarity with it and its contents than they do the other forests. The greatest threats here are bandits and plains cats.

An odd duality seems to exist in the minds of Nova Vaasans, expressed in many aspects of their culture and daily habits. The aristocrats, for instance, speak reverently about the responsibility of a noble to his people and a master to his servants, and the importance of personal honor and chivalry. The commoners talk of duty to one’s superiors and the sanctity of Law and Order.

Yet Nova Vaasa is a land where the aristocracy taxes the peasantry into abject poverty, beating and imprisoning those who cannot afford to pay. A noble has the legal right to strike a commoner for the crime of insolence, and few think twice about exercising it. Many in the peasantry, meanwhile, throw themselves into every vice with abandon, steal from their neighbors and stare daggers into the back of every aristocrat who passes by. In short, a wide gulf stretches between the professed values of the Nova Vaasans and the lives they actually lead. Suggest this to a Nova Vaasan, however, and you will meet a stone wall of denial.

Famed Personages of Nova Vaasa

Despite Prince Othmar's larger game of thrones with his fellow nobles, it is the crimelord Malken who is his only true rival for mastery of Nova Vaasa. This shadowy figure is rumored to control all that occurs in the underworld of Liara and a good deal of illicit activity elsewhere in the domain as well. Malken is practically a bogeyman to the poor of Nova Vaasa. They say he is a beastly creature, known to stalk and brutalize young women and their husbands or lovers, but he always seems to escape town guardsmen undetected even after a brazen and public crime. Further rumors say his informants are everywhere, that he knows of every theft or act of greed committed in the domain, and that he has annihilated entire thieves' guilds in a single night. In the darkest alleyways of the domain, it is Malken's word, not Othmar's, that is the law.

Another of Nova Vaasa's most famous residents is a legendary grim-faced warrior named Weathermay. He rides a black warhorse and is always clad entirely in black. He roams Nova Vaasa on a relentless quest against creatures of the night and other evildoers. He is to the common folk what the famed monster hunter Rudolph van Richten was to scholars. His fame is not for his great insight into the nature of evil creatures, but instead for his talent at destroying them.

Sir Tristen Hiregaard is head of the Hiregaard family, which controls and exacts tribute from the farmlands along the Dnar River and the city of Liara. Unlike Nova Vaasa's other noble families, the Hiregaards treat their peasants with fairness and dignity. On occasion, Sir Hiregaard has even been known to show kindness, but he rarely has an opportunity to put his charitable impulses into practice. Bound by a strict set of rules that demand obedience to his ruler and his laws, he collects every coin of tax due. He is never brutal in his collection methods, but he is always very thorough. Further, he argues for lower taxes at every yearly Council of Lords, even though his arguments always fall on deaf ears. Some of his peasants revere him as their champion, while others despise him as much as they would any other overlord. Even in his twilight years, Sir Hiregaard is very much the ladies' man, and many women—peasants and nobles alike—vie for his favors, for he showers lovers with expensive gifts. Still, others do their best to avoid his attention. After all, several of his past lovers have died mysterious, violent deaths, and even more have been left maimed and scarred beyond recognition.

Beasts and Monsters of Nova Vaasa

While the horse is the cornerstone of Nova Vaasan pride, the plains cat crouches at the center of their fears. Plains cats are large felines, superficially similar to panthers in appearance. They tend to be taller at the shoulder than panthers, however, and they have a far thicker musculature. Their fur is almost uniformly midnight black, though occasionally a plains cat with dark red fur will be born in a litter. These "blood-cats" are rumored to be larger and stronger than their kin, and some say they can hypnotize prey with their golden eyes, fade into

invisibility, or even imitate human speech. Whatever the color of their fur, plains cats are terrifying predators. They are utterly silent when stalking prey, until they pounce with a yowl that sounds unsettlingly like a human scream. A plains cat's leap can carry it an astonishing 30 feet.

Snakes are the other significant threat in the Vaasimark. In fact, snakes are probably a greater danger overall than the cats, as there are many more of them. There are plenty of less dangerous breeds, Nova Vaasa is home to many diamondbacks and sidewinders, both of which use rattles to warn off attackers. Two deadly poisonous snakes unique to Nova Vaasa are the ironwhip, easily confused with the harmless whipsnake, and the goldenhood, a cobra with scales in black and yellow stripes. A bite from a goldenhood can kill a horse in minutes.

After the above, animal life in Nova Vaasa becomes more mundane. Small, timid wolves roam wooded areas, while jackrabbits, groundhogs and numerous lizards live on the grassy plains. Avian life is typical of the climate.

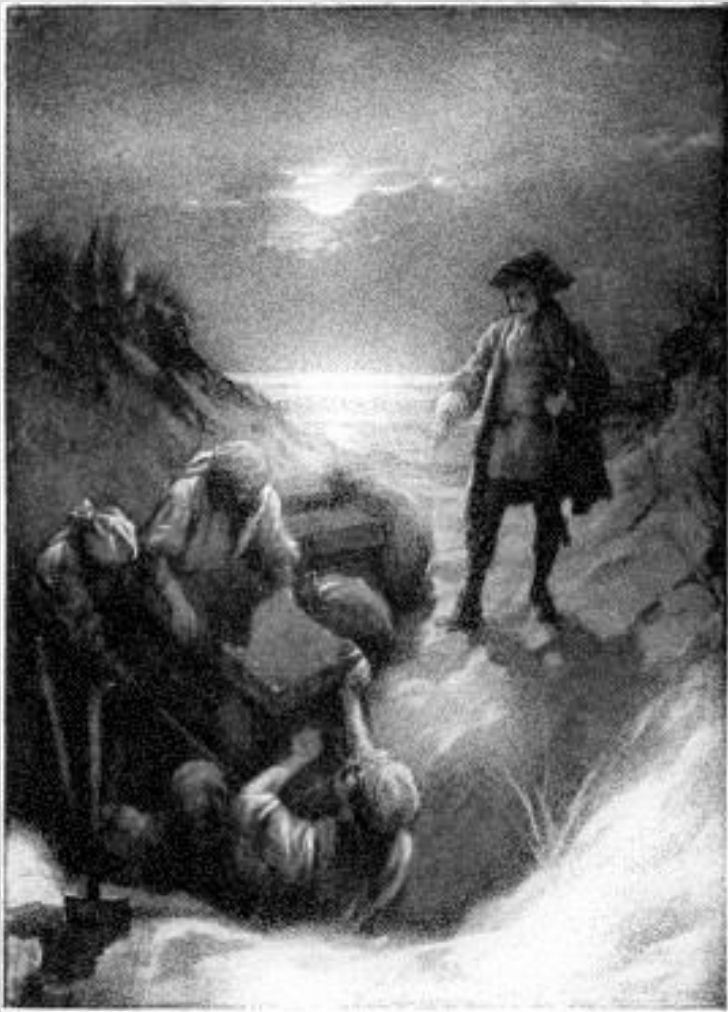
Nova Vaasans tell many more fanciful tales of sinister creatures stalking the prairie. Another spectre in the night is the *hestdrikker* ("horse-drinker"). These are rumored to stalk horse ranches at night, drawing their blood and leaving them ill and dying. No adventurers have reported reliable sightings of a *hestdrikker*, suggesting that these tales are perhaps no more than an ignorant reaction to mundane illnesses among the horses.

More creditable are stories of rampaging werewolves and wereboars striking farms and ranches, leaving carnage behind them. Fortunately, these lycanthrope attacks are rare. Swarms of dark fey called *jermlaines* are said to live in tunnel complexes within the bluffs or beneath the plateau. They sometimes emerge to hunt when their usual diet of snakes and rodents proves insufficient, but fear of the plains cats usually keeps them hidden.

Much feared are the *doedridere*, undead horsemen who silently roam the Vaasi Plateau. *Doedridere* are thought to be the restless corpses of men and horses who died of thirst or exposure on the plains. Tormented by their lonely, prolonged deaths, man and horse rise again, bonded forever in undeath, to wander those same plains forever. The *doedridere* crave living company, but they are surrounded by auras of such fearful melancholy that no living thing can long stand to be near them. It is best to avoid them, for those with whom they stop to converse will not be allowed to leave.

Nova Vaasans have many other tales of spectral or malicious horse creatures. *Niksiee* pose as beautiful horses, coaxing fools onto their backs after which they charge into the nearest river or lake and drown the unfortunate rider. *Skarphove* are a rumored breed of cunning, flesh-eating horses whose hooves have blade-sharp edges and whose manes and tails are like tangled wire. *Hestskærere* are goblin-like creatures that slit open the bellies of sleeping stallions and climb inside, driving the horse mad and directing it in all manner of mayhem.

Strangely, the Nova Vaasans tell few horror stories involving cat-like creatures. Perhaps the reality of the plains cats is frightening enough.



THE SEA OF SORROWS

West of the Core lies a mist-haunted body of water known as the Sea of Sorrows. Its dark waters are bitter, stormy, and cold. Dense fogs constantly shroud the surface, and terrifying nor'westers can materialize without warning. It is a rare day when lookouts can see more than a mile ahead, and none can truthfully say that they have seen the sun or stars while sailing on this haunted body of water.

The fogs of the Sea are extraordinarily thick and clammy. When a ship sails into a fog bank, time seems to stop. An unnerving silence sets in as the Mist deadens all sound and chills voyagers to the bone. Visibility is reduced to a few yards, forcing all sailing vessels to drift helplessly at the mercy of the winds and currents.

Efforts by mariners and explorers to chart the Sea of Sorrows are hampered by the fact that most of the sea is hidden by eternal fog banks. No two captains have been able to chart a consistent course to the lands that are rumored to exist there. One captain who holds a course through the Mists will reach the island of Dominia, while another (or even the same captain) will find himself running aground on the barren shores of Bluetspur when trying to plot the

same course. A ship that wanders into the Mists may end up anywhere.

A few scattered islands lie hidden in the Mists of the Sea of Sorrows. Few landings have been recorded on any of these isles, and it is extremely unusual to encounter the same island twice, no matter how long one searches. Most seafarers keep the coasts of the Core in sight when sailing this sea.

The Sea of Sorrows itself has no native human inhabitants, but mariners from Lamordia, Darkon, Dementlieu, and Mordent often brave its dangerous waters. Anglers, sealers, and traders ply the waves between those realms in small numbers. Martira Bay is home to a shipyard that builds some of the finest vessels of the Core, while Port-a-Lucine, Ludendorf, and Mordentshire serve as major ports.

Many of the scattered islands in the ocean are inhabited, however. The most prominent of those are **Blaustein** (a small island and village ruled by the charismatic noble Bluebeard), **Demise** (one of two sizable islands in the Lamordian island chain called the Finger, dominated by a seemingly impassable labyrinth made from white stone), **Dominia** (a tiny island, home to an insane asylum run by the world's leading expert on mental disorders), **Ghastria** (home to the village of East Riding, which merchants say is inhabited by roughly six-hundred subjects ruled by a benevolent marquis), the Isle of Agony (described under the domain of Lamordia), **Markovia**, the largest known island of the Sea of Sorrows, is a lush and seemingly uninhabited place which some scholars say was once part of the Core. Years ago, an attempt was made by Lamordians to settle Markovia, but the colonists vanished mysteriously.

SITHICUS

A place of thick, tangled woods and sharp, rugged mountains, Sithicus is a shattered elven kingdom, perhaps the only domain in the Land of Mists populated primarily by nonhumans. This withdrawn realm has little interest in the domains beyond its borders. Here, massive trees crowd out the sun, plunging the forest floor below into darkness. A tangle of mottled ivy and gray ferns hides the earth from sight, providing perfect cover for snakes, rodents, and insects. Fallen logs litter the forests, encrusted with florid, poisonous fungi. The Musarde River and its tributaries cut through the domain's gently rolling terrain. Rocky uplands peek out of the sweeping forest landscape here and there, providing roosts for great, russet eagles. The lowlands are filled with bubbling springs and shallow pools.

Most natives of Sithicus are xenophobic high elves who prove hostile to strangers, especially those of less than pure elven descent. Elves from other lands find Sithican elves grim and cold. They speak their own unique dialect of Elvish that is difficult for other elves to understand. The name Sithicus comes from this language, meaning "Land of Spectres."

Outsiders are treated with disdain or even hostility by the Sithican elves, who remain haughty and suspicious toward all other races and lands. Even humans who have dwelled in Sithicus for generations are considered second-class citizens. Ironically, these arrogant elves are ruled by a dwarf.

Azrael, a despot with unholy powers, rules Sithicus through sheer fear. Three years ago, the dwarf inherited control of the domain from the unholy knight who once ruled from Nedragaard Keep. Although the knight was undeniably harsh to the Sithican elves, he cared little for his role as their monarch. Azrael has proved a much more monstrous tyrant. The dwarf governs erratically, appearing periodically in elven settlements, demanding tribute and slaughtering any who displease him. No explanation or excuse is ever given. The Sithican elves hate Azrael passionately but fear his wrath even more. The dwarf king commands troops of undead soldiers and is widely rumored to be a supernatural creature himself. Speculation abounds regarding Azrael's relationship with Sithicus's Vistani, whom he seems to envy, fear, and hate.

In the years since an event known as the Hour of Screaming Shadows—when the death knight who once ruled this realm vanished and his castle collapsed in ruins—the most prominent geographic feature in Sithicus has been the Great Chasm, a massive canyon that nearly splits the domain in two. In the entire continent, only the Shadow Rift that cleaves the Core itself is a larger gulf in the land than this colossal rift. It gapes in the heart of Sithicus like an open, festering wound. The chasm runs for dozens of miles north to south, and is up to five miles wide in places. Sections are said to be bottomless, although few explorers have been foolish enough to test those claims. Fearsome creatures lurk within the Great Chasm, creeping forth when the sun sets. The elves of Sithicus say a larger shadowy presence seethes in this chasm, and they avoid it at all costs.

Out of the Great Chasm rises a black spire topped by the ruins of Nedragaard Keep, the vanished death knight's former abode, the cracked ruins now jut from the earth like blackened teeth. Ravens wheel

forlornly about the towering shards, and some elves swear they have glimpsed mournful shades drifting around the ruins at night. The stone bridge that once spanned the rift is gone, so reaching the ruins is all but impossible.

The climate in Sithicus is temperate but mild. Although the sun often blazes cruelly in the late summer months, the elves and other natives are sheltered by the cool shadows of the forest.

Travelers tend to stick to the main roads that lead to the domain's principal cities, Mal-Erek, Hroth, and Har-Thelen. These wind their way through narrow valleys or hug the edge of crumbling cliffs. This heavily forested domain lies in the southwest region of the Core, bordering Barovia and Kartakass to the east, Valachan to the west, and Verbrek and Invidia to the north. To the south, there is another vast forest, and then only the Mists. The west is dominated by the Giant's Cloak woods, which lie just south of Mal-Erek and the Little Arden River, and north of the Disappearing Mountains. The woods are named for a stone giant and his mostly Vistani allies who utilized the thick forest to hide from King Azrael's soldiers and other enemies. The eastern side is filled by an even larger forest, the sprawling, tangled Fumewood.

Har-Thelen is largely accepted as the capital of Sithicus, though it is merely a village of five-hundred souls, almost all elves. Trade along the Musarde River and the trade road known as the Merchant's Slash make this community the most tolerant of outsiders, though that isn't saying much. Hroth is larger than Har-Thelen, home to nearly a thousand residents, but is far less centrally located or open to visitors. Hroth lies on the edge of a boggy land near the Disappearing Mountains, one of two southern mountain ranges that vanish into the Mists as the stretch to the South (the other is the Misttop Mountains). Terrible things are rumored to crawl and slither out of the fens near Hroth. Mal-Erek has just under five-hundred inhabitants, is the most xenophobic of the elven villages. The Library of Mal-Erek here is a place of rotted, forgotten lore and ruined secrets.

Azrael has avoided establishing a capital, moving through his kingdom in a chariot constructed of the bones and teeth of his enemies, but the rapidly expanding internment camp called Sorrow has become the domain's de facto political center. The camp's name is derived from the sobriquet the elves gave to Azrael—the Sorrow of Sithicus. The camp houses more than one-hundred of the domain's most ethical and honorable denizens, all considered

subversives or potential threats to Azrael's despotic government. The camp's buildings are constructed of stone mined from the nearby Misttop Mountains by the ever-growing prison population. Any breach of the king's law can land a citizen in Sorrow, while visitors to the domain are frequently pressed into service as camp guards. Visitors who refuse the honor of joining Azrael's army find themselves among the prisoners, unless they can pay a substantial bribe for their freedom. The salt mines of Veldrava, which bore deep into the Misttop Mountains not far from Sorrow, may be an equally miserable prison. Sinister whispers are said to murmur from within these pits' corrosive depths.

The other two settlements of note are of great interest to outsiders. One is Iron Warden, which is little more than a trading post up the Endless River from Har-Thelen. It is a frequent stop for merchants traveling through the domain and explorers planning to investigate the Great Chasm, and outsiders feel far less unwelcome there. The other noteworthy community isn't within Sithicus, but just over its border. The small village of Yurt and its four hundred inhabitants lie within the borders of Kartakass, but many travelers find it worthwhile to stay here instead of within Sithicus. In fact, the borders of three domains intersect here—the third is Barovia—giving this welcoming village a great deal of merchant traffic.

Though they comprise an overwhelming majority, elves are far from the only inhabitants of this realm. Over the years, human merchants and artisans from the nearby domain of Kartakass have settled in Sithicus, often marrying into elven houses of low station, especially in Har-Thelen. Many half-elf children fathered by these Kartakan merchants are now growing to maturity. A small group of Vistani, the Wanderers, has lived here at various times.

The Guilt of Sithicus

Any sentient being who passes through the borders of Sithicus and enters this dismal realm is afflicted by its atmosphere of crippling guilt. Every character who enters Sithicus gains the following Flaw while there: "I am haunted by the guilt of my worst misdeeds, which I can't forget no matter what I do."

In addition, when a character first enters Sithicus, and every time they finish a long rest in the domain, they must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. If they fail, they are overwhelmed by their own guilt until the next time they finish a long rest, reducing their walking speed by 5 feet and giving them disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks due to their feelings of apathy and unworthiness. Spells seem useless to combat this effect, but rumors

report that pieces of a broken relic tied to the previous darklord can loosen the guilt's effects.

As a result of this effect, however, there is one advantage, at least for spellcasters. When a spellcaster finishes a long rest in Sithicus, the following 5th-level spell is added to the spell list of any spellcasting classes in which they have levels at that time, and they treat it as any other spell on the spell list of that class from that point on. Wizards of 9th level or higher may scribe the spell in their spellbooks at any time after that, for the usual cost in gold and time.

Guilt Lash

5th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 20 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 minute

You reach into the mind of humanoid creature within range and force it to relive the moments of its life it feels guiltiest about. The target must make a Charisma saving throw. If they fail, until this effect ends, they reduce their speed by half, and they have disadvantage on all attack rolls, Wisdom and Charisma saving throws, and Wisdom and Charisma ability checks.

At the end of each of the target's turns, it must make another Charisma saving throw. After failing three of these saving throws, these guilt effects last for the duration, and the creature stops making these saves. After succeeding on three of these saving throws, the creature snaps out of its guilt-driven flashbacks, and the spell ends.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 8th level or higher, the duration increases to 10 minutes.

In addition, there are several communities of even more xenophobic natives hidden deep in the domain's forests—some are colonies of dark-minded wood elves, and others are villages of a violent and unique halfling subrace, dwelling in the Fumewood and the Iron Hills of the northeast. These halflings usually kill outsiders on sight. The very existence of these halflings is considered just a legend by most Sithicans, and the regions where they live are considered haunted by the elves, who avoid them as fearfully as they shun the Great Chasm.

No drow elves or dusk elves are native to Sithicus.

To natives of Sithicus, the domain's night sky is a reminder of a distant homeland they long for, yet can only remember distantly.

The sky is apparently moonless, filled with cold pinpoints of light. These stars resemble constellations of their fabled home, but with differences. The constellation representing their ancestors' greatest god of good, an aspect of Bahamut, has been torn asunder, its stars scattered throughout the sky. The stars in the "five-headed dragon" constellation representing an aspect of

Tiamat shine brighter than any others. Stars are dim in constellations believed to depict other gods.

Although it is not easily seen, Sithicus actually does have a single dark moon in its curious sky. Named Nuitari, this orb is black and can only be seen by characters of evil alignment. These characters can see by its dark light about as well as normal humans can in moonlight. Characters of other alignments can "see" the black moon only by observing which stars wink out in the sky when it passes before them.

Cycles of the Black Moon

Nuitari, the black moon of Sithicus, becomes full every eight days. When the characters enter Sithicus, roll 1d8 on the Phases of Nuitari table below to determine the phase of the moon, since its phases affect arcane magic in Sithicus. Nuitari remains in each phase for twenty-four hours—one day and one night.

The phase of the moon sometimes grants certain spellcasters a pool of energy to spend to empower their spells, represented by High Sorcery Points. Like the sorcery points of sorcerers, High Sorcery Points can be spent to empower certain spells. The number of High Sorcery Points a character can gain is determined by the Phases of Nuitari table.

These effects depend greatly on alignment. Characters who are neither good-aligned nor evil-aligned are considered neutral for purposes of gaining High Sorcery Points. Only bards, sorcerers, warlocks, wizards, and members of other classes who choose their spells from the wizard's spell list (such as arcane tricksters and eldritch knights) can gain High Sorcery Points. On the Phases of Nuitari Table, characters of these classes are referred to as "arcane casters." Only wizards and those who draw their spells from the wizard's spell list (such as arcane tricksters and eldritch knights) gain the full amount of High Sorcery Points listed, while members of other classes gain 1 less than the listed amount (this often means they will gain none). High Sorcery Points are gained when a qualified spellcaster finishes a long rest during a phase of the moon that grants them, at which point they gain the amount listed for that phase.

If you are a member of a class that gains High Sorcery points, you can expend 1 High Sorcery Point to do any one of the following when you cast a spell:

- If the spell causes one or more targets to make a saving throw, spend 1 High Sorcery Point to roll a d4 and cause one of the targets to subtract the number rolled from their saving throw against the spell.
- When you cast a spell that requires an attack roll, spend 1 High Sorcery Point to roll a d4 and add the number rolled to one attack roll with that spell.
- When you cast a spell that inflicts damage, spend 1 High Sorcery Point to add 1d4 plus your proficiency bonus to one damage roll of that spell.

Members of certain classes can spend High Sorcery Points in other more specific ways, as follows:

Sorcerer. Sorcerers can spend High Sorcery Points to add a metamagic option to a spell, just as if they were normal sorcery points. However, High Sorcery Points cannot be used to create spell slots.

Warlock. When a warlock casts a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action, they can spend 1 High Sorcery Point to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

Wizard. Wizards can spend High Sorcery Points to add one of the following listed metamagic options from the sorcerer class description to a spell, just as if they were a sorcerer spending sorcery points: Distant Spell, Extended Spell, or Subtle Spell.

In addition, whenever a wizard spends a High Sorcery Point to modify certain kind of spell, they also gain temporary hit points equal to 1d4 plus their Intelligence modifier. If the spell already grants them temporary hit points, instead increase the number of temporary hit points gained by 1d4. The type of spell that triggers this effect depends on the wizard's alignment: If they are good-aligned, it is when they cast an abjuration spell. If they are evil-aligned, it is when they cast a necromancy spell. If they are neither good nor evil in alignment, it is when they cast a transmutation spell.

PHASES OF NUITARI

d8 Roll	Phase of the Black Moon	High Sorcery Points Gained at the End of a Long Rest
1	New moon	1 for good-aligned arcane casters*
2	Waxing crescent moon	None
3	Waxing half moon	1 for evil-aligned arcane casters*; 1 for neutral** arcane casters*
4	Waxing gibbous moon	2 for evil-aligned arcane casters*
5	Full moon	3 for evil-aligned arcane casters*
6	Waning gibbous moon	2 for evil-aligned arcane casters*
7	Waning half moon	1 for evil-aligned arcane casters*; 1 for neutral** arcane casters*
8	Waning crescent	None

*=Classes that draw spells from the wizard's spell list gain the full amount listed; other classes gain 1 fewer (this may reduce the number gained to zero)

**=For purposes of High Sorcery Points, "neutral" arcane casters are any casters who are neither good-aligned nor evil-aligned

Elves native to these lands—both high elves and the rarer wood elves—have a general air of apathy about them. All have a silvery tinge to their hair—whether tempered with golden blond, adding a metallic sheen to darker hues, or simply a shining silver-platinum. Their eyes tend towards various shades of amber. Characters familiar with high elves will recognize their clothing as similar to that favored by elves of past ages, but their attire is drab in color and their armor dented and unpolished. Instead of riding proudly into battle on the backs of

griffons or hippogriffs, their warriors use horned stag beetles as mounts. Sithican elves find neither joy nor beauty in the tangled forests and boulder-choked streams of their home. Their songs are mournful dirges, accompanied by low-pitched, droning instruments that evoke a sense of loss.

Sithican elves believe that their culture will survive, as it has done for centuries, no matter what troubles befall it. The domain's wicked monarchs may rise and fall, the petty problems of other realms may come and go, but Sithicus itself will endure. Denial tinges the elves' cold arrogance; all around, the wonders of their culture are crumbling. They cling to their traditions dourly, draining them of meaning and suffocating their society for reasons they can no longer remember.

Despite the various ways in which the Sithican elves fall short of the grace for which others of their race are renowned, they still look down on other races and, to a lesser degree, on elves who

are not of their particular stock. In many subtle ways, they make non-elf characters feel unwelcome in Sithicus. Such characters are overcharged for supplies, told that no rooms are available at the inns even though there are obvious vacancies, and served last at taverns.

Everywhere they go, non-elf heroes receive rude stares. Small children throw mud at them, and residents coincidentally choose to empty slop buckets into the street just as they pass by. The rare elf who actually smiles

at the heroes or extends them a helping hand seems a godsend beside the rest. This attitude reflects the treatment elves of Sithicus get when they leave their own domain. In most other domains of the Core, it is the nonhumans who are treated with contempt, if not fear.

A small, but significant, Vistani population persists in Sithicus. These Vistani are called the Wanderers, and they are very few in number. Having fled other realms after repeated tragedy, they nearly met their end here, betrayed by one of their own. All but a handful were murdered, and their betrayer has never been brought to justice.

A subrace of halflings unknown on most worlds is native here as well. In some worlds they would be called kender, but their time in this place of horror has changed them completely, and they call themselves the afflicted ones. In their lost homeland, they were known for friendliness, fearless joy, and wanderlust, but these descendants are violent and

bitter. They have the reputation of being some of the most violent and xenophobic people of the Core. It is said that most of their race who dwelled in this lands were exterminated by the experiments of the former darklord, who turned them into vampires or worse. The few who survived now live in the Fumewood, and others who

know their reputation avoid the areas they claim. Visitors to the domain can recognize the boundaries of the afflicted ones' territory

by the rotting heads that are spiked to the trees at its edges; they thus turn trespassers into "No Trespassing" signs. Secretly, they even have their own town, Kendralind, hidden among the



gnarled trees of the Fumewood.

The Afflicted Ones

This subrace of halfling is described more fully in the Races chapter, including rules for player characters.

Reluctantly and gradually, contact between the Sithican elves and denizens of other lands has increased. Although still suspicious and insular, Sithicans have reaped the benefits of expanding trade with neighboring domains, particularly Kartakass, source of the human tradesmen who dwell in many settlements, especially Har-Thelen. Merchants are eager to acquire the rare vegetables, spirits, hardwoods, and handicrafts the elves produce. Tiny settlements of human traders and laborers have begun to appear in Sithican territory outside the main elven settlements, which angers the more isolationist noble houses. Azrael does not discourage such economic colonialism, however, as it benefits his own coffers.

Elegant architecture was once prized by the elves of Sithicus, but today the domain's settlements are crumbling. The wondrous elven wood and crystal masonries are neglected and covered with ivy. Twisting towers of living wood are blighted with insect galls and rot, and the gardens stand choked with thistles and brambles. Roads that once glittered like an evening sky are dull and crumbling. The arcane libraries slowly rot under an assault of mildew and silverfish, yet the elven wizards seem oblivious. Temples to forgotten gods are charred and blasted as if from lightning, the holy names stricken.

The presence of the hated Azrael and his undead soldiers aside, the Sithican elves adhere to a traditional loose elven aristocracy. Without a true elven monarch to unite them, however, relationships between settlements and noble houses can become tense and bitter. There are houses for each task or role in elven society, though some are much more prestigious and powerful than others. The noble, ranger, and wizard houses are particularly prominent. Since the elves value their freedom above all else, laws are few and far between. Protecting the resources of the forest and the privacy of elven settlements are the primary priorities. Sithican militias are small but well-trained and diversified, with fighters, rangers, and wizards in their ranks.

Although each of the cities of Sithicus has its own caste of elf nobles—each headed by a hereditary ruler known as a Lord Speaker—all are forced to acknowledge the rulership of the brutish King Azrael, just as they acknowledged his predecessor against their will. They see him only rarely, but all fear his wrath, though they do not cringe at the

mention of his name as they did for the former Darklord. Discourtesy to the king is generally considered a death sentence. The laws made by the Lord Speakers are few, and typical of what one would expect to find in any elven community.

Mason, the Lord Speaker of Har-Thelen, is an elven arcane trickster who appears to be a bit more ambitious and upbeat than other Sithican elves. He continues to bully and manipulate the artisans of his city to produce decent goods that can be traded with Kartakass, and he has even pressed stonemasons into the city's service so that it may be repaired and maintained. Mason is fighting an uphill battle, though, and rumors have it that his activity is annoying the tyrant Azrael. The dwarf dictator prefers the elves to be docile, or at least direct all their efforts to serving him.

In recent years, however, resistance against King Azrael's tyranny has grown among the elves, with the village of Mal-Erek as the center of the unrest. The king's soldiers still maintain order in all the elvish cities, but more and more suffer from hit and run attacks by rebels. In fact, the only thing preventing a wider revolt is the infighting between the three major elven enclaves, each of which sees its nobles as the true heirs to the kingly line of their lost homeland.

The domain of Sithicus originally formed around the infamous death knight Lord Soth in 720 BC. For thirty-two years, the Knight of Black Rose ruled over the domain with cold indifference. While residing on the world of Krynn, the death knight had clung fiercely to his infamous history, but Sithicus was a place that threatened to rob Soth of his memories. He left much of the domain's day-to-day rule to his seneschal—the murderous dwarf Azrael Dak—and lost himself in magical reverie through the use of *memory mirrors*, magical creations that contained fragments of Soth's past.

The domain itself has changed, perhaps to fit its new darklord, whoever it may be. As Soth's prison, Sithicus perverted history and twisted memories. The new Sithicus, however, is place where people can't forget their misdeeds, Sithicans dwell upon their sins and flaws, no matter how minor, and in doing so come to expect everyone to share their failings and imperfections. Paranoia and paralyzing distrust are the hallmarks of the current Sithican psyche. Even visitors to the domain are afflicted by the "Guilt of Sithicus."

This effect and the manipulations of some shadowy force drive the weak-minded of this domain to subvert and destroy all nobility they find, snuffing

out whatever sparks of good burn in their neighbors' souls. More than a few of the nobler denizens of the domain have been tricked into falling afoul of King Azrael's secret police, the Politskrae. These unlucky souls quickly find themselves imprisoned in the squalid internment camp known as Sorrow.

Lord Soth and the Blessed Knight

A mysterious warrior lives in the ruins of Nedragaard Keep. Whenever he wishes to leave the ruins, a ghostly bridge forms across the Great Chasm for him to ride across. Rumors call this noble figure the Blessed Knight, as he wanders the domain doing good works and protecting innocents. In fact, he is a supernatural double of the domain's former darklord, Lord Soth. On his homeworld of Krynn, Soth was a high-ranking member of a sacred order of knights, the Knights of the Rose, but he murdered his wife in order to marry a beautiful elven maid. He was given the chance to expiate his sin by saving millions of lives. He was charged warning a powerful Kingpriest of Paladine whose hubris was about to inflict a terrible Cataclysm on his homeworld of Krynn, but on the way he was dissuaded by elven priestesses, who caused him to believe his new wife had been unfaithful. He rode back to his castle, which burned down in the Cataclysm. For his failure, he was cursed to become a death knight.

Soth used the *memory mirrors* that lined his throne room to relive his life, altering the events he saw to imagine what he would have done differently. In the process, he formed a nobler version of himself within the mirrors. When the cursed Soth left the domain and his castle was destroyed in the Hour of Screaming Shadows, the *memory mirrors* shattered, and this noble image of the Solamnic Knight Lord Loren Soth was set free with a life of his own.

The presence of the Blessed Knight in Sithicus is like a dagger through the black heat of the darkness that rules this domain. For those who learn the Blessed Knight's true nature, his existence is a stern rebuke to the excuses they use to justify their worst deeds. He is, after all, a manifestation of the redemption that even a monster like Soth might have found, had he been willing to turn away from his sins and accept the possibility of mercy.

Once or twice, the Blessed Knight has approached adventurers in Sithicus, entreating them for aid. He has offered them when he claims is a shard of the *memory mirror* that created him, and asked for assistance in locating the other *memory mirror* shards scattered in the Hour of Screaming Shadows. He told both groups that beyond the shard he possesses, five more can be found in Nedragaard Keep, three lie within the Great Chasm, and three more were scattered to various locations in Sithicus. One group dismissed his request as trouble they didn't need, but the other heard him out... until he explained that his motivation in assembling the shards was his belief that the re-assembled memory mirror could permanently destroy the darklord of Sithicus. Having been around enough to know that a darklord would not permit adventurers to craft such a doom unimpeded, they cited

having an urgent quest of their own and politely declined. The Blessed Knight still seeks adventurers...

Memory Mirror

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Once the indulgence of the dreaded death knight Lord Soth during his time as a darklord, this 6-foot-long by 3-foot-wide mirror was shattered into twelve fragments. While the bulk of the mirror's power lies in a single central piece held by the Blessed Knight (who is attuned to this *key memory mirror shard*), the other shards serve to empower the key shard and unlock its greater abilities. Each *memory mirror shard* reflects images of a character's past innocence when they look into it for more than a few seconds. The *key memory mirror shard* held by the Blessed Knight reflects not only the past, but shows each person who looks into it an image of the most idealized version of themselves that they could be in the present. This *key memory mirror shard* glows with soft white radiance when within 100 feet of another piece, and Mirror Shards held touching it bond with it seamlessly.

Random Properties. Each of the memory mirror shards has 1 random minor beneficial property.

The *key memory mirror shard* held by the Blessed Knight has the following random properties:

- 1 minor beneficial property
- 1 major beneficial property

When fully assembled, the complete *memory mirror* has the following random properties:

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 2 major beneficial properties

Properties of each Memory Mirror Shard. If you attune to one of the twelve *memory mirror shards* that is in your possession, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on all Wisdom saving throws against being charmed or frightened, or against having your emotions or moods affected by magic (including the Guilt of Sithicus effect described in this section).
- Whether you are attuned or not, when you finish a long rest while carrying this item, you are unaffected by any Flaws you may have dealing with guilt or regret.
- Each *memory mirror shard* melds seamlessly to the *key memory mirror shard* if held against it, regardless of whether anyone is attuned to either item. Attunement to the *memory mirror shard* ends when it melds with the *key memory mirror shard*.

Properties of the Key Memory Mirror Shard held by the Blessed Knight. The Blessed Knight is attuned to the *key memory mirror shard*. If at some point you are attuned to it instead of him, you gain the same benefits as he does:

- You have advantage on all Wisdom saving throws against being charmed or frightened, or against having your emotions or moods affected by magic.
- You are immune to the Guilt of Sithicus effect and the *guilt lash* spell (both described in this section).
- You gain an additional Ideal: "I strive to be the best possible version of myself."

- When you finish a long rest, any Flaws you may have dealing with guilt or regret are permanently removed. (If this means you have no Flaws, consult with your DM about adding a new Flaw.)
- Anyone looking into the *key memory mirror shard*, whether it is attuned or not, gains immunity to the Guilt of Sithicus effect described in this section and to any other guilt-based magical effects (such as the *guilt lash* spell, also described in this section) for a number of weeks equal to 1 plus the number of *memory mirror shards* to which the *key memory mirror shard* is melded.
- Each *memory mirror shard* melds seamlessly to the *key memory mirror shard* if held against it, regardless of whether anyone is attuned to either item. Any attunement to that *memory mirror shard* ends when it is melded, but you remain attuned to the *key memory mirror shard* no matter how many other shards to which it bonds.
- Whether it is attuned or not, the *key memory mirror shard* glows with white light when within 100 feet of another Mirror Shard.
- If the *key memory mirror shard* is melded to all of the eleven other *mirror shards*, it transforms into the complete *memory mirror*, as if it had never been broken. If you are attuned to the *key memory mirror shard* when this happens, you are automatically attuned to the complete *memory mirror* it becomes.

Properties of the complete Memory Mirror when fully assembled. Your alignment changes to lawful good, and you gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to the charmed and frightened conditions.
- You have advantage on all saving throws against having your emotions or moods affected by magic.
- You are immune to the Guilt of Sithicus effect and the *guilt lash* spell (both described in this section).
- You gain an additional Ideal: "I strive to be the best possible version of myself, and I am succeeding."
- When you finish a long rest, any Flaws you may have dealing with guilt or regret are permanently removed. (If this means you have no Flaws, consult with your DM about adding a new Flaw.)
- Anyone looking into the *memory mirror*, whether it is attuned or not, gains permanent immunity to the Guilt of Sithicus effect described in this section. Until the next time they leave Sithicus, they are also immune to any other guilt-based magical effects (such as the *guilt lash* spell, also described in this section).
- Whether the *memory mirror* is attuned or not, while it is within Sithicus, if a darklord looks into it, that darklord sees their own true nature reflected back at them. As a result, for 1 hour, that darklord is both frightened of the *memory mirror* and poisoned, and cannot regain hit points or change their form (via effects such as *polymorph* spells, the *shapechange* spell, or any other effect that transforms them into something else). This effect ignores immunities. If the darklord of Sithicus is reduced to 0 hit points while

under this effect, this destroys that darklord permanently.

- If a darklord under the effect of the *memory mirror* is destroyed, you can immediately end your attunement to this artifact, causing it to cast the *gate* spell. The *gate* remains open for 1 minute. It leads to a relatively peaceful area in any one of the Domains of Dread you choose (or, if the DM chooses to permit it, this *gate* may instead allow you to travel out of Ravenloft entirely, and into an alternate plane of your choice).



TEPEST

Tepest is a land of ancient forests nestled in jagged, rocky hills of the Timori Pass, directly south of Keening and Darkon. East Timori Road (which used to cross the mountains of the Core, but now dead-ends at the Shadow Rift) bisects Tepest from east to west. Near the center of the domain, the road hugs the southern shore of Lake Kronov. Most of the land is between 500 and 800 feet above the level of the Sea of Sorrows, but a single peak rises to nearly 1,500 feet in the north.

Winters and summers in this land are short and mild, with the spring season separating the two by weeks of uninterrupted rain. Autumn comes early in Tepest and is slow to relinquish itself to winter. The slow descent into winter allows crops the time needed to ripen. The long fall season is also marked by unpredictable weather, particularly along the Blackmist River, south of Lake Kronov. The lake's clear waters never freeze completely, though snow and ice cling to the surrounding peaks more than half the year.

Here, the clash of warm winds from the Nova Vaasan plains and cold air streaming down from the Balinoks where the Shadow Rift narrows can cause violent storms to explode upon the hillsides with little or no notice. This same clash of temperatures causes the eternally overcast skies.

While Tepest looks to most outsiders like one big forest that features minor breakpoints marked by impassible gorges and rivers, the Tepestani see their land as containing many different forests.

Tepest has three important settlements, Viktal, Briggdarrow, and Kellee, each home to about three thousand people. Briggdarrow and Viktal are located on the southern shores of Lake Kronov. This large, clear mountain lake is either fed by or feeds all the whitewater rivers that rush through Tepest. The Tepestani claim the lake is home to a monster they name the Avanc. Kellee is about twenty-five miles east from the other two, on the Timori Road.

In addition to the human settlements, Tepest is home to an indeterminable number of goblin tribes. The humanoids lair in caves in the mountains and hills of the domain, preying on travelers and shepherds. One of the major risks of traveling off the main road through Tepest is the many traps set in the woods by the goblin tribes. They are built either to trap game or to defend the goblins' homes from attack. The goblins, in turn, are preyed upon by horrid hags who also make their homes here.

The Strange Flora of Tepest

Three noteworthy types of plants grow only in the hills of Tepest: the cloudberry, fairy stools, and Wichtingourds (also called witching gourds).

*Cloudberry*s grow on low, prickly bushes found in small patches throughout Tepest. Difficult to cultivate, the only successfully farmed plantings thrive on the steep hillsides along the Blackmist River, a region legendary for the severe storms and unpredictable windblasts that each year blow three or four villagers off the steep slopes and into the icy, fast flowing river far below. The tiny hamlet of Linde, which controls the only concentrated cloudberry farms, is steadily gaining fame for cloudberry wine, a fruity vintage popular with nobles of Nova Vaasa. Most of the community's output is sold to Vaasan merchants, as production is limited by the many dangers involved in harvesting them in the fall.

Fairy stools are small, red-speckled, tan mushrooms that grow quickly in circles, lines or spiral patterns when exposed to arcane magic. The Tepestani are convinced that the mushrooms only grow where fey have practiced their corrupt spellcasting, but experiments by wizards have indicated that a single fairy stool multiplies and sprouts into dozens within mere hours of exposure to any magic from the conjuration, divination, enchantment and transmutation schools. The mushrooms grow in spiral or circular patterns in response to spells which cover an area, they form into straight lines along the path made by a precision spell such as *magic missile*, and they combine those two general growth patterns when spells affect an area far away from the caster.

The Tepestani also believe the mushrooms grow where fey have danced or traveled, springing from the ground in order to give them places to rest. The Inquisition looks for the presence of fairy stools near homes to determine who in communities may be consorting with the fey. They also use shallow trays containing fairy stools as slow, inaccurate detect magic devices, passing them back and forth across a prone subject. If more fairy stools sprout in the tray, the subject is assumed to be either under the sway of the fey, an ally of the fey, or perhaps even a fey himself.

Wichtingourds are small gourds filled with seeds that mature in early fall. They grow throughout Tepest's forests, and the Tepestani believe that they also appear where the fey have been. However, the Inquisition does not use them as "fey detectors." Instead, the common folk turn the wichtingourds to practical purposes. They dry them out and use them as rattles — highly effective ones at that, as I witnessed several crying children be soothed to sleep with but a few shakes of these "witching gourd" rattles. The people also believe that the rattles can offer protection from fey; if a gourd is broken open and its seeds scattered, any fey who comes upon them must stop and count all the seeds.

Tepest's human populace is united only by racial stock, their worship of Belenus and related entities, and their fear of the fairy creatures they believe hide

under every rock and in every brook. Each village is ruled in its own fashion, so assuming that what is acceptable in one village may also be acceptable in the other can prove dangerous.

These are a poor folk, who live in small whitewashed cottages with thatched roofs. As a matter of pride, they carefully adorn the cottage walls with intricate floral patterns, and in the summer the window boxes overflow with blossoms. Viktalianians fish for sturgeon on the lake or herd goats and sheep. The lead goat in every herd wears a bell, and as the herders guide their animals home at dusk, haunting clangs echo across the valley. The wood in this domain burns poorly, causing lots of smoke; hence, dried animal dung often fuels Viktalian fires.

Tepestandi are fair of skin, with freckles. Their hair colors range from auburn to shades of crimson or orange.. Their clothing is simple, consisting of cotton blouses and skirts for the women, and loose-fitting shirts and trousers for the men. Both sexes wear boots and heavy furs in winter, though adults and children alike tend to go barefoot as soon as the weather turns warm. Tepestandi are an extremely superstitious lot. They believe the night is haunted by "little beasties" who kidnap small children.

There was a time when the Tepestandi humans shut their doors tight against these creatures, huddling around their hearths in fear. However, that began to change some years ago. During the cataclysm called the Grand Conjunction, the stars shifted in the heavens, and two nations to the west and south of Tepestandi simply ceased to exist, replaced by an immense canyon filled with dark, swirling Mists, known only as the Shadow Rift. The Tepestandi could think of only one explanation for what had happened: magic. The hags and "little beasties" of the night must have wrought evil spells that had destroyed entire nations. Fearful that the same might happen to them, the Tepestandi declared war on the creatures of the night - and all who consorted with them.

Wyan, an elderly priest of Belenus in Viktal, spearheads the crusade against the "little beasties". Wyan declared war on the fey and established the Inquisition of Belenus to drive out the foul spirits of the forest before they could seduce more souls or take more lives. This crusade has managed to destroy some of the land's more foolish hags, but several innocent bystanders have also been targeted. More than one unfortunate traveler was declared a "night-creature" and slain. Elves, half-elves and especially halflings were certain to draw the

attention of the Inquisition — and they were nearly as certain to be burned at the stake as fey. The same was true of wizards and sorcerers. No fewer than 23 innocent men and women were burned alive for being "fey" or for "consorting with fey" during the Inquisition's first ten years. Wyan and his Inquisition are well-meaning, but they are becoming increasingly overzealous. These crusaders have become something of a militia in Tepestandi.

Scattered throughout the countryside, either on the edge of the pastures where Tepestandi run their sheep during the day or deep within the most overgrown parts of the forest, stand austere single or two-story stone structures. Decaying and overgrown, these structures once served as keeps for the axelords who ruled Tepestandi in ancient times, and this type of architecture died with them. The Tepestandi studiously avoid these buildings — to the point of pretending they don't even see those that stand near their sheep pastures — and the remoter ones have become lairs for the more powerful of the goblin clans or for fey.

Near several of these structures can be found ancient standing stones, the tallest of which stand over six feet in height. They all radiate faint magic of the abjuration school. At one time, the stones all featured magical runes of great power, but they are all defaced by crude representations of humanoids and game animals and are now indecipherable. Tepestandi bards claim that the stones once ensured the blessings of the gods upon the homes of the axelords, but they lost their magical power when the fey brought ruin to the land some 500 years ago.

Goblins are very common in this domain. Fortunately, the voracious appetite of some other malevolent force in the woods keeps their numbers in check. Unfortunately, reports seem to indicate this force—whatever it is—also hungers for humanoid flesh. In addition, those who travel southwest of Lake Kronov will enter the dire forest of Blackroot, an evil treant with particularly terrible powers.

Tepestandi history begins with their creation myth. They believe that the world moves through these cycles as ages on a grand scale, and that the rise of humanity was the summer of the world—and that the Grand Conjunction was the onset of autumn. They believe that their gods created the world one season at a time, starting with Spring, and populated each season with its own beings. In Spring, the gods created the Children of Spring — the fey. These immortal nature spirits neither knew nor experienced death, so to this day they have no

respect for life or death. Mortal men and women and natural animals were created in the Summer, twisted and fallen creatures such as goblins and lycanthropes were created in the Autumn, and evil gods created undead and elementals in the Winter.

An interesting note about the Tepestani is that, unlike many other peoples of the Domains of Dread, they do not worry much about the undead; they tend to be of the opinion that if the undead are left alone, they won't trouble the living—of course, like Lamordia, this domain is far less troubled by undead than many others.

The most visible and most powerful religious institution in Tepest is Belenus's Inquisition. Overall, this group of militant priests and lay people has good intentions. The Inquisition is trying to do what it genuinely believes to be Belenus's will:

saving the world by
destroying the fey
attempting to
corrupt and
ultimately
destroy it.



However, these priests and lay people are operating from a foundation of ignorance, while growing more confident in their scant knowledge. They believe that everything related to fey is inherently corrupting, therefore studying the fey can only corrupt the would-be scholar. They distrust direct evidence and rely instead upon their own suppositions, existing folklore and forced confessions.

A temporary cessation of the Inquisition's zealotry brought about by a proven false accusation (and deep soul-searching on Wyan's part over his culpability in the death of that innocent) was ended by the death of the wife of the leader of Kellee at the end of a shapechanging creature. This leader, a Falkovnian transplant named Gerald Ferrier, had kept his town insulated from the feverish violence and superstition of the Inquisitors, but the death of his wife has made him less resistant. Kellee still offers limited protection to outsiders in Tepest—enough that the town actually has some trade with foreigners from outside the domain—and he organizes and equips a professional volunteer militia who act to protect the people from goblins rather than being motivated by a religious crusade.

Isolated as it is, Tepest has never enjoyed extensive contact with other domains. The East Timor Road and South Dnar River, both leading into Nova Vaasa, are Tepest's only conduits to the outside world. The evil reputation of the domain's forests is enough to dissuade travelers even from a broad highway like the East Timor. The recent hysteria that has gripped Tepest further discourages the few outsiders interested in political or economic ties with the domain. Nonetheless, limited trade persists with settlements in northern Nova Vaasa.

Spellcasters in Tepest and the Inquisition

The native Tepestani religion is the worship of the Celtic pantheon (as described in the *Player's Handbook* appendix), with a particular emphasis on Belenus as the leader of the gods, with the others merely his servants. In this domain, Belenus grants the Rulership domain (described in the Cleric section of the Classes chapter). Clerics and paladins worshipping Belenus or other non-evil gods of his pantheon are the only spellcasters beyond suspicion in Tepest. All others may be witches, diabolists, or agents of the hated fey. As such, they may be accused by common people or brought to the attention of the powerful Inquisition.

Both common Tepestani and priests believe that magic and nature are intertwined in what they call *the Weave*. They consider all magic as originating with this Weave, and, like nature, magic is uncontrollable and inherently dangerous. Only when priests use magic can it be considered safe for mortals, as the gods have tempered it.

Other kinds of magic are sources of temptation that will invariably lead those who use it down the path of evil. Generally, Tepestani associate beings with inherent magical powers with the fey, while they consider wizards and others who use books, scrolls, and ancient items to prepare spells as merely misguided fools, tampering with forces that may ultimately consume them. They assume that anyone who can cast magic without spellbooks or through other unusual methods must somehow be in league with the fey (though in the case of many warlocks, they are correct). Inquisitors have the authority to place anyone suspected of such things on trial for witchcraft. Trials begin when an Inquisitor uncovers some bit of information (often gossip) that indicates someone is in league with the fey. If the inquisitor deems the claim credible (purely a judgment call), they have the accused rounded up and imprisoned in preparation for trial. The Inquisitor then collects evidence against the accused. Evidence ranges from anomalies that the Inquisitor observes in areas where the accused would spend a lot of their time — such as abundance of fairy stools — to tales regarding the accused from every wagging tongue in town. Meanwhile, the accused is pressured to confess to their “crimes,” which often involves torture, but the tastes of individual Inquisitors differ. Confessions are drawn so the Inquisition can expand its knowledge base of the methods of the fey and their servants.

After this phase, the Inquisitor takes all such findings and the full text of any confession to the leader of the Inquisition, the elder priest of Belenus called Wyan of Viktal, who decides whether the suspect will be tried or set free. Inquisitors often reference *Malleus Umbricum* (or “Hammer of Shades”), Wyan’s book on battling the fey. It is not an especially accurate work, and Dr. Van Richten had intended to pen a more correct text on the subject before he disappeared. (His copy of *Malleus Umbricum* was inherited by the Weathermay-Foxgrove Twins, who, upon finding it, were inspired to write *Van Richten’s Guide to the Shadow Fey*.)

An actual trial is presided over by three Inquisitors, and generally consists of little more than gossip or the rants of prior accused undergoing torture, but such hearsay is often damning. However, if evidence is presented that clearly proves the accused to be innocent, they usually do get off. Those found to have merely been bewitched by the fey get light sentences, but those pronounced guilty of purposefully consorting with the fey are executed by whatever means is most convenient—hanging, stoning or drowning. The Tepestani bury the corpses of those so executed at crossroads, believing (wrongly) that doing so prevents the guilty spirit from finding its way home. Those found to actually be fey themselves in disguise (often any sorcerer, warlock, or wizard seen casting a spell) are forced to confess, as above, and are then burned alive at the stake.

VALACHAN

Valachan is a rugged domain in the southwestern corner of the Core, blanketed by lush evergreen forests and prowled by fearsome black panthers. The trees are ancient and massive, shrouded by cool fog and a thick beard of mosses. Eerie hoots and growls echo through the hollows, and the chill air is heavy with the primeval scent of damp redwoods. Its ridges and numerous small canyons make overland travel difficult and provide concealment for the land’s many predators. Rocky streams flow eastward toward the Arden River, their whitewater rapids teeming with fish. Valachan boasts three towns of notable size: Ungrad, population fifteen hundred; Rotwald, four thousand; and Helbenik, thirty-five hundred.

Valachan’s ruler is Baron Urik von Kharkov, a tall, broad-shouldered, black man with muscular limbs and eyes that are a unique shade of yellow. His hair is straight and black, usually kept meticulously groomed. Baron von Kharkov’s fortress, Castle Pantara, lies between Rotwald and Helbenik, couched on a cliff above the main road. In contrast to the inviting homes of his subjects, Kharkov’s castle is a menacing fortress of charcoal-gray stone.

Villages are densely clustered in Valachan, bustling pockets of industriousness amid the eldritch wilderness. The windowless buildings are constructed of heavy logs or planks, with gabled roofs shingled in black slate. Large, single-room lodges are common even among wealthy nobles, who take great pride in their cavernous abodes and encourage villagers to socialize within. Structures are decorated with elaborate, stylized carvings of panthers, bears, wolves, and ravens. Heraldry is important to the Valachani, and homes are proudly adorned with the matriarch’s insignia.

Although temperate, the Valachan’s climate is exceedingly wet, with heavy rainfall throughout the year. Temperatures are moderate through all seasons, but sweltering summers occur occasionally.

Valachani natives share their lord’s features: They are tall and black-skinned with straight black hair, which both men and women wear long. They tend to be lean and finely muscled, with long sturdy limbs. Even those who work at physically hard jobs such as stonecutting are trim, though broad shoulders are common. Their skin is typically a dark coffee brown, though colors ranging from a creamy tan to nearly charcoal black occur. Eye color is almost always dark brown, but the odd individual with

unsettling bile-yellow eyes is sometimes born. Valachani hair is glossy black and worn long and straight by both genders. Men never wear beards or mustaches, but many grow long sideburns.

The Valachani dress simply, in baggy trousers, tunics, or smocks. Everything is made to be durable, and is often decorated with animal teeth. A bit of fringe is the most common other decorative motif. Faded black and white are the favorite colors, though these are accented with bold reds, greens, and blues. Valachani wear knee high boots of soft leather throughout the year, even when not outdoors. Jewelry is rare, though an occasional earring, bracelet, or ring can be seen.

Natives of Valachan frequently suffer from White Fever, a mild flu that develops at night and leaves its victims listless and bedridden for several days. A stalwart people, they have grown accustomed to this, and the other challenges of their rustic life amid the domain's eerie forests. They personify the creatures of the forest in myths, reserving their greatest reverence and fear for the panthers, which are numerous and notoriously cunning.

Valachani value perseverance and strong family ties but tend to be suspicious of "book learning" and the trappings of more advanced domains. A Valachani who does not know how to shoot a bow or survive in the wilderness is less than a whole person. Despite their individualism, the Valachani are social people with exceedingly complex rituals for life's milestones, including birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. Lengthy festivals mark these events in settlements. Handcrafted gifts are exchanged and wealthy Valachani attempt to outdo one another by obtaining the best foodstuffs and entertainment.

Baron Urik von Kharkov rules this domain with an iron fist. He is rumored either to be a vampire or some kind of lycanthrope. The folk recognize the Baron as their lord and ruler. He is a cold man who values obedience and his own privacy above all else. This stern aloofness does not endear the baron to his subjects, but the Valachani have learned to pay their taxes dutifully and thereby avoid the baron's attention and infamous temper. Von Kharkov demands petty servitude from random commoners on occasion, summoning them to Castle Pantara for a single night. The work is harsh, and the laborers usually return home with a case of White Fever.

Once per year, the Baron demands that a young woman leave her family and become his bride. She rarely lives out the year. The people assume that she either kills herself or dies from his abuse. The truth is far worse. These sinister facts only heighten fear

of the baron and feed rumors that he truly is inhuman.

The baron's private army of enforcers, known as the Black Leopards, collects taxes and rounds up anyone unfortunate enough to draw von Kharkov's ire. Expertly trained in wilderness skills and the use of special weapons, these enforcers are monstrous sadists zealously loyal to their lord. They carry ritually made heavy black maces with the blunt end fashioned like a panther's paw, referred to as "the Baron's arm," as well as long, machete-like black knives and cruelly made spiked whips. The mysterious Lady Adelaide, the Veiled Mistress, commands the Black Leopards. Arrogant and astonishingly vicious, Adelaide shares the appetites of the baron. She can be bribed by the offering of a handsome youth, who usually emerges scarred without and within from the mistress's wicked attentions.

Despite the oppressive presence of the baron's minions, life in most Valachani settlements is peaceful. The most powerful nobles administer justice and arbitrate disputes as they see fit, but corruption is rare. Nobility is hereditary through the mother's side, and men rather than women marry out of their families. Although tradition dictates that nobles be respected and deferred to because of their wealth, commoners do not tolerate incompetence or weakness in their betters. Nobles who lack the guile to defend their positions are quickly eliminated and their assets divided among the remaining aristocrats. Serving in a settlement's militia is an honorable and profitable pursuit, as nobles reward service with wealth, titles, and arranged marriages. Despite expanding trade with neighboring domains, Valachan retains a strong streak of independence. Baron von Kharkov apparently has little interest in establishing alliances with other realms. His enforcers patrol the domain's frontiers irregularly, equally likely to harass, rob, or murder curious travelers. Thus, the Valachani are left to forge their own bonds with foreign merchants. For now, the Valachani seem content to trade their wares and avoid entangling themselves in the affairs of other lands.

The forests of Valachan are rich with wildlife. Common fauna include deer, moose, boars, martens, eagles, and ravens. Large predators include bears and, of course, the panthers that have become such an important symbol of Valachani culture. Vampires are believed to haunt the woods as well, spawned by some hidden master.

OTHER LANDS OF THE CORE

While describing all of the Domains of Dread is well beyond the scope of this document, a sense of the wider expanse beyond the borders of Barovia can be obtained through the curated handful of darklords' realms described in detail. The other domains of the Core are described below, however, and have also been detailed in many previous publications for the Ravenloft campaign setting:

Borca: Aristocratic poisoners led by the scheming Boritsi family rule this beautiful nation of ruthless merchants, oppressed peasants, and political intrigue.

Darkon: The largest Domain of Dread, this sprawling and diverse yet orderly feudal kingdom is largely defined by the rising and falling dictatorship of the archmage Azalin Rex, whose rule is abetted by a secret police known as the Kargat.

Dementlieu: Ruled over by the aging Lord-Governor Marcel Guignol and his influential advisors, the Council of Brilliance, this temperate and prosperous land is the center of the Core's art and culture.

Forlorn: This tiny domain surrounds an accursed castle, and its dwindling population lives in hiding to fight off the land's main inhabitants, the devouring monsters known as goblins.

Invidia: A passionate realm embroiled in a long civil war, as a vicious despot obsessed by a genocidal loathing of the Vistani overtakes more and more formerly independent villages, and his racist hatred inflames more and more Invidians.

Kartakass: The bards of Kartakass are renowned as the best performers in the world, and musicians brave wolf-infested forests to study under the *meistersingers* in the backwoods towns of Skald and Harmonia.

Keening: The ten-mile radius around Mt. Lament contains no living inhabitants, only an abandoned trade road, a powerful banshee, and the City of the Dead, bustling with walking corpses who continue the careers and pursuits they knew in life.

Mordent: The landed gentry who ruled this pastoral coastal countryside vanished long ago, leaving only the benevolent Weathermay Family of Heather House to govern, assisted by each settlement's sheriff and mayor, alongside a special order of detectives known as the Lamplighters. (Mordent was the setting of the first sequel to the original Ravenloft, the classic AD&D module *I10: Ravenloft II: The House on Gryphon Hill*.)



Necropolis: Once the greatest city in the much larger domain of Darkon which surrounds it, it is now protected by an invisible shroud that kills any living being who dares to enter. It is said Death himself rules over the city's undead inhabitants.

Richemulot: Three urban communities divided by vast forests, this seemingly egalitarian realm claims to value intelligence, guile, knowledge, and professionalism over material wealth, but corruption festers in labyrinthine sewers and behind the closed doors of the elite.

The Shadow Rift: The mother of all chasms begins where its adjacent domains end in sheer cliffs, as if crumbling into nothingness. Black fog swirling hundreds of feet below the Rift's edge hides whether there is any bottom to the abyss.

Verbrek: Towering forests, misty hollows, overgrown wetlands, and unnatural predators make this wild domain a treacherous backwater, where the wolf is master and humans huddle in their isolated settlements like cowering prey.

Chapter 3:

Races

Although humans make up the vast majority of the population of the Domains of Dread, many of the non-human civilized races found in other worlds are native here as well. Elves are the main natives of Sithicus, for example. Darkon, the largest domain in the Core, is inhabited by elves, dwarves, halflings, half-elves, as well as humans, and they all claim that domain as their homeland. Also, many of the Realm of Terror's denizens came from other worlds. The Mists steal from many planes, and have done so for centuries. As a result, all of the most common races from other D&D settings can be found in one form or another.

Thus, adventurers of every race and class can be found in the Land of Mists—the rarer and more unusual the race, the more likely that character is an adventurer. Since it so difficult for nonhumans to find an accepting community to live a more settled life, adventuring is an attractive career for most. Whatever the race, all must live by the Dark Powers' rules. If the Dark Powers find a particular trait of a nonhuman race particularly distasteful—or intriguing—characters may find its effects subtly twisted. These changes apply to all creatures in the Realm of Dread, whether they are lifelong residents or have just recently emerged from the Mists.

With the exception of a very few domains, such as Darkon and Sithicus, nonhumans face a cold reception when they roam in the lands of men. In some lands, nonhumans are simply considered unnatural — freaks of nature to be pitied or ridiculed. In other lands, humans may react with deeply rooted, superstitious fear. Nonhumans who visit a few domains, such as Falkovnia and Tepest, may even be risking their lives.

Some say humans are favored by the Dark Powers as the main denizens of the domains because of their potential for both good and evil. However, they are far from the only race with free will. It is true that nonhumans possess undeniable, inborn traits, such as dwarven industriousness or halfling curiosity. A few sages—all human of course—claim that the Land of Mist's inhuman creatures, from elves to gnomes to vampires to lycanthropes, are all merely facets of the human soul, placed in the world by nameless gods to reflect against humanity's light.

Most nonhumans scoff at this, for their cultural traits are not ironclad. Nonhumans may have *tendencies*, but like any other mortal, they are responsible for their own fates.

The following sections describe how many different races fit into the Domains of Dread.

HUMANS

In the Domains of Dread, humans are the standard by which all other races must be measured. They form a vast majority of most domains' populations. In fact, many domains have no native nonhumans, and other races are so rare that many humans know them only through rumor or legend.

Humans fill every niche in society and represent a wide spectrum of cultures and ethnic groups. Some sages have pondered why humans are so prevalent in the Land of Mists. Are the Dark Powers drawn to some inherent spark in the human spirit that other races lack? If so, it may be this: every human holds the potential to perform great good or to commit great evil and can choose which path to follow. Humans are the masters of their own nature; it is both their greatest strength and their most fatal flaw. Human communities can be found in every settled domain. That is, as far as settled domains go — even Sithicus has tiny human communities. Some domains—such as the unearthly wasteland of Bluetspur—have no "civilized" human settlements, though human encampments or nomadic elements may exist.

Most of Ravenloft's human folk live and die within a score of miles from their birthplace and can spend their entire lives without ever encountering something they know to be supernatural. When combined with cultures rich in suspicion and superstition, the result is an intense xenophobia that makes it difficult for humans in most lands to accept nonhuman races.

NEW HUMAN VARIANT: HUMAN (VISTANI MYSTIC)

It seems your people have always dwelt in the Domains of Dread, though most tales say your sojourn in this benighted realm began when your ancestors' pact with the Barovian nobleman called von Zarovich became an agreement with the Dark Powers. When traveling in large family groups, this ancient pact even allows you to travel through the mists, ranging between domains despite the will of the Dark Lords. You are of the Vistani, perhaps the first inhabitants of these troubled lands. The traditions, humor, and language of the Vistani (singular Vistana) are dark and mysterious to

outsiders. Your kin often speak in long flowing riddles to those they do not trust, wrapping crucial truths in useless information and telling tales of your ancestors that are almost certainly untrue. Among family and allies, however, it is clear that you are a most serious people, who thrive in a haunted land that demands deep wisdom and constant vigilance.

Though quick to act when your lives or traditions are threatened, your people seek to avoid violence of any kind. They work strenuously to avoid dark sorcery and other similar forces.

There are many stereotypes of the Vistani, and some of them are ones they cultivate themselves, or at least capitalize on to retain an intimidating mystique. This is out of necessity, since their lack of a homeland in the Domains of Dread makes them vulnerable, but in other ways, in this realm ruled by inhuman horrors, they are safer than those cower behind stone walls. Still, the same myths also make them a target for those who see the Vistani as thieves, entertainers, and fortune-tellers with funny accents.

In truth, many character classes are common among their people. A spellcasting Vistani is as likely to be druid or a wizard as a bard or a sorcerer. Rangers and fighters are as common as rogues. Still, the many powerful bloodlines intertwined with the ancestries of Vistani families and *tasques* do make the sorcerer's arcane birthright more common among their ethnicity than that of other humans. However, their gender identity strongly affects this path as well (see the Vistani Sorcerers sidebar). Physically, Vistani are just like any other human, but some have training in mystical traditions unique to your culture. The variant below is for those raised with such training.

To make a Vistani, apply either normal human statistics or this variant, which uses the optional Feat rule from chapter 6 of the Player's Handbook.

HUMAN (VISTANI MYSTIC) TRAITS

All of these traits replace the Ability Score Increase trait of the normal human.

Ability Score Increase. Choose two different ability scores, and increase each of them by 1.

Bonus Feat. Select a feat of your choice, and gain that feat at 1st level.

Bonus Language. You can speak, read, and write Common, Patterna (the Vistani tongue) and one additional language of your choice.

Lesser Evil Eye. You learn the *blood curse** cantrip.

Vigilant Mind. When you make a Wisdom save against an effect that would charm or frighten you, you can use your reaction to roll with advantage.

Vistani Sorcerers

Strong cultural factors cause Vistani sorcerers to share certain traits. They tend to favor divination and enchantment spells, and they never identify themselves as men, no matter how they were raised. When the rare male Vistani shows sorcerous abilities, even as a child, superstitious customs indicate it must be killed, though sorcerers born physically male who choose to live as women are spared this fate. The Vistani believe any male sorcerer of their people who grows to maturity is fated to become a *Dukkar*, a hated being of evil who will bring great suffering to his people.

DWARVES

In the Land of Mists, the center of dwarven culture is the town of Tempe Falls in Darkon, though nearby Corvia also hosts a sizeable dwarven population. Smaller dwarven communities have also spread south along the Balinoks and to other mountainous regions, such as the Sleeping Beast of Lamordia.

Dwarves in most domains share much of the same culture as their counterparts in other worlds. In a world where terror lies in the shadows, they may be even more devoted to their own well-defended communities, living lives that center on the forge and family. They respect dedication in all forms—to hard work, to their clan, and to codes of honor. A dwarf holds nothing as precious as their family and nothing as beautiful as fine craftsmanship.

Native dwarves have little time for frivolity. Their music consists entirely of dirges for their ancestors or anthems of clan tradition. Other races often view dwarves as dour and humorless creatures, but retain high praise for dwarven craftsmanship. Dwarves claim a spiritual kinship with the earth itself. Superstitious humans in many domains have distorted this, believing that dwarves are actually elemental spirits. Many of their folktales speak of dwarves who require a diet of gold and gems or who turn to stone if touched by sunlight.

Hill dwarves in all domains are likely to trade with nearby humans, as a practical matter of survival. They are unlikely to live in deep delves or full underground communities, and seldom have the kind of lands necessary for sustaining themselves with agriculture.

Mountain dwarves, by contrast, feel safer in their underground homes, and most go their whole lives without seeing a human.

In recent years, dwarven explorers from Darkon have been making inroads into the forsaken region of the Mountains of Misery once known as Arak. There they have been laboring to reopen the abandoned mines and a long-neglected trade route that connected Tempe Falls in Darkon to Liara in Nova Vaasa before the Shadow Rift appeared. Those dwarves who were stranded in Liara founded their own smaller community there, out of necessity, but they too are making excavations to connect to their home, though their tunnels are much smaller so far. They strive to keep their hidden tunnels secret from human organized crime in Liara, which is growing more and more powerful by the day, under

NEW DWARF SUBRACE: CRAG DWARF

In the histories of dwarves, there are often tales of devastating events—delving too deep into some infernal force, an invasion by a humanoid horde, a realm-shattering cataclysm—that drive an entire dwarven nation from their underground homeland and onto the surface. Such is the instinct of dwarves that they nearly always seek new homes beneath the earth, even in the shallow tunnels beneath small hills or human cities. But on some worlds—especially in the Domains of Dread—circumstances have prevented some dwarves from finding such sanctuary, but kept them confined to some desolate or vulnerable region on the surface. In these cases, they have survived only by learning to resist the depredations of raiding humanoids and other threats with defiant vigor. They developed razor-sharp instincts and fearsome tactics, allowing them to both react and attack with a speed not often seen in others of their race, becoming a new breed known as crag dwarves. While they still look solidly built and stout compared to most other races, dwarves of hill and mountain who meet them find them lean and weathered, with the hungry eyes of pack wolves in winter and strange ways in battle.

Crag Dwarves of Bluetspur

Small colonies of crag dwarves are tucked away in many domains, doing their best to avoid notice. A particularly tormented group is known to persist in what may be the most inhospitable of all the domains, the bleak expanse known as Bluetspur. They dwell just below the summit of Mount Grysl, tunneling no deeper than they have to, for fear of encountering the powerful psychic slavers who rule most of that horrific realm's underground reaches. They've learned to treat the fungi they encounter underground or collect from the mountain's surface so that its poison is tolerable to their hardy dwarven bodies, and it has become their main foodstuff. According to legend, they were once

dwarves of another world who tunneled too deeply and found themselves in a vapor-filled cavern, and ended up trapped in this land. Occasionally, one or two crag dwarves escape via the Mists during a daytime foray, but any large scale attempts at migration have merely led would-be immigrants back to Bluetspur. The Dark Powers, it seems, are not done tormenting the crag dwarves of Mount Grysl.

CRAG DWARF TRAITS

The crag dwarf subrace has the normal dwarf traits, plus the subrace traits below.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom and Dexterity scores increase by 1.

Cagey Defender. When you are surprised, you can still take a single action or bonus action (but not both) during the surprise round. You cannot move unless you take an action that specifically allows you to move (such as the Dash action).

Shocking Strategy. When you are within 5 feet of an enemy, but no enemy within 5 feet of you has taken a turn in the combat yet, you can take the Disengage or Help action as a bonus action.

Stalwart. Whenever you make a saving throw to avoid becoming frightened, you are considered proficient, and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

ELVES

Two seemingly unrelated societies comprise the main populations of elves in these lands. The elves of Darkon tend to have dark hair and eyes of green, violet, or gray. Elves from the domain of Sithicus tend towards silvery hair and amber eyes.

Both groups share the elven traits of pointed ears, vulpine features, and lithe builds. Most elves prefer to dress in light, fine fabrics like silk or satin.

Sithican elves prefer drab colors, but the fashion of Darkonian elves is set by season: pastel greens and blues are worn in the summer, followed by yellows, oranges, and reds as the trees turn color in the autumn. During the winter months, the Darkonian elves restrict themselves to black, white, or gray tones, to be replaced by an explosion of colors with the coming of spring.

Darkon contains three primarily elven communities—Neblus, Nevuchar Springs, and Sidnar—where elves mingle freely with other races. On the far side of the Core, Sithicus stands as the only domain with a primarily nonhuman population. Legends speak of still more elven cities hidden from human eyes by powerful elven magic or the Mists. Elves occasionally settle in human lands, where they can become respected scholars. In some locales,

tales circulate of elves who served as advisers to entire human dynasties.

Many humans call elves the "fair folk," thinking of them as part of the same fey kingdoms as pixies or sprites. These children of nature are respected by some humans but quietly feared by others. They measure their lives in centuries and lack the sense of urgency that seems to drive humans. In times of need, elves can react as quickly as any other race, but they see nothing wrong with dedicating months or years to perfecting a sonnet, observing beauty, or engaging in the pursuit of pleasure. Humans often call elves hedonistic and claim that they have only a bystander's understanding of death. In fact, in some lands, elves are commonly thought—however erroneously—to be immortal nature spirits merely aping the human form. More than one unfortunate elf has had her immortality tested by the inquisitors of Tepest.

No native communities of drow have been found in the Domains of Dread, though some say a race of something like drow dwell in the part of the Mountains of Misery once known as Arak.

NEW ELF SUBRACE: DUSK ELF

Dusk elves are a cultural offshoot of the more common subraces of elves, said to be blessed by the moon with great stealth. They are more somber and reserved than their wild cousins, and they tend to dress in fashions closer to the norm of the realm they live in.

At the dawn of creation, no difference between the different kinds of elves existed, and no wickedness sundered the drow from their light-dwelling kin. They were one people, bound through common love and life, and united by the eagerness and curiosity for the natural world's many wonders. All this ended with the dreaded war between the elves that altered the course of what would become high elves, wood elves, and dark elves for all time.

Even as the elves rallied against their dark kin, some chose no side. Instead, they sought escape from the escalating violence and retreated to hidden parts of the mortal world. The nobles who led the sylvan armies against the dark host deemed those who fled traitors, and the most powerful of elven gods vowed vengeance against them for their cowardice. One goddess, however, saw this flight as obedience to her own tenets. This goddess is named as Mother Night among the dusk elves of Barovia and other Domains of Dread. In most worlds, she is identified as the elven goddess Sehanine. This goddess sheltered those who abstained from the war

as her chosen people, raising a veil to hide them from anyone seeking retribution, while the drow were driven into the Underdark.

Over the intervening generations, these elves lived in secret, forbidden from returning to their homelands and afraid to range too far from their hidden redoubts. Only after the ancient wars and their part in them began to fade did such elves venture farther afield. Elven memory is long indeed, and some bear the lost tribe, now called dusk elves, ill will, but many find ways to look beyond the ancient offense and take these people for who they now are.

The Magic of the Dusk Elves

During the war between the ancestors of the various subraces of elves, it is said that some elves who remained neutral sought increase magical powers to enforce peace among the warring factions. Various reports give these proto-dusk elves credit for inventing various forms of magic, as well as for being the progenitors of various magical species descended from elves.

The most popular of these rumors says that certain dusk elves were the first warlocks, at first pacting with great powers of the Feywild, but later experimenting with demonic influences as well. It is unclear how these rumors might relate to tales of ancient tieflings forging the first warlock pacts with their fiendish kin.

What can be confirmed is that dusk elf spellcasters can reach heights of power just as dizzying as those attained by high elf wizards, and that there are many warlocks among them as well. It is also known that they were the first to practice the Pact of the Gloom (detailed in the Warlock section of the Classes chapter), and that dusk elf illusionists and necromancers collaborated to establish the study of shadow magic (sometimes called "nethermancy") as its own occult tradition.

Physically, dusk elves are a slight folk, nearly identical to their elf counterparts. They tend to be thinner and taller than most other elf subraces. Most are very dark-skinned, with complexions ranging from a dark brown to a golden tan, complimented by lustrous black, auburn, or silverish hair. Their variety of eye colors includes any color that might be seen in a drow, wood elf, or high elf, but most have brown or dark purple eyes. Where they differ is mostly in their choice of apparel, as they favor subdued colors and practical, unadorned garb. These types tend to share the basic traits of their high elf and wood elf kin, but where those elves are free-spirited and mercurial, dusk elves are furtive, haunted, and suspicious. In a few communities, generally descended from elves who hid in refuges partially underground or near cave-riddled mountains, some dusk elves have abilities closer to those of the drow. Members of this

small minority often differ in appearance from dusk elves elsewhere, with skin pale as moonlight.

Dusk Elf Beliefs

The goddess who granted them succor remains the most powerful religious presence among the dusk elves, and many exclude other gods on holy days. In the Shadowfell and the Domains of Dread, that goddess is named as Mother Night. In worlds beyond, such as the Forgotten Realms, this goddess is most often known as Sehanine Moonbow. In lands where Sehanine is not worshipped, she is identified with goddesses of the moon and/or hunt, such as Artemis. A central tenet of this faith is the notion of the night as a source of refuge and recovery, rather than a feared unknown. This ethos directly opposes gods of thievery and murder (such as Mask, Bhaal, or Set), whose worshippers tend to see the night as a cover for victimizing others.

Other faiths abide among the dusk elves as well. They have no disdain for gods of light, for example, and dusk elves in Barovia often pay homage to the Morninglord. In the Realms, they also venerate the good-aligned drow goddess Ellistraee, who represents the redemption of dark elves that their ancestors always believed was possible. However, the worship of those elven gods who swore vengeance on the dusk elves—such as Corellon Larethian in the Realms—is forbidden in most of their communities, and those who maintain these faiths must do so in secret, lest they face exile and ostracism. In some dusk elf settlements, rumors persist about cults worshipping Lolth.

Dusk elves restrict their emotions to a narrow range, showing little joy and less grief. For all their disinclination for emotional displays, dusk elves are a people of deep feeling. When alone or among a trusted few, they give in to their happiness and sorrow with surprising intensity.

Dusk elves value their privacy and guard their lands from trespassers. The dusk elves who protect their communities from trespass are a select group of deadly sentries, known as the gloaming guardians. They protect the routes into their communities, and if they encounter intruders, they use their stealthy talents to trick or frighten interlopers away. Failing that, the guardians use their considerable martial prowess to pick such trespassers off one at a time, until they realize their error and return from whence they came. Gloaming guardians are sometimes the only dusk elves who meet other peoples.

During private moments, dusk elves reflect on their nature, their people's history, and the plans their patron goddess has for them. They see the natural world as a prison, albeit a beautiful one, and pine for the fabulous cities of the high elves and verdant fey lands of the wood elves.

Those who shrug off the accustomed melancholy of their people sometimes leave their hidden

communities to see what the world has to offer.

Adventuring is a common pastime for these bold souls, and they prove constant, though detached, comrades. They show little of the joy shared by other elves.

However, dusk elves are sensitive about their reputations and might go over-board to prove their loyalty. Those who return from sojourns abroad have founded factions pushing for reconciliation with high elves and wood elves. They face

strong opposition, but a few

communities have been successful in establishing talks with their estranged kin.

Dusk Elf Feats

While the base dusk elf is, mechanically, identical to your choice of another of the elf subraces (usually wood elf, or sometimes high elf), adventuring dusk elves learn to focus the unique blessings of their patron goddess in more potent ways. They combine the magic that helps hide them from the world with the training in stealth all dusk elves receive to frustrate and confuse their enemies. For player characters, the Dusk Elf Stealth feat is a good way to express the traits that differentiate them from their kin. In addition, the Shadow Sentinel feat (available to all races with an appropriate background, but especially suited to the dusk elf) is perfect for members of the gloaming guardians. Finally, the Dusksinger feat allows dusk elf warlocks to use a variant of the elven martial and magical art known as Bladesong (as described in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*). These feats are all described in the Optional Feats chapter.

DUSK ELF TRAITS

A dusk elf has the traits of another elven subrace, sharing close kinship with the other breeds of elves. The overwhelming majority of dusk elves have the traits of a wood elf, sometimes of a high elf; those



rare dusk elves who share the qualities of a drow (including their sensitivity to sunlight) are seldom seen outside their communities, and playing one requires special DM permission.

Dusk Elves of Ravenloft

At some point before Strahd von Zarovich's fall from grace, groups of dusk elves migrated to Barovia. Later, they came to live in other Domains of Dread. Elves of other kinds are much rarer in these benighted lands than in other worlds, which has slightly altered dusk elf culture here. They are still appropriately suspicious and fearful for dwelling in such haunted places, but the fact of their existence is not a total secret, though their racial enclaves are still guarded with deadly secrecy.

Dusk elves trapped in the Land of Mists feel a sense of kinship with local humans, whose frightened paranoia mirrors their own.

In fact, such dusk elf colonies will even engage in trade with humans living in the same Domain of Dread. Residents of such dusk elf communities are much more likely to venture out to see other lands. Human settlements in some domains, however, practice evil traditions openly, and in such places, dusk elves are just as secretive as usual.

Barovian Dusk Elves

The dusk elves of Barovia suffered a cruel fate, even before that realm was drawn into the Domains of Dread by the Mists. Once, the dusk elves had a sizable and well-populated refuge in the Svalich Woods near Lake Zarovich. One of their own nobles, a black-hearted dusk elf named Rahadin, refused to recognize the authority of a higher ranking noble. His disobedience towards that prince was so ruthless and disrespectful that Rahadin was banished. Later, during the rule of the King Barov—Strahd's father—the dusk elves declined to pay fealty to that human monarch.

The traitorous Rahadin helped Barov conquer and nearly exterminate the dusk elves of the Svalich kingdom. Members of the royal family who had exiled Rahadin were murdered down to the last distant cousin, leaving no heirs, and the others were hunted down like animals. On the verge of being annihilated, the few survivors surrendered. Barov left those who weren't subjugated to the mercy of the Vistani, who took in many. Yet worse was yet to come.

Years later, Barov's son, Strahd von Zarovich, fought a great war to purge his enemies from Barovia. Rahadin had been adopted by the king for his service, and now he served Strahd loyally as his brother and lord. After Strahd succeeded his father as ruler of Barovia, the dusk elf traitor helped build Castle Ravenloft, and Strahd made Rahadin his chamberlain.

A dusk elven archmage named Patrina, who had studied spellcasting alongside her brother Kasimir before advancing far beyond him and mastering the blackest of arcane arts, felt a great bond with Strahd. Even the knowledge that his father had slaughtered nearly all of her kin did not dissuade here. She taught the human noble

much of necromancy and other occult secrets before Strahd fell in love with another, allowing the jealous and hateful Rahadin to drive Patrina from his lord's presence. When the Mists claimed Barovia, Patrina was living in Vallaki with her brother among the Vistani once more. As she soon as she discovered Strahd was cursed with vampirism, and that the woman he had loved was no more, she went to him at once in the hopes of winning his love and sharing his power. She asked to be bound to him forever in marriage. Drawn once more to her knowledge and arcane might, Strahd consented, but before he could make her his bride, her brother and their other kin heard of this foul betrothal.

Whether it was an act of mercy to keep her from the curse of undeath, or a monstrous atrocity to keep her from becoming the concubine of their hated oppressor, Patrina's brother led his fellow dusk elves in stoning her to death. Strahd immediately demanded Patrina's body, and got it, burying her in the catacombs of Castle Ravenloft. Then he sent Rahadin to punish the dusk elves. Rahadin didn't have them all killed. His wicked loathing of his own people and loyalty to his master drove him to a horrific form of poetic justice. Since males of his race had deprived Rahadin's lord of a bride, he ensured they could never marry among their own people. Rahadin slew every female dusk elf in Barovia.

Playing a Barovian Dusk Elf

Dusk elves native to Barovia all share the traits of wood elves. They cannot be female without the special permission of the DM. Aside from Rahadin, who is dusky-skinned but still pale for a dusk elf, all those survivors who remain in the domain of Barovia have the dark skin and hair common to most of their people.

Other Dusk Elves in the Domains of Dread

A number of dusk elves live in the domain of Darkon, where they keep their true origins secret but have largely integrated with the larger population. Curiously, these dusk elves believe they have always lived in Darkon, which they see as the ancestral homeland of all elven peoples. According to their tales, Mother Night sheltered them here and tricked the progenitors of the drow and other breeds of elf into leaving.

In Sithicus, where elves live in greater numbers than in any other Dark Lord's realm, the dusk elves maintain no settlements, and individuals of their subrace who pass through are even more covert than normal. They do their best to avoid the strange, xenophobic elves who live in Sithicus, who they find even more alien and threatening than high elves and wood elves of other lands.

HALFLINGS

Most halflings in the Domains of Dread are nomadic, wandering in clans from one domain to another. Unlike the constantly drifting Vistani, however, halflings tend to take root in a given area for a few years, experiencing all it has to offer before moving on. Any settlement of sufficient size may boast a halfling community, though these may be ghettos.

Some halflings have settled down to form permanent communities. The largest of these are both in Darkon. Halflings in the city of Rivalis raise goats, produce cheese and take pride in their flower gardens. The town of Delagia supports itself through fishing and is actually built atop Lake Korst, its buildings resembling beaver dams.

Tales are told of a village of halflings hidden somewhere in the forests of Sithicus. These halflings were hideously tortured by the black knight who previously ruled that land, however. They are now said to be insane, feral creatures.

Equally feral, but likely not insane, are the desert halflings of Kalidnay. Perhaps dwelling in the scorched sands of the Amber Wastes as well, these isolated tribes are antisocial, raiding human caravans, and are sometimes said to practice cannibalism. Sages dismiss these tales as fantasy—who could imagine a cannibal halfling?

Perhaps owing to an appearance not unlike that of human children—for whom they are often mistaken—halflings are lucky enough to avoid most of the animosity that other nonhumans face. With their small size and lack of supernatural powers, halflings present humans with little to fear. Humans respect halflings' courage and general good nature—

sometimes to a fault. Humans often treat halflings with good-intentioned condescension, believing that all halflings are as innocent and harmless as the young children they resemble. Some human bards in Nova Vaasa claim that halflings were created when a powerful hag tried to purify a human as an experiment, driving all the evil from his body. The experiment was a success, but the victim was reduced to half his former size, the "evil half" vanishing to none-knows-where. Halflings pay this legend very little mind.



NEW HALFLING SUBRACE: SUNSCORCHED HALFLING

The wiry, desert-dwelling sunscorched halflings have eked out a desperate existence in the sandy wastes since time immemorial, scavenging and raiding as needed to make their desolate homes as comfortable and safe as possible. When their far-ranging scouts find an oasis, hidden valley, or sparsely forested ridge that can offer a better life for their clan and its children, they will work for years to drive out any hostile inhabitants, and then defend their new holding with the ferocity of cornered animals. Whether striking out from such a home base wandering as many tribes do, sunscorched halfling family groups raid caravans and the habitations of strangers without remorse, dependent on such booty to support the entire tribe.

Sunscorched halflings live apart from other races, divided by their stature and odd customs, but no one can deny their bravery and cunning. The savagery for which they are feared masks a deep and abiding reverence for the natural world and an uncommon connection to the land's spirits.

According to their myths, sunscorched halflings are among the oldest peoples in creation. Once stewards of all the land, the halflings retreated when dark forces rose to dominate the world, and they built a civilization in hidden places.

Their strong connections to the natural world make it hard for them to establish productive relationships with other races. For example, sunscorched halflings place little emphasis on the individual; each is merely part of the overall community. This view makes it nearly impossible for sunscorched halflings to deceive or betray one another, but other races are seen very differently. They are not part of the community, and are generally seen as existing out of harmony with nature. Such creatures can therefore be treated no differently than predators, or prey.

Sunscorched halflings see all creatures as potential sources of sustenance. After all, living beings compete to survive, and halflings think nothing of eating their enemies, for doing so ensures their own survival. Cannibalism is rarer than the local folktales of other races make it sound, but the custom is a testament to the unmatched tenacity that keeps sunscorched halflings alive.

It's worth noting that "sunscorched" is not a name these halfling use among themselves. In fact, it is a term used by other halflings and human scholars to differentiate them from other sorts of halflings, such as lightfoots or stouts.

SUNSCORCHED HALFLING TRAITS

The sunscorched halfling subrace has the normal halfling traits, plus the subrace traits below.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Desert Dweller. You have advantage on all Wisdom or Constitution checks related to surviving in deserts, plains, or wastelands, and on all Constitution saves against fire, heat, or thirst. In addition, you are naturally adapted to hot climates.

Wasteland Fury. If you are not within 5 feet of any ally when you hit with an attack roll, you can choose to inflict 1d10 extra damage against one target you hit. After you use this ability, you may immediately move 5 feet without provoking opportunity attacks. Once you inflict this extra damage, you cannot do so again until you finish a short or long rest. If a creature who takes the extra damage has not yet taken a turn in the combat, they are frightened of you until the end of their next turn.

NEW HALFLING SUBRACE:

AFFLICTED ONE

Once these halflings were part of a carefree and happy-go-lucky people. Their curiosity, humor, and cheerfulness were so unrelenting others sometimes found them infuriating. It seemed that no matter how they aged, a child's innocence never left them. Yet innocence has abandoned the afflicted ones. The horrors they have seen have changed them forever. Their friendly cheerfulness has vanished, replaced by grim suspicion. Although they remain incurably curious, it is the curiosity of fear and paranoia. They are curious not because they just want to know but because they want to know whether it will hurt or help them. If they meet a stranger, they are as likely to attack as to talk, but either way—while the interloper is alive, or after they are dead—the afflicted ones want to know everything about who that person is or was and what is on their person, to see what kind of threat they may represent. To this end, even around someone they do not see as a direct source of harm, they constantly peek, poke, and pilfer. They don't think of themselves as thieves, but don't have a moral notion of property. Anything not nailed down is theirs if they want it, and they are full of rationalizations if caught. However, those rationalizations now have a single theme: they take things to check them out. Caught with his hand in the pouch of a wizard, the afflicted one says, "I'm only making sure nothing in there is dangerous" or "Of course I kept this wand I found in there, you might decide to use it against me sometime." These

creatures naturally assume that everyone and everything is a potential threat. Their sense of humor has become a wry defense mechanism, a black comic sense of the absurdity of their lives. They enjoy sarcastic rejoinders, the darker the better, and truly biting insults. They indulge in harsh practical jokes. Among one another, the jokes are used as a method of conflict resolution and revenge. They have developed an elaborate system of face based on who has last had the better of whom. The one arguable blessing of all this is an extreme bond between all afflicted ones. They have been through the Abyss, and they know they are in this together. Their loyalties to family are practically fanaticism, and any outsider who denigrates their community in any way will be marked for murder if they aren't already.

A special racial species of vampire exists for this subrace. Ezmerelda d'Avenir wrote that of all vampires, they were the most deeply horrifying.

AFFLICTED ONE TRAITS

The afflicted one subrace has the normal halfling traits, plus the subrace traits below.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Handler. You are proficient in the Sleight of Hands skill. Whenever you make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) skill check to pick someone's pockets, add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Taunt. You have an instinctive insight into others' insecurities that you can exploit through well-crafted insults or intimidating mockery. You know the *vicious mockery* cantrip. Charisma is your spellcasting ability score for this spell. If a creature fails their saving throw against your *vicious mockery* cantrip, the next time it makes an attack roll before the end of its next turn, it takes extra psychic damage equal to your Wisdom modifier if that attack roll is not against you.

Afflicted Ones in the Domains of Dread

Of all the domains, it is believed Sithicus is the only one to which this halfling subrace is native. They were the subject of horrific experiments and torments by the death knight who ruled them, and escaped only due to unrelenting determination to keep each other alive and their own natural cunning. They live hidden in that domain's vast forests, their territorial boundaries marked by posts bearing the heads of trespassers.

Rumors that there are also afflicted ones native to the domain of Falkovnia remain unproven.

DRAGONBORN

Until very recently, no dragonborn were native to these lands. Newcomers even to most of the other worlds where they have become common, the physical appearance of dragonborn is farther from the human norm than any of the other races described here. Thankfully, like most other nonhumans, they have the option of the throwing the hood of a cloak over their heads and being ignored by passersby while traveling, the same as anyone else. While these draconic humanoids still almost always need to hide their appearance, a subrace native to the Domains of Dread has emerged very recently. Sailors in the Nocturnal Sea have reported encountering dragonborn mariners aboard sophisticated sailing ships. In some of these tales, they are terrifying pirates breathing the very Mists themselves from their jaws. In others, they appear out of the fog to rescue foundering ships.

SEA DRAGONBORN (DRAGONBORN VARIANT)

The sea dragonborn are a warlike people who take to naval battle readily, using their unique abilities to strike with stealth from banks of fog or vapor. Besides a tendency to be smaller and more agile, they are very much like their metallic or chromatic kin. They have a tradition of raiding ships and port settlements, but few seem to be evil, and most warbands focus their depredations on evil groups which their leaders declare as anathema. Of course, less ethical sea dragonborn of other alignments are often marine raiders as well, but are far less discriminating when choosing their targets. They dress in loose-fitting, airy clothes, in which they find it easy to move, layering them as necessary in colder climes.

Sea Dragonborn Multiclassing

If you are using the optional multiclassing rules, sea dragonborn gain a special benefit: they can substitute their Dexterity score for their Strength score when determining if they can be multiclass paladins.

SEA DRAGONBORN TRAITS

These traits replace the Ability Score Increase, Draconic Ancestry, Breath Weapon, and Damage Resistance traits of a normal Dragonborn.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2, and your choice of either your Strength score or Dexterity score increases by 1.

Amphibious. You can breathe both air and water.

Draco-Aquatic Ancestry. Like all dragonborn, you have draconic ancestry, but it links you to dragons of the sea rather than the usual metallic or

chromatic breeds. For effects that may depend on it, your draconic ancestry is of the “Sea” type, and your breath weapon is a 15 ft. cone requiring a Dexterity save. Your ancestry does not grant the normal resistance to a particular damage type, but for any effect that may be based on the damage type determined by your draconic ancestry, the damage type is considered fire.

Minor Heat Resistance. When you take fire damage, you can use your reaction to roll a d4. Add your Constitution modifier to the number rolled, and reduce the damage by that amount.

Searing Steam Breath. You can use your action to exhale a cloud of super-heated steam. When you use your breath weapon, each creature within a 15 ft. cone must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 1d6 fire damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. Being underwater doesn't grant resistance against this damage. The damage increases to 2d6 at 6th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 16th level. In addition, your breath weapon creates an area of fog that includes not only the cone itself but any area within 5 feet of it, including the space in which you are standing when you use it. The fog remains for 1 minute, and it spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. After you use your breath weapon, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Sea Dragon's Legacy. You gain a swimming speed equal to your walking speed, and whenever you make a Dexterity (Stealth) check while you are heavily obscured by any form of water or vapor (including mist and fog), you are considered proficient in the Stealth skill and add double your normal proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Sea Dragonborn in Ravenloft

Those who have had friendly contact with the Sea Dragonborn report that they claim to have a homeland in the far north of the Nocturnal Sea, which they call Al-Kabus. It is said to lie east of Todstein and west of Vechor. They describe it as an archipelago of cold desert landscapes, with sandy border islands surrounding column-like rock formations that jut up from the water to great heights.

It is unclear if this “Al-Kabus” is a new domain, part of another domain, or a homeland that is now lost to the sea dragonborn, the place they knew in another world before they were drawn into the Mists. In the latter case, they may believe, incorrectly, that they can still sail home.

GNOMES

Gnomes, like many non-human civilized races in the Domains of Dread, are most likely to be found in the diverse nation of Darkon. The largest primarily gnomish settlement is in Darkon, in the town of Mayvin. Demand for gnomish skills has also drawn small communities—very rarely more than one hundred strong—to Valachan and Hazlan. The largest gnomish population outside Darkon—still no more than 150 gnomes, all told—exists in Nova Vaasa, where it has become fashionable for nobles to have a gnomish jester in their courts. Rumor has it that most of these jesters also serve as court spies, aided by their magical talents and small size.

Gnomes in many worlds possess intense intellectual curiosity, and those in the Land of Mists are little different. They are fascinated by intricate details, be they riddles or the fine cogs of a pocket watch. Gnomes enjoy nothing so much as solving a difficult puzzle—building patterns out of chaos. Gnomes often work as alchemists, gem cutters, engineers, or clockmakers. Because of these tendencies, gnomes were many of the first members of the Metaphysician class (a new character class described in this document).

Many gnomes in these lands also possess a wicked, morbid sense of humor flavored by the darkness around them. These gnomes often pass the time by telling macabre tales laced with irony, and they enjoy playing practical jokes, particularly on anyone they consider too dour. Gnomish practical jokes are usually remarkably elaborate but are virtually never intended to cause the recipient any true harm—when that is the intention, however, the harm can be grievous indeed.

HALF-ELVES

As the product of love affairs between elves and humans—the two most populous races in the Core—half-elves are more common than they once were. Half-elves have no communities of their own in the Domains of Dread, and tend to adopt the prevailing human fashions of their homeland.

Although half-elves are at risk in a few domains, such as Falkovnia and Tepest, they do not face the same level of animosity many other nonhumans do in human lands. Half-elves are generally pitied by both humans and elves; some even consider half-



elves mildly cursed by their heritage. It is said that half-elves are doomed to outlive their human loved ones and to grow old and die before the eyes of their elven kin. Half-elves find it difficult to maintain long-term relationships.

Forced into the life of an outsider, though not often reviled as some races are, half-elves often pride themselves on their iconoclastic nature. Many pour their alienation and anguish into artistic pursuits, becoming musicians or wandering bards. A few even reject their given names, adopting dramatic titles like the Wind Haunter or the Deathseeker.

A half-elf may be born to a wandering elf in any domain, but most hail from the regions surrounding the lands of eastern Darkon or Sithicus, where elves live in greater numbers than in other domains.

HALF-ORC

Orcs are unknown in most domains, even as creatures of legend. The only true half-orcs native to the Realm of Terror are those born to half-orcs from other worlds brought by the Mists.

However, a variant form of half-orc does exist in the Dread Domains, but they are not born to orc parents. Rather, they are a reflection of certain dark forces that imbue the domains, and are usually born to fully human parents. Known as calibans, they resemble half-orcs in many respects, but have no orcish heritage.

The existence of calibans makes the day-to-day existence of actual half-orcs even more difficult, since most folk who know of the existence of calibans believe half-orcs to be the same sort of creature. Most familiar with calibans associate them with curses and evil magic, and most unfamiliar with them have no context for seeing a half-orc as anything but a monster. In many ways, a half-orc in the Domains of Dread faces even more challenges than those of other world, and almost all are adventurers.

The buried feelings of shame, frustration, isolation, and even rage most half-orcs and calibans experience sometimes express themselves as supernatural phenomenon. There are many half-orcs who possess the Living Poltergeist feat (described in the Optional Feats chapter).

CALIBAN (HALF-ORC VARIANT)

Thankfully rare, calibans are twisted humans exposed to curses or foul magic while still in the womb. The birth of a caliban in a community is often seen as a sure sign of the presence of witchcraft — specifically, the corrupting aura of a hag.

Calibans are physically powerful but misshapen humanoids. No two calibans look alike, but common deformities include twisted backs or limbs, asymmetrical features, bristly skin, or tusk-like teeth. Calibans are widely considered brutish, savage creatures; their name is a corruption of "cannibal," stemming from their most infamous reputed habit. In truth, many calibans are simple-minded, petty brutes, but this is often the product of their upbringing. Rejected as monsters, most calibans spend their lives hidden in dank cellars or flee civilization to roam the wilds. In truth, a caliban's heart can be as pure and noble as that of any human.

CALIBAN TRAITS

Calibans can be created with the same traits as half-orcs, but they tend to vary more in their various personal aptitudes and challenges than half-orcs do. In addition, the sinister nature of their birth makes them innately frightening. Therefore, the following alternate traits are available to any caliban, in addition to the normal half-orc traits:

Cunning Survivor. Your Constitution score increases by 2 and your Dexterity score increases by 1. This replaces the half-orc's Ability Score Increase trait.

Frightful Savagery. When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, in addition to the normal effects of a critical hit, the target is frightened of you until the end of your next turn. This trait replaces the half-orc's Savage Attacks trait.

Relentless Terror. You can cast the *frightful strike** spell once with this trait. You regain the use of this spell when you finish a long rest, or when you inflict damage with a successful melee weapon attack on your turn against a creature who was frightened of you at the beginning of your turn. This trait replaces the half-orc's Relentless Endurance trait.

TIEFLINGS

Tieflings are rare in these lands, and exist in isolation or small families rather than in full communities of their own. Their rarity may have something to do with the fact that fiends shun the Domains of Dread with all their might, since the closed boundaries between planes mean that once here, a fiend, celestial, or elemental can usually never leave. It is said that fiends trapped in the Domains of Dread warp reality around themselves, and that human children born within that effect sometimes grow into a special subrace of tieflings. Those are the only tieflings who are native to the Realm of Terror, and in almost all cases, they have the traits of the Shadowfell tiefling variant (described below).

Unlike calibans (another variant race born to humans in the land of Mists due to the taint of dark magic), these native tieflings look almost completely human, and are not shunned as many calibans are. Their dark legacy is more subtle, yet because of the power to influence others granted by their birth, many become far more wicked than most calibans. Many possess the Mind Reader feat (described in the Optional Feats chapter).

SHADOWFELL TIEFLING (VARIANT)

Some tieflings have a mysterious ancestral tie to the Shadowfell as well as fiendish roots. It is unclear if they are intertwining of multiple planar origins, the descendants of fiends who took up residence in the Shadowfell, or something else entirely. Tieflings born in the Land of Mists do not have the physical characteristics described for tieflings in the core rules. Rather they look human, but always have four specific traits. First, whenever their reflection is seen, the shadow of a knife's edge is always falling across their face. Second, their shadows always lag a split second behind them, and sometimes do not precisely copy their actual actions. Third, they constantly exude a slight smell of smoke (whether woodsmoke, pipeweed, or some other scent, depending on the individual tiefling), even when perfumed or bathing. Finally, they always have misty gray eyes.

These tieflings can marshal the potential of their fiendish blood to dominate their environment through fear and manipulation. The power of their heritage enhances their force of personality rather than allowing them to perform flashier tricks of shadow and flame, making them natural leaders and valued comrades.



SHADOWFELL TIEFLING TRAITS

Shadowfell Tieflings have most of the same traits as other tieflings, but replace their Hellish Resistance and Infernal Legacy traits with the Legacy of Terror trait:

Shadowborn Resistance. You have resistance to necrotic damage.

Legacy of Terror. You know the *warning roar** cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *wrathful smite* spell once with this trait. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *aid* spell once as a 2nd-level spell with this trait. You must finish a long rest to cast these spells once again with this trait. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for all spells granted by this trait.

NEW RACE: RAVENKIN

"THE ENORMOUS BLACK BIRD WORE A SHINING SILVER NECKLACE, ENGRAVED WITH THE SYMBOL OF THE FORGOTTEN BAROVIAN GOD ANDRAL. IT COCKED ITS HEAD WHEN I ENTERED, REGARDING ME WITH BRIGHT BLACK EYES. I SENSED AT ONCE THAT THE CREATURE WAS NOT ONLY INTELLIGENT, BUT FAR WISER THAN I. YET I WAS STILL UNPREPARED WHEN IT BEGAN TO SPEAK, AND AGAIN WHEN IT TOLD ME MORE ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF MY QUEST THAN I HAD LEARNED IN MONTHS OF RESEARCH."

FROM THE JOURNALS OF EZMERELDA D'AVENIR

The ravenkin are an avian race that have been trapped within the misty confines of Ravenloft. More intelligent than most humanoids, they look much like huge versions of the common raven or crow, with a full wingspan averaging seven feet. Although some see ravens as symbols of ill omen, ravenkin are one of the few persistent forces for good in this otherwise dark land of evil.

A VANISHING MYSTERY

A reclusive and extremely long-lived race, ravenkin are shrouded in black feathers and have long, straight beaks. When they wish to set themselves apart from normal ravens, they often wear small items of sparkling jewelry. The ravenkin speak their own screeching dialect of Auran, which sounds like a collection of squawks and shrieks to those not listening for it. Most of these creatures will also speak the common language in use by the humanoid inhabitants of their lands. Ravenkin communities resembled nothing so much as a collection of large nests, spread out over several square miles. Only a small number of ravenkin eggs hatch, so their numbers are steadily declining. They believe the corruption of their eggs is due to the evil taint of these lands.

HIDDEN SPIES

Ravenkin are not built as sturdily as even halflings or gnomes are. Generally, they avoid attention and direct confrontation when possible. They tend to ignore creatures they encounter, unless those creatures are actively seeking them out. In the latter case, they are wary and untrusting until the

strangers prove themselves to be friends. Once someone has earned the trust of the ravenkin, though, they have won a great prize, for these creatures are able to provide a wealth of information about the evils of Ravenloft. The Vistani say that ravenkin can see through the eyes of every raven in the land; from the vast knowledge these folk seem to be able to amass on even the shortest notice, that seems to be only a minor exaggeration. More than two centuries ago, the ravenkin first entered the Domains of Dread. Since then, they have been trapped. They keep a close eye on the dark entities and evil forces that surround them.

BY BEAK AND TALON

Ravenkin, like the birds they so closely resemble, do

not have hands, but their taloned toes are nearly as dexterous as the fingers of a halfling, though not as strong. They can manipulate lockpicks, quill pens, knives, and light tools and weapons with ease. Ravenkin believe the best way to survive a fight is to avoid it, but when they must engage in physical combat, they rely on special hit and run tactics, pecking at humanoid opponents' eyes or fingers. The ravenkin exist on a diet of insects, berries, and carrion. In short, they will eat almost anything put before them – truly proving themselves to be omnivorous. They find the act of hunting bothersome, however, and delight in the taste of slightly rotted meat,

making carrion the main element of their diet.

RAVENKIN NAMES

A ravenkin's first name tends to reflect their cawing, birdlike language. Thus, they share many of the same sorts of names as aarakocra, with either gender having first names like Aarok, Aial, Auraa, Deekek, Errhk, Heeahk, Ikki, Kareeka, Keeva, Kleeck, Oorr, Ouss, Quierk, Pyoor, Salleek, Shreeaka, or Ureek.

As a rule, an individual's last name is his age, as ravenkin measure time, so not in years. A recently hatched chick might be "Kareeka Twomoons" and a wise old elder might be known as "Shreeaka Fiftyautumns".



RAVENKIN TRAITS

Being almost identical to normal ravens other than in size, ravenkin share many distinctive traits. Their lack of hands, difficulty with armor, and diminished lifting and carrying capacity present special challenges, while being able to fly starting at 1st level is exceptionally effective in certain circumstances and exceedingly dangerous in others. As a result, playing a ravenkin requires special consideration by your DM.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1, and you increase your choice of your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 2.

Age. Ravenkin reach physical maturity slightly faster than humans, but live much longer—a ravenkin who lives less than a hundred-fifty years is considered to have died young.

Alignment. Most ravenkin are good. Very few are lawful, since none of the legal entities they have found in the Realm of Terror can be trusted.

Language. You can speak, read, and write Common, Auran, and one other language.

Size. Ravenkin are about 3 feet tall, but their full extended wingspans are much larger than their height, averaging seven feet. They have thin, lightweight bodies that weigh around 20 pounds. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 20 feet.

Flight. You have a flying speed of 30 feet. This increases to 40 feet when you reach 3rd level, and 50 feet when you reach 5th level. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. When wearing armor, you reduce your flying speed by half.

Darkvision. With even better eyesight than that of the ravens to whom you are kin, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of grey.

Frail. Your carrying capacity (including maximum load and maximum lift) is halved, and you have disadvantage on Strength checks made to push, pull, lift, or break objects.

Handless. Ravenkin can only manipulate objects with their taloned feet. As a result, you can never use a heavy or two-handed weapon, and you only gain your proficiency bonus when using light weapons with which you are proficient.

Mimicry. You can mimic the speech of another person or the sounds made by other creatures. You must have heard the person speaking, or heard the creature make the sound, for at least 1 minute. A

successful Wisdom (Insight) check contested by your Charisma (Deception) check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.

Natural Sorcerer. You know one cantrip of your choice from the sorcerer spell list. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it. In addition, spells you cast do not require somatic components.

Pecking Strike. You are proficient with your unarmed strikes, which deal 2 piercing damage on a hit. When you make a critical hit with an unarmed strike, that creature must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 plus your Dexterity modifier plus your proficiency bonus. If they fail, they are blinded until the end of your next turn (creatures who fail this saving throw who either cannot see or do not have eyes instead cannot take reactions until the end of your next turn). If the saving throw fails 5 or more, the blindness lasts until they receive magical healing, or until they benefit from a *regeneration* spell or an effect that cures blindness.

Ravenlink. You can communicate telepathically with any raven within 100 feet. Additionally, so long as you have at least 1 unused spell slot of 1st level or higher, you enjoy extra uses for this link. As an action, if there is a raven within 100 feet, you can see through that raven's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of your next turn. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses. Finally, when you cast a spell with a range of touch, you can choose for any raven within 100 feet of you to deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. Doing so uses the raven's reaction when you cast the spell. If the spell requires an attack roll, you use your attack modifier for the roll. All these abilities work just as if the raven were your familiar. However, if you ever cast the *find familiar* spell, it fails—no ravenkin can ever have a familiar.

Snatching Talons. When you take the Disengage action while flying, you can choose one creature within 5 feet to make a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to 8 plus your Dexterity modifier plus your proficiency bonus. If the creature fails, it drops one object of your choice that it is holding, and the object lands at its feet. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, you can choose to catch the object if it is not too heavy for you, otherwise it lands in a space of your choice within 5 feet of the creature.

Winged Speech. Through sounds and gestures, you can communicate simple ideas with any Small or smaller beasts that have a fly speed.

Chapter 4:

Classes

Only the most unusual inhabitants of the Domains of Dread are adventurers. Most natives live their whole lives in the domain in which they were born, sometimes never imagining other lands exist beyond their own communities. In places where multiple domains cluster together, like the Core, most folk are aware that other lands exist, but very few ever visit them. Even most traveling merchants only range between two or three domains. Tending, as they do, to travel regularly between the realms of many different darklords, adventurers are as rare here as they are extraordinary.

The heroes of Ravenloft come in many forms, but the groups that survive the longest tend to combine many different classes. This is likely due to the variety of threats with which the Dark Powers have populated their playgrounds. Some heroes, like barbarians and fighters, are well suited for battling physical foes. Spellcasters, like clerics and warlocks, wield their numerous talents against more spiritual threats. Yet when the form of the threat is insidious or unknown, or when direct confrontation isn't the goal, heroes who focus on mastering skills for investigation or exploration, such as bards and rogues, can be invaluable.



Barbarian

Barbarians dwell in many of the Domains of Dread. Tiny homesteads struggle to beat back the cyclopean forests of Verbrek. Denizens of tiny villages huddle in the frozen wastes of Vorostokov. Nomads wander the burning sands of the Amber Wastes. Life for the people of these communities is a daily struggle against unforgiving terrain. Their clans need hunters, warriors, and protectors—and the most powerful of these is the barbarian. Lone barbarians can also be found in other lands, where they live as solitary hermits or mountain men and avoid the noise of civilization. Among lycanthropes and the larger goblinoids, barbarians are believed to be relatively common as well. Most barbarians in the Lands of Mist are intensely superstitious. The Voros of Vorostokov, for example, believe that written words inherently contain evil magic. The folk of more "enlightened" cultures view barbarians as uncouth at best or drunken berserkers at worst. Tales are whispered of barbarian clans who sell the pelts of anything they catch, humanoid or otherwise.

NEW PRIMAL PATH:

PATH OF THE SHADOWCURSED

Something unholy lives in you. When you rage, you let it out. For you, raging is not merely summoning up primal ferocity or venting your own anger, but granting another separate will control of your body for a time. The true nature of the shadowy presence in your mind may vary, or you may not understand it. It could be a vengeful relative's spirit, the remaining vestige of forgotten deity of war, a dark splinter of your own personality, a tainted totem spirit, or the sentience that once dwelt in a cursed weapon but has instead moved into you. Whatever it is, it is now a part of you, and you know you will never be free of it.

Some barbarians with this primal path are unusual for that class in that they were born or raised in an urban settlement or hierarchal society, but whatever horrid doom put the shadowy second spirit in their mind compelled them to leave their community and live elsewhere, whether alone or as part of tribe. Such *shadowcursed* have lived outside of civilized ways for so long, they are highly unlikely to return.

THE SHADOW WITHIN

At 3rd level when you choose this path, you are cursed, and an evil intelligence lives within you, a foul shadow defined by the worst elements of your soul that makes a mockery of your ideals. You

create an extra Flaw that is only in effect when you are raging. While raging, you have no Ideals. Because this secondary personality has a will of its own, it helps you to anticipate threats and resist psychic attacks. You add half your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1) to all saving throws against psychic damage or being charmed, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

While you are raging, you gain additional benefits. During your rage, you add your full Constitution modifier to all saving throws against psychic damage or being charmed, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious, instead of just half. Your eyes gleam with an unholy light when you rage, granting you advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks but disadvantage on all other Charisma checks. These abilities come with a growing curse, as the dark spirit within you torments you when you go too long without letting it out. When you would normally regain all of your Hit Dice, if you have not attacked a creature while raging within the past 24 hours, you immediately expend a number of Hit Dice equal to your proficiency bonus without gaining hit points.

SHADOWCURSED WEAPON

Starting at 3rd level, you are able to shunt the hateful shadow in your mind into a weapon it possesses, granting you some relief from its constant whispers and attempts to control you, though its influence never completely leaves your thoughts. You can transform one weapon you are holding into your *shadowcursed weapon* by spending 1 hour concentrating on that weapon, as if performing a sort of dark ritual. This can be done during a short rest. The weapon may be magical, but it cannot be an artifact or weapon that is already sentient. The weapon ceases being your shadowcursed weapon if you die, if you perform the 1 hour ritual on a different weapon, if the weapon is more than 100 miles away from you for longer than 24 hours, or if you use a 1 hour ritual to break your bond to it. While you have a shadowcursed weapon, that weapon is considered magical, and it inflicts additional damage on successful attacks equal to half your proficiency bonus (rounded up). In addition, the shadowcursed weapon loves killing, and rewards you with life-force stolen from its victims; when you make an attack with your shadowcursed weapon that reduces a creature to 0 hit points, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1).

If you have not had a shadowcursed weapon for longer than 24 hours, you have disadvantage on Intelligence and Charisma saves. If another creature

wields your shadowcursed weapon, they also gain the magical bonus to damage, but whenever a creature carrying your shadowcursed weapon rolls a d20, they take 1d6 psychic damage if the die comes up as a 1 or a 2.

SUSPICIOUS THOUGHTS

Beginning at 6th level, you can better harness the hateful vigilance of the shadow that rides in your mind, as it warns of possible threats and casts its suspicions on the motives of those you meet. You add your Constitution modifier to all Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) checks,

BLOODTHIRSTY SHADOW

Starting at 10th level, your shadowcursed weapon's love of killing grows into a truly formidable power. While you are raging and wielding your shadowcursed weapon, you can use a bonus action to make one additional weapon attack with your shadowcursed weapon. In addition, when you attack with your shadowcursed weapon outside of your turn, you gain a +2 bonus on the attack roll.

AGAINST THE SHADOW

Starting at 14th level, your long fight against the shadow blackening your thoughts grants you a powerful defense against attempts to influence your mind. You gain proficiency with Intelligence saves, you are immune to the charmed and frightened conditions, and you have advantage on all saving throws against enchantment spells.

WEAPON OF DOOM

Beginning at 14th level, your shadowcursed weapon has grown so powerful that it threatens everything around you, and punishes your flesh when it is frustrated in its attempts to kill. When you are raging and your shadowcursed weapon is on your person or within reach, if there are any creatures within 5 feet of you at the beginning of your turn, you must choose one such creature and make an attack against it with your shadowcursed weapon if you are able. If your shadowcursed weapon is not drawn or in hand, you make it so as part of the attack, and if you do not have the necessary hand or hands free to wield your shadowcursed weapon, you must drop any item that would prevent you from wielding it. This attack does not expend your action or bonus action, and it is never made at a penalty for disadvantage. If the attack misses, you take psychic damage equal to your barbarian level.

Bard

Bards tend to hail from—or find their way to—more civilized lands, where travel is easiest and audiences are most receptive. Bards in the Domains of Dread may take the form of traveling storytellers who offer news of distant lands, often in highly embellished form, for a hot meal and a few coins. In some cases, bards are tortured performers whose talent is barely distinguishable from their madness. These bards maintain their fragile grip on sanity by channeling their feverish imaginations into their art — and into the forces of magic. The Vistani people are talented in many pursuits, but they are famous for their charismatic bards, who entrance audiences with their swirling dances and the frenzied music of their violins. Many bards, regardless of birthplace, aspire to study at the famed bardic colleges of Kartakass. For a bard in these lands, little in life yields more prestige than admission to the Harmonic Hall or to perform in Harmonia's amphitheater. Yet bards also tend to be restless creatures, who wander from one audience to the next.

NEW BARD COLLEGE:

COLLEGE OF SECRETS

There are many organizations in the Domains of Dread that act in secrecy. From thieves' guilds and spy rings to unspoken cults and rebellious conspiracies, all these secrets societies need operatives and leaders like you. In serving your chosen group, you have learned to understand the value of loyalty and secrecy, and how to command fear and respect. The key to your success and survival is an expert understanding of the psychology and culture of those around you. Your branch of your college is no loose association, but a close-knit society of sworn comrades, bound together in a mutually dependent code of discretion, honor, and blood. You are different things to different people. Some call you a protector of the common folk, others think of you as an extortionist or a threat. In some places, you and your fellows may be relied upon as an unofficial police force. You may even be condoned by local authorities, but they'll never know the truth of what you are. In the Domains of Dread, secret societies are more prevalent than in many other places. In a world where fear, despair, and horror are predominant themes, some of the common folk will latch onto any form of hope that comes along. Instead of being a member of the downtrodden masses, you can be one

of the elite, in on The Secret and better off than your peers. In short, your secret society offers you the hope of rising above the fear and despair of the land.

What is a Secret Society?

In the Domains of Dread, a cryptic allegiance, or secret society, is founded on a single concept: conspiracy. All of its members are conspiring to achieve a common goal. This goal is one that would not be widely supported by the common folk or those in power, or else the society wouldn't need to be secret. Frequently most members of the society know only the broad aims of the organization. The details of the master plan are known to just a select few.

The members of a secret society tend to be scattered and few. They rarely know each other by sight or name. Secret symbols and signs are the only way they can identify each other. The members of a secret society can come from any walk of life, from peasant to noble, adventurer to scholar. Whomever they are, the members of a secret society are fanatical. They are so strongly devoted to their cause that they may even risk their lives for it.

The goal of the society can be good or evil. Many of them have goals that shouldn't even be judged on a good/evil scale. Some have goals that may not make sense to a rational mind. In most cases, there is a master plan to achieve the goal. The master plan is frequently incomplete or requires many generations to fulfill. After all, if they had all the pieces right now, their quest would be over. The members of a secret society are constantly seeking the missing links or waiting for an auspicious time to launch the next phase of their master plan.

Despite their increased presence in the Domains of Dread, secret societies still encompass only a very small segment of the population. Only a few thousand people in all of the lands of the Core are members of cryptic allegiances.

It is always important to remember that the true power in any domain is held by its darklord. Secret societies wield relatively little influence. For all their secrecy and stealth, it is unusual for a society to have any significant presence in a domain without coming to the darklord's attention.

Most lords keep tabs on the societies, but they seldom interfere with their activities. Why destroy an organization that might be useful someday?

Secret Societies of Ravenloft

Most of the cryptic allegiances described in the Secret Societies chapter of this document are a great fit for the College of Secrets bard. Some of the best options described there for this bard archetype include: *The Ba'al Verzi* (an ancient Barovian order of assassins), *the Circle* (an order of knights who work to undermine the darklords by destroying their lieutenants), *Carnival* (a traveling circus of outcast led by a mysterious woman), *the Fraternity of Shadows* (scholars, mages, and illusionists obsessed with unraveling the secrets of the Domains of Dread), *the Kargatane* (agents of hidden masters with a secret to immortality), and the *Keepers of the Feather* (who seek a particularly arcane path to defeating the most infamous of darklords).

BLOOD INITIATION

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you have been fully initiated as a member of your secret society, and you have been trained in all their mysterious ways. They in turn expect your loyalty and secrecy, but this gives you a number of benefits:

- You gain proficiency with one Charisma-based skill, and with two of the following tools: thieves' tools, disguise kits, forgery kits, or poisoner kits.
 - You can communicate wordlessly with any other member of your secret society who can see you. If you can see them, they can communicate back. This is not telepathy, but a combination of gesture, innuendo, and facial expression that no one outside of your group can perceive without some kind of magical insight.
- As an action, when a non-hostile creature is frightened of you, you can make a Charisma (Deception) check against its passive Insight score (10 + Insight modifier) to cause it to stop being frightened of you and become charmed by you instead. It remains charmed by you for 10 minutes or until you or your companions threaten it or do something harmful to it. Creatures immune to being charmed remain frightened of you. If you genuinely mean the

creature no harm, the DM may allow you to make a Charisma (Persuasion) check instead of using your Deception skill.

PREDATORY INSIGHT

At 3rd level, you learn the *hunter's mark* spell. It does not count against the total number of spells you can know as a bard. When an ally attacks a creature that is the subject of your *hunter's mark*, you can use your reaction to expend one of your uses of Bardic Inspiration, rolling a Bardic Inspiration die and adding the result to the ally's attack roll. If the ally hits, they inflict additional damage equal to your Charisma modifier. In addition, when a creature that is the subject of your *hunter's mark* spell attacks another creature you can see or hear, you can use your reaction to expend one of your uses of Bardic Inspiration to give them disadvantage on that attack roll. If the attack still hits, the damage is reduced by an amount equal to the number rolled on your Bardic Inspiration die.

GRIM MOCKERY

Starting at 6th level, you can use what seems like gentle teasing, a polite word of caution, or even just



a look to communicate a terrifying threat. When you cast the *vicious mockery* cantrip, the range is doubled, you can target two creatures instead of just one, and you add your Charisma modifier to the damage roll. At 11th level you can target up to three creatures with this cantrip, and at 17th level you can target as many as four. In addition, at 14th level, when you successfully strike an opponent with an attack, you can cast *vicious mockery* as a bonus action, targeting only the opponent you struck.

SECRET INSIGHTS

At 6th level, if you spend at least 1 minute observing or interacting with another creature outside combat, you learn certain information about its capabilities compared to your own. The DM tells you if the creature is your equal, superior, or inferior in regard to two of the following characteristics of your choice:

- An ability score of your choice
- Armor Class
- Current hit points
- Total class levels (if any)
- Levels in a particular class (if any)
- At the DM's option, you might also realize you know a piece of the creature's history or one of its personality traits, if it has any.

When you use this ability on a creature, you can also cast *hunter's mark* on it without any components and without using a spell slot. Once you cast *hunter's mark* on a creature without using a spell slot in this way, you cannot do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

CUTTING SECRETS

Starting at 14th level, when you roll an ability check or saving throw to resist any attempt to discern information about you, your plans, your location, or your thoughts, you have advantage on the roll, and if your proficiency bonus is applied, you double your proficiency bonus for that roll. This includes effects that would read your thoughts or compel you to speak the truth. If you succeed on your roll, you can cast *vicious mockery* as a reaction, but must include the source of the attempt to discern the information as a target.

INFORMANT NETWORK

At 14th level, you have carefully built up a network of informants who you can contact from almost anywhere (via a messenger bird, magic, or other means). These informants are mix of guards, beggars, vagabonds, merchants, and allied government officials who have enough personal loyalty to you to perform routine favors, but not to risk their safety. As long as you are within 100 miles of a settlement that includes at least 100 intelligent

creatures with whom you share a language, you can use the following abilities:

- You can cast the *commune* and *legend lore* spells as rituals with a 1 hour casting time, but they are not magical effects, and you do not learn those spells; they represent information from your network rather than divination magic, and can be used even if spells are unavailable (such as in areas of dead magic or antimagic). Any references to contact with deities in those spells instead reference contact with your network. You can gain any information that is known by more than 1 person within 200 miles, within the limitations of the spells. The casting time is the time it takes to contact your network and get back your answer.
- You choose a location that you have seen before, or a public location which has been described to you in some detail, then ask members of your network to watch it for one hour. At the end of that hour, you are informed of everything that could have been seen in that location within the last hour, as if you had been watching it yourself with a *scrying* spell for that time. Creatures that enter the location who have the Observant feat or can see invisible objects make a Wisdom saving throw against your bard spellcasting DC. If they succeed, they know they are being watched, but not who is watching them.
- You use your existing network's contacts to get knowledge about an unfamiliar city or town you are near. When you are within 5 miles of a settlement with a population of at least 100 intelligent creatures, you can spend 30 minutes following up on leads from your contacts to gain knowledge of up to three facts of your choice about any of the following subjects as they relate to the settlement:
 - major criminal organizations and cult activities
 - significant underground tunnels or architecture
 - popular religious groups and places of worship
 - powerful figures in government and commerce
 - individuals who inspire great awe or fear (such as archmages or legendary warriors)
 - basic demographics of the population (percentage of humans and other races, etc.)
 - rumors of monsters dwelling in the settlement or nearby (including below it)
 - any large wilderness areas inside or close to the settlement
 - other settlements or cultures nearby

For example, if you entered a new city and used this ability, you could determine its most powerful thieves' guild, the locations of temples that can provide magical healing, and which graveyards people say are haunted by undead.

Cleric

Clerics bear the sacred responsibility of carrying the divine message of a patron deity to their mortal followers. Of course, in the Domains of Dread, this message is as likely to be Bane the Lawgiver's ceaseless demands of obedience or Zhakata's ravenous cruelty as it is to be the words of hope offered by deities like Ezra or the Morninglord. Clerics in Ravenloft may be the shepherds of their congregations, adventuring to remove the faithful from danger, or they may be itinerant priests, preaching the word of their god in the earnest hope of converting new followers to their faith. Then again, they might be depraved cultists, secretly carrying out the obscene mandates of their foul patron. When a cleric enters Ravenloft from another world, they immediately feel a hollowness slip into their heart, a void that the strength and support of their deity once filled. Although clerics continue to receive the blessings of their divine patrons, they no longer feel their guidance. This absence often causes clerics new to the Land of Mists to suffer crises of faith or pass through periods of deep depression. For natives of the Land of Mists, this remoteness is perfectly normal; they expect the gods to be distant and inscrutable as a matter of common sense. Some clerics in Ravenloft claim to be the direct vessel of their respective deities, but these folk are widely regarded as lunatics and false messiahs.

NEW DIVINE DOMAIN:

HUNTING DOMAIN

The Hunting domain focuses on the sacred link between hunter and prey, a relationship that ties mortals to nature. The gods of hunting represent far more than the mere pursuit of animals or the skills and equipment involved. They signify both the hunt for justice—such as tracking down an enemy who was wronged you or your community—and the sacred spiritual quest that reveals wisdom. A god of the hunt who is evil emphasizes the power of the hunter, who uses superior strength, cunning, and skill to kill and take what they wish. A good god of the hunt encourages a village or tribe dependent on hunting a certain animal for food to see those animals as their mystical kin, not as prey, and to be careful not to hunt more than they need. Deities such as Sehanine Moonbow, Mielikki, Malar, Gwaeron Windstrom, Habbakuk, Artemis, Bast, and Skadi claim influence over this domain. Divine patrons of the hunt are more often female than male,

and are often tied to forests, seasons (especially autumn), and the moon as well. Like rangers, clerics of this domain walk the frontier between civilization and the wild.

In the Domains of Dread, some cultures identify Mother Night as a goddess of the hunt, granting her cloak of darkness as a blessing that allows nighttime hunters to approach their prey unseen. She is popular in Barovia among simple hunters and the dusk elves of Vallaki. The Valachani god Yutow is also placated as a hunting deity, due to his ties to the spirit of the panther. Certain cults in remote domains worship Malar, though only in secret.

HUNTING DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>detect poison and disease, hunter's mark</i>
3rd	<i>locate animals or plants, misty step</i>
5th	<i>haste, plant growth</i>
7th	<i>freedom of movement, locate creature</i>
9th	<i>hold monster, tree stride</i>

BONUS PROFICIENCY

When you choose the Hunting Domain at level 1, you gain proficiency with all martial ranged weapons, and you become proficient in the Stealth and Survival skills.

AIMED SHOT

From 1st level onward, you are a master of ranged weapons, able to maintain near perfect aim in a variety of conditions. You do not suffer disadvantage on your attack roll when you make a ranged weapon attack against a target within 5 feet of you, and when you make a ranged weapon attack against a target within 30 feet of you, that target does not benefit from half cover or three-quarters cover.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: PREFERRED QUARRY

Starting at 2nd level, your faith grants you sacred aid on the hunt against certain enemies. You have two types of creatures that are your preferred quarry: aberrations, beasts, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, oozes, plants, or undead. Alternatively, you can select two races of humanoids (such as humans and goblins) to be your preferred quarry (in addition to beasts). As a bonus action, you can use your Channel Divinity to force all creatures within 30 feet that are your preferred quarry or the current subject of your *hunter's mark* spell to make a Wisdom saving throw against your cleric spell DC. If they fail, for 1 minute their speed is reduced by half, and they take radiant damage equal to half your level whenever they take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide actions.

SPIRITUAL AIM

Beginning at 6th level, you practice an intuitive martial technique when aiming ranged weapons (referred to in some traditions as Zen Archery). You can substitute your Wisdom modifier for your Dexterity or Strength modifier when making a ranged attack roll with a weapon.

MARKED QUARRY

At 6th level, creatures that are your preferred quarry or the current subject of your *hunter's mark* spell do not benefit from half cover or three-quarters cover against your attacks (including spell attacks), and they have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth), Charisma (Deception), and Charisma (Intimidation) checks against you.

MASTER ARCHER

Starting at 8th level, you have a +1 bonus to attack rolls on ranged attacks, and you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

SACRED HUNT

At 8th level, whenever you use your Channel Divinity, you gain an additional benefit: For 1 hour after using it, you can track other creatures while traveling at a fast pace, and you can move stealthily while traveling at a normal pace. When you reach 11th level, you also gain this benefit whenever it is nighttime and the moon is visible in the sky (even if you are not outdoors yourself to see it).

HUNTER'S FOCUS

Beginning at 17th level, when a creature is the subject of your *hunter's mark* spell, you have advantage on ranged attack rolls against that creature. During your turn, whenever you miss with a ranged attack against a creature that is your preferred quarry or the current subject of your *hunter's mark* spell, you can immediately make an additional attack. You can only gain one additional attack during your turn with this ability.

NEW DIVINE DOMAIN:

RULERSHIP DOMAIN

Clerics from this domain come from a culture where their status as clergy members in their particular sect gives them a superior place in society. They gain legal authority to pursue enemies of the faith, and to make commands of those who rank lower in the formal or informal caste system that elevates them. Often—but not always—they come from a theocracy where one faith or pantheon is linked to

the state, and other faiths may be looked down upon or even outlawed. Often, they function as a police force as well as a vocational aristocracy, leading inquisitions to ferret or hunt down the rebels and infidels who threaten their dominion. These priests are often referred to as Inquisitors, Kingpriests, or Templars, and tend to be lawfully aligned. Though this domain's clerics often worship and work in the service of tyranny, this is hardly true of all of them. In worlds beyond the Domains of Dread, there are a wide variety of examples of the Rulership domain in practice. For example, in the Forgotten Realms city of Elturel, lawful good clerics of Torm use these divine powers to keep the peace, seeking the genuine good of all citizens. Also in the Realms, the nation of Unther has had four different faiths of varying alignments—the churches of Tiamat, Hoar, Anhur, and Gilgeam—all enforce their leader's edicts with these gifts in different eras. On the other hand, oppressive drow priestesses of Lolth and kuo-toa whips worshipping Blibdoolpoolp can also receive such gifts. In the Realms, deities as varied as Siamorphe, Tyr, Bane, Helm, the Red Knight, and Waukeen have all granted this domain. Across various worlds, Clangeddin, Deep Duerra, Gorm Gulthyn, Ilneval, Bahamut, Tiamat, Maglubiyet, Athena, Re-Horakhty, Forseti, Heimdall, Kali, Paladine, Takhisis, Kiri-Jolith, Sargonnas, Pholtus, Iuz, St. Cuthbert, Heironeus, Wastri, Allitur, Primus, and the Silver Flame have all granted this domain to clerics in certain regions, especially those charged with enforcing laws or uncovering hidden threats. Many Domains of Dread are theocracies, though some (such as G'Henna, Pharazia, and Verbrek) are devoted to false gods. In those theocratic realms where clerical powers are actually available, many priests of this domain exist. Deities in the Domains of Dread who also grant this domain include Belenus (as worshipped in Tepest and Nidala), Bane, also known as the Lawgiver (worshipped in Nova Vaasa and Hazlan as part of the state religion, the Iron Faith), Yutow the Peacebringer (whose monotheistic faith dominates Valachan), and many of the above listed deities of other worlds, who have been brought to these lands as their people have been stolen from their true realms.

RULERSHIP DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>psychic shield*</i> , <i>telekinetic slam*</i>
3rd	<i>detect thoughts</i> , <i>hold person</i>
5th	<i>control thoughts*</i> , <i>invasive id*</i>
7th	<i>locate creature</i> , <i>staggering smite</i>
9th	<i>dominate person</i> , <i>telekinesis</i>

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

When you choose the Rulership Domain at level 1, you gain proficiency with all martial weapons, and you become proficient in the Intimidate skill.

DOMINEERING FORBIDDANCE

Starting at 1st level, your unmistakable mantle of command can dissuade others from attacking you. When a humanoid attacks you or targets you with harmful spell, you can use your reaction to force it to first make an Intelligence saving throw against your cleric spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature must either choose a new target, lose the attack or spell, or take psychic damage equal to your Wisdom modifier and become frightened of you until the end of your next turn. If a creature cannot be frightened, you cannot target it with this effect. If you attack a creature or cast a spell that targets it, that creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: CENSURING AUTHORITY

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to restore order to the lawless. As an action, you present your holy symbol, and each creature of your choice within 20 feet which can see or hear you must make an Intelligence saving throw. Each creature that fails takes 2d8 psychic damage, and for 1 minute, its speed is reduced by 10 feet. If it is a humanoid, you can also cause it to be indifferent about creatures of your choice that it is hostile towards for 1 minute, though at the end of that duration it becomes hostile again unless the DM rules otherwise. Creatures who succeed on their save only take half as much damage.

RESTRAINING STRIKE

Beginning at 6th level, you add have advantage on opportunity attacks against humanoids, and when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack outside of your turn, you reduce its speed by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.

STERN REBUKE

Starting at 8th level, the power behind your dominant presence castigates your foes and fortifies your own strength of will. When you cast a spell that deals psychic damage or radiant damage, you can add your Wisdom modifier to one damage roll of that spell. For 1 hour after casting such a spell, you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened, and add your Charisma modifier

(minimum of 1) to all Wisdom (Insight) checks to sense if a creature is lying.

GUARDIAN OF ORDER

Beginning at 17th level, you are immune to being charmed or frightened, and when a creature takes psychic damage from your Domineering Forbiddance feature, it takes an extra 2d8 radiant damage and has disadvantage on all Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws until the end of your next turn.

ALTERNATE DIVINE DOMAINS:

ELEMENTAL DOMAINS

In many Domains of Dread, the gods are considered absent or too distant to intercede. In some of them, clerics of traditional deities do not exist, but clerics channeling elemental power can still perform miracles. In other places—including worlds beyond the Mists—there are gods who grants elemental domains as well.

These domains do not generally include entirely new abilities, but replace the spell lists of existing domains while providing minor alterations to the features they provide.

AIR DOMAIN

The Air Domain works exactly as the Tempest Domain does, but you replace the list of spells provided by that domain with list below, and some of the features are changed, as described below under “Altered Features.”

AIR DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>feather fall, thunderwave</i>
3rd	<i>gust of wind, dust devil**</i>
5th	<i>call lightning, wind wall</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals, storm sphere**</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental, control winds**</i>

ALTERED FEATURES

Clerics of the Air Domain use the features of the Tempest Domain, but alter some of them as follows:

Bonus Proficiency. Instead of gaining proficiency with martial weapons and heavy armor, you gain proficiency with martial weapons and learn the following cantrips: *gust***, *thunderclap***, and *uncanny balance**. You also learn the Auran language.

Thunderbolt Strike. Instead of thunderbolt strike, you gain the following new feature, Lightning Swiftiness:

- **Lightning Swiftiness.** Starting at 6th level, immediately before or after you cast a spell of 1st level or higher, you can use a bonus action to cast a cantrip that normally has a casting time of 1 action.

Divine Strike. When you inflict the damage from this feature on a Large or smaller creature, you can also push it up to 10 feet away from you.

EARTH DOMAIN

The Earth Domain works exactly as the Nature Domain does, but you replace the list of spells provided by that domain with list below, and some of the features are changed, as described below under “Altered Features.”

EARTH DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>beast bond**</i> , <i>earth tremor**</i>
3rd	<i>earthbind**</i> , <i>Maximilian’s earthen grasp**</i>
5th	<i>erupting earth**</i> , <i>wall of sand**</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals</i> , <i>stoneskin</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental</i> , <i>transmute rock**</i>

ALTERED FEATURES

Clerics of the Earth Domain use the features of the Nature Domain, but alter some of them as follows:

Bonus Proficiency. Instead of gaining proficiency with heavy armor, you gain proficiency with all martial weapons that inflict bludgeoning damage, and you learn the following cantrips: *magic stone*** and *mold earth*** (these are in addition to the druid cantrip you learn from the Nature Domain normally). You also learn the Terran language.

Channel Divinity: Charm Animals and Plants. When you use your Channel Divinity for this feature, it affects not only beast or plant creatures, but also elementals who speak or understand the Terran language.

Divine Strike. Instead of choosing to inflict cold, fire, or lightning damage with this feature, you select one of the following damage types: acid, bludgeoning, or thunder. If you choose bludgeoning damage, that damage is considered magical.

Master of Nature. This feature also affects elementals charmed by your Channel Divinity: Charm Animals and Plants feature.

FIRE DOMAIN

The Fire Domain works exactly as the Light Domain does, but you replace the list of spells provided by that domain with list below, and some of the features are changed, as described below under “Altered Features.”

FIRE DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>burning hands</i> , <i>fiery wrath*</i>
3rd	<i>flaming sphere</i> , <i>scorching ray</i>
5th	<i>fireball</i> , <i>flame arrows**</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals</i> , <i>wall of fire</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental</i> , <i>immolation**</i>

ALTERED FEATURES

Clerics of the Fire Domain use the features of the Light Domain, but alter some of them as follows:

Bonus Cantrip. You gain the *produce flame* cantrip instead of the *light*** cantrip. You also learn the Ignan language.

Channel Divinity: Radiance of the Dawn. This feature inflicts fire damage instead of radiant damage.

WATER DOMAIN

The Water Domain works exactly as the Life Domain does, but you replace the list of spells provided by that domain with list below, and some of the features are changed, as described below under “Altered Features.”

WATER DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>fog cloud</i> , <i>healing word</i>
3rd	<i>prayer of healing</i> , <i>Snilloc’s snowball swarm**</i>
5th	<i>tidal wave**</i> , <i>wall of water**</i>
7th	<i>conjure minor elementals</i> , <i>control water</i>
9th	<i>conjure elemental</i> , <i>maelstrom**</i>

ALTERED FEATURES

Clerics of the Water Domain use the features of the Life Domain, but alter some of them as follows:

Bonus Proficiency. Instead of gaining proficiency with heavy armor, you gain proficiency with the trident, net, and heavy crossbow, and you learn the *ray of frost* and *shape water*** cantrips. You also learn the Aquan language.

Channel Divinity: Preserve Life. When you use your Channel Divinity for this feature, at the beginning of your next turn, all plants within 30 feet of you are healed for a number of hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier, and all living creatures within 30 feet suffering any kind of thirst are relieved of it, as if they had just drunk 8 ounces of water.

Blessed Healer. This effect is not only triggered when you cast healing spells as described in this feature, but also when you cast one of your domain spells of 2nd level or higher.

Divine Strike. This feature inflicts cold damage instead of radiant damage.



Druid

In the Domains of Dread, druids seldom revere or draw power from a traditional deity, sustaining their druidic magic through their bond with nature itself. According to tradition, the first druids entered the Land of Mists with the domain of Forlorn, but they spread to many other lands in the centuries that followed. Druids are the guardians of the untamed wilds. Most druids are secretive about their faith and avoid civilized lands, for good reason: not only do druids find the cities of humankind unsettling, they often face hostility from ignorant locals. In most domains, the natives know of druids only through the filter of folklore, and they often confuse druidic magic with "witchcraft," a feared and poorly understood form of magic said to be the plaything of hags and warlocks. To avoid danger, many druids pass themselves off as clerics of "modern" gods when passing through settled lands.

NEW DRUID CIRCLE:

CIRCLE OF THE EQUINOX

Given their closeness to nature, druids have a special relationship with the cyclical passage of time. Balance is central to the ethos of many druidic orders, and this reflects the duality of the year, the changing nature of the world as light grows and recedes. Druids such as you believe that to exist in true balance is also to exist in state of flux, changing your nature as the seasons change. Even compared to druids of the Circle of the Moon, you adapt to your surroundings more easily than any other kind of druid, because your capabilities change from day to day. Your druidic tradition shares much with the religions of ancient sylvan cultures, which predated many modern churches, and you may refer to nature spirits and the archfey as "the old gods." Other druids may gather at standing stones, but those of your Circle always do, using the position of these megaliths to track the passage of time with exact precision. You also believe ancient members of your order built the stone circles that stand in Barovia and many other domains to this day, using them for more powerful purposes than the keeping of the yearly calendar. You have ancient bonds to spirits of nature, and the fey in particular, that relate to the time of year and which of your Circle's aspects you currently favor.

Most druids of this Circle favor one of two seasonal aspects: Autumn or Spring. Autumnal druids are less well trusted in many domains, having ways

more commonly associated with folktales of witchcraft or the Vistani. They do little to discourage this, often referring to themselves as "witches" and their magical talents as "witchcraft." They can curse their enemies with ill luck, and strange creatures are said to attend them. An Circle of the Equinox druid favoring Autumn is more vengeful, enforcing natural balance by correcting wrongs committed and seeking to keep any particular sort of creature from dominating the wilderness. They dwell deep in the savage places of the world, seldom keeping company with the civilization. Ancient pacts tie druids of this Circle who are currently in the aspect of Autumn to the Winter Court of the fey, in his company they are often found.

Spring druids are more likely to be found on the borders of civilization, dealing with humans and elves and the like, than their autumnal counterparts. They also keep company with fey of the Summer Court, who honor old oaths binding them to druids of this Circle who are currently in the aspect of Spring. They often refer to themselves as "beastlings" or "skinchangers." These druids function as something like midwives to beasts of the wilds, helping new mothers through difficult births. When passing by, they can never resist offering the same aid to any expectant mother, whether she is a dairy cow or a nobleman's wife. Druids favoring Spring seek natural balance by encouraging large populations of all animal and plant species, on the notion that such bounty aids all living things, so long as no one type of life overwhelms the others.

The Circle of the Equinox in Ravenloft

Among Forfarian druids (those arising from the lost domain of Forlorn), your ways are practiced by druids of two different orders: the Oak Faction, who favor the powers of the Spring seasonal aspect, and the Rowan Faction, who favor those of Autumn. A sizable group of these druids dwell in Barovia as well, among the Forfarian immigrants outside the village of Immol.

The Circle of the Solstice

Another druid circle, the Circle of the Solstice, exists as this one's natural counterpart, favoring seasonal aspects of Summer or Winter just as Equinox Circle druids favor Spring or Autumn. These druids embrace extremes in their behavior, pushing the far ends of the natural balance, in the esoteric belief that doing so somehow strengthens both sides of any equilibrium. Strangely, they do not have pacts with the Courts of the Fey the way druids of the Circle of the Equinox do. Instead, they have unique ties to other types of creatures most druids seldom truck with. Members of other Circles find the Solstice druids esoteric and strange; some even consider them downright insane.

A particularly erratic group of Winter-aspected druids of the Circle of the Solstice dwell in Barovia, in the area of Yester Hill. These druids actually worship the darklord Strahd von Zarovich, believing his powers over the weather and elements in his domain represent a divine tie to the forces of nature.

rites of the Fey

At 2nd level when you choose this circle, you learn the *quickling step* and *uncanny balance* druid cantrips. They do not count against your number of cantrips known. You also learn *find familiar* as a druid spell. When you cast the spell, you can choose one of the normal forms for your familiar, or you can choose one of the following special forms: blink dog, pseudodragon, sprite, or wolf. Additionally, when you take the Attack action, you can forgo one of your own attacks to allow your familiar to make one attack of its own with its reaction.

Seasonal Aspect

Beginning at 2nd level, your ties to changes of seasons and the fey creatures of the wilderness grant you additional abilities that change like the seasons. Whenever you finish a long rest, you choose one seasonal aspect: either Autumn or Spring. You cannot change your chosen seasonal aspect until you finish another long rest. If you finish a long rest without choosing an aspect, you are assumed to choose the aspect that is closest to the current actual season (Spring during the spring and summer, Autumn during fall and winter). The abilities you gain from your seasonal aspect are described below.

Autumn. You gain access to certain spells depending on your druid level, according to the table below. You automatically have the listed spells prepared, and they do not count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. Any listed spells are always druid spells for you while you have the Autumn seasonal aspect.

Autumn Seasonal Aspect Spells

Druid Level	Spells
2nd	<i>faerie fire</i> , <i>fog cloud</i>
3rd	<i>dust devil</i> ***, <i>misty step</i>
5th	<i>haste</i>
7th	<i>greater invisibility</i>
9th	<i>maelstrom</i> **

In addition, while you have this seasonal aspect, you can substitute your Wisdom modifier for your Charisma modifier when making Charisma checks related to fey of the Winter Court.

Spring. You gain extra options for new types of creatures you can use your Wild Shape to transform into, depending on your druid level, according to the table below. Many of these creatures are not beasts, yet this aspect allows you to take their forms, and you ignore the normal limits on the challenge rating of a creature you transform into when

changing into the listed creature types. You do not need to have seen these creatures before. When you transform into one of the listed creature types using your Wild Shape, you can choose to do so as a bonus action, rather than as an action.

Spring Seasonal Aspect Wild Shapes

Druid Level	Wild Shape Options
2nd	black bear, needle blight, satyr (no pipes)
3rd	brown bear, dire wolf, vine blight
6th	cave bear, centaur, giant constrictor snake
8th	mephit (any kind), hippogriff, sprite
9th	displacer beast, hook horror, owlbear
12th	chuul, lizard king/queen, manticore
15th	bulette, gorgon
18th	chimera, wyvern

In addition, while you have this seasonal aspect, you can substitute your Wisdom modifier for your Charisma modifier when making Charisma checks related to fey of the Summer Court.

Natural Healing Powers

Starting at 6th level, your connection to the natural world provides you with a pool of healing power that replenishes when you take a long rest. With that pool, you can restore a total number of hit points equal to your druid level \times 5. As an action, you can touch a creature and draw power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in your pool. You can use this feature in any shape you assume using Wild Shape. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs. When you heal yourself for 5 or fewer hit points with this feature, you may do so as a bonus action instead of an action. Depending on your current seasonal aspect, you gain an addition use for this pool of power, as follows:

Autumn. You can expend 15 hit points from your pool of healing as a bonus action to cast the *hex* spell as a 1st level spell, without using any components.

Spring. When in a shape you assumed by using your Wild Shape, you can expend 5 hit points from your pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. You can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Natural Healing Powers, expending hit points separately for each one.

Gifts of the Fey

Beginning at 10th level, you have earned the respect of the fey and other supernatural beings in the wilderness around you, and they teach you some of their secrets. When you cast *find familiar*, you can choose for your familiar to take the form of an adult faerie dragon of any kind, instead of one of the normal forms.

In addition, you are immune to being charmed or frightened, and when another creature attempts to

charm or frighten you, you can use your reaction to teach them you are not to be trifled with. The creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your druid spell save DC or take psychic damage equal to your druid level and be frightened by you until the end of your next turn. You can use this feature in any shape you assume using Wild Shape. Depending on your current seasonal aspect, you gain an additional use for this feature, as follows:

Autumn. When a creature fails its Wisdom save against this ability, instead of causing it to be frightened, you can choose to expend 5 hit points from your pool of healing as a reaction to immediately cast the *bestow curse* spell, targeting that creature, without using any components.

Spring. When a creature fails its Wisdom save against this ability, you can choose for it to be charmed instead of frightened if you wish. If you choose for it to be charmed, it is charmed for 1 minute by this feature, and you can decide whether or not to inflict the psychic damage as well.

GUARDIAN AT THE THRESHOLD

At 14th level, you are recognized as a keeper of the balance among the fey and other creatures of the wilderness, and can stop them in their tracks with a command. You can cast *hold monster* at will—targeting a beast, elemental, fey, or monstrosity—without expending a spell slot or material components. You must finish a long rest before you can use this feature on the same creature again. You can use this feature in any shape you assume using Wild Shape.

Depending on your current seasonal aspect, you gain an additional use for this feature, as follows:

Autumn. Whenever you cast *hold monster* using this feature, you can also use it against fiends and celestials.

Spring. Whenever you cast *hold monster* using this feature, you can also use it against humanoids. Once you use this feature against humanoids two times, you cannot use it against humanoids again until you finish a short or long rest.

NEW DRUID CIRCLE:

CIRCLE OF THE SPIRITS

Druids of the Circle of the Spirits are known as *shamans*, intermediaries between the mortal world and the realm of spirits—the vast multitude of living beings that infuse the entire world with divine essence. As a shaman, you play a vital role in your culture—communicating with ancestor spirits, demons, nature spirits, and the most powerful of spirits, who might be considered deities. You offer sacrifices, prayers, and services to the spirits, and in return gain the favor of certain patron spirits who bestow spells and other magical abilities upon you. In the Domains of Dread, many believe the Mists prevent spirits from moving on to their final rests. Whether this is true or not, the spirits of many of your ancestors remain in the world, sometimes granting omens or changing fortunes, other times causing serious trouble. Propitiating such spirits is a matter of great importance, making your vocation a vital one.

Druids of this circle often go on adventures not because of any desire of their own, but as a direct result of their unique relationship with the spirit world. Ancestor spirits often have their own agendas—deeds left undone or wrongs unavenged—and call on their shaman descendants to carry them out. Common folk and even nobles often summon shamans like you if evil spirits or undead monsters cause trouble. Even nature spirits, normally unconcerned with the affairs of humanity, might request assistance from you if an evil influence (such as a fiend or a corrupting aberration) troubles the natural world. Shamans who traffic with evil spirits are often driven to commit heinous deeds. You are both blessed and burdened by your gifts, and may sometimes feel like a pawn in the games and machinations of the spirit world.

Circle of the Spirits Multiclassing

If you are using the optional multiclassing rules, druids of this circle gain a special benefit: they can substitute their Charisma score for their Wisdom score when determining if they can be multiclass druids.



THIRD EYE OPEN

When you choose this circle at 2nd level, you may choose to make Charisma your spellcasting ability score for this class, instead of Wisdom. This includes using your Charisma instead of Wisdom to determine the number of spells you prepare, to calculate the DC of saving throws against your druid spells, and as the modifier for your druid spell attacks.

In addition, you can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when you are on the Material Plane, and vice versa. Because you perceive creatures and objects in the Ethereal Plane as being limned in an aura of colored light, you can always discern whether something you see is in the Ethereal Plane or not, and you can always identify if a creature in the Ethereal Plane is a celestial, elemental, fey, fiend, or undead, and which of those types it is. You do not perceive these auras around creatures or objects if they are not in the Ethereal Plane.

Aura Color Suggestions

It may be useful to begin with a sense of what the auras seen with the Third Eye Open feature look like. In the author's own campaign, druids with this feature perceive celestials as having a golden aura, fiends as having a black aura, ancestor spirits as having a white aura, other undead as having a pale gray aura, fey as having a kaleidoscoping aura of many colors, and elementals as having a colored aura based on what element they are connected to (red for fire, blue for water, a sandy tan for earth, silver for air, and green if the elemental is tied to wood as a separate element). All other creatures and objects in the Ethereal Plane have an aura of light violet.

Spirit Points. Some of your other Circle of the Spirits features require you to spend a *spirit point*. Whenever you finish a long rest, you gain a pool of spirit points equal to your proficiency bonus. When you reach 17th level, you also regain 1 spent spirit point whenever you finish a short rest. You regain 1 spent spirit point whenever you cast a spell using a 1st-level spell slot. Spells cast with higher level slots do not grant you a spirit point. You can never have a number of spirit points higher than your proficiency bonus. When you finish a long rest, any unspent spirit points are lost, and you gain new spirit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

SUMMON SPIRIT COMPANION

Starting at 2nd level, as an action, you can call forth an ancestral spirit. Some traditions identify ancestors with a certain type of animal, believing that beast to embody the past and future souls of their people. Other ancestor spirits are seen as retaining the identities of their mortal lives, and

having their own goals, whether to protect their progeny or seek vengeance for a crime against them or their family. Any spirit you summon as your companion seeks to grant you spiritual aid and good fortune in a variety of ways.

Aura. The spirit companion emits an aura within a 5-foot radius of itself, benefiting all creatures in the aura that are not hostile to you. Creatures in the aura gain advantage on Charisma saves, and also benefit from other bonuses depending on what spirit companion you summon (see Spirit Companion Types, below). If you are within the spirit companion's aura, you benefit from all these bonuses as well.

Interceding Spirit. While you have a spirit companion within 30 feet, celestials, fey, fiends, elementals, and undead can always understand your spoken words, and you can always understand theirs, and you cannot be charmed or frightened by them.

Spirit Companion Types. When you choose this circle at 2nd level, choose one of the spirit companion types listed below. When you summon your spirit companion, the chosen spirit is the type that appears. The type represents the goals of an ancestral ghost or the totem of a particular breed of animal. The animal type your spirit companion represents might be an animal related to or similar to those listed here, but more appropriate to your homeland or culture. For example, you could choose a hyena, hunting hound, coyote, lion, mongoose, or even a blink dog, in place of the wolf. Each type of companion spirit grants different bonuses to friendly creatures within its aura.

Bear Spirit. Non-hostile creatures within this spirit companion's aura add your spellcasting ability modifier to death saves and Strength saving throws.

Protective Ancestor Spirit. Non-hostile creatures within this spirit companion's aura add your spellcasting ability modifier to Intelligence saves and Wisdom (Insight) checks.

Vengeful Ancestor Spirit. Non-hostile creatures within this spirit companion's aura add your spellcasting ability modifier to saving throws against divination spells, being charmed, or any effect that would read their thoughts or which would sense or calm their emotions.

Wolf Spirit. Non-hostile creatures within this spirit companion's aura add your spellcasting ability modifier to Constitution saving throws against exhaustion and saving throws against effects that would cause them to become frightened.

Spirit Companion Traits. When it is summoned, your spirit companion enters the Border Ethereal

and manifests in the same space as you, yet it is not visible to anyone who cannot see into the Ethereal Plane. It can never affect or be affected by anything not on the Ethereal Plane, except as described under your Circle of the Spirits features. The spirit is a celestial creature with 1 hit point. It does not have physical traits such as Armor Class, it is immune to all damage types and conditions, and it cannot make attack rolls, nor can anyone make attack rolls against it. It takes no actions. It only moves, and only when you order it to do so.

The spirit inhabits a space you choose within a 30 foot radius of you, and whenever you move, you can order the spirit to move to a different space within that radius. It always moves at the same time you move and moves wherever you order it to. It can always enter the same space as you or a creature that is not hostile to you and stay there, without any effect on that creature. It can move through other creatures and objects. If you order it to end its move to inside an object, or if you end your turn more than 30 feet away from it, the spirit companion ceases to exist until you summon it again. If you lose consciousness, a summoned spirit companion remains in existence for one minute. If you regain consciousness at all during that time, nothing happens, but after you have been unconscious for 1 minute without waking it ceases to exist until you summon it again. Otherwise, the spirit companion remains until you dismiss it or until you finish a long or short rest.

HOST SPIRIT

At 2nd level, you can use your wild shape as a bonus action to become one with your spirit companion instead of changing into an animal. Your spirit companion must already be summoned and must be in the same space as you when you use this feature. This effect changes your body while you are the host. If you host an animal spirit like a wolf spirit, you look something like the hybrid form of a lycanthrope. If you host an ancestor spirit, you look exalted yet inhuman, like a wingless celestial or a vampire (if it is a protective spirit, your skin takes on a metallic bronze sheen, and your eyes appear gold; if it is a vengeful spirit, your skin looks like white marble, and your eyes appear red).

Host Spirit Benefits. When you host your spirit companion inside your body with this ability, it ceases to exist as a separate entity, becoming only a part of you, and you gain the following benefits:

- You gain temporary hit points equal to 5 times your druid level. (You retain any remaining temporary hit points after this effect ends.)

- You can substitute your spellcasting ability modifier for your Strength on your all attack and damage rolls with melee weapons and unarmed strikes.
- You can roll a d4 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed strike, and when you reach 6th level in your druid class, your unarmed strikes also count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.
- Your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier if you are not wearing armor.
- Your spirit companion's aura now emanates from you, and you and all friendly creatures still gain all the same benefits from it.
- You temporarily gain proficiency with Strength saves.
- When you use the Attack action on your turn, you can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks against humanoids, but disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks against them, due to your inhuman appearance.
- Beginning at 6th level, while you are using your Spirit Host feature, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn, and you can roll a d6 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed strike
- You gain additional benefits depending on the type of spirit companion you are hosting with this ability (see below).

This effect ends if you run out of the temporary hit points granted by this feature, or you replace them with another source of temporary hit points (such as the *false life* or *heroism* spells). It also ends if you are reduced to 0 hit points, if you fall unconscious, if you cast a spell using a spell slot higher than 1st level, or if you die. Otherwise, you can continue to host your spirit companion for a number of hours equal to half your druid level (rounded down). When this effect ends, you lose the benefits of this feature, and your spirit companion re-manifests in the same space as you, functioning as it did before you hosted it.

Additional Benefits by Companion Type. When you use your Host Body feature, you gain benefits based on your spirit companion type, in addition to the benefits above, as follows:

Bear Spirit. You can use your bonus action to gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons until the beginning of your next turn. In addition, you can spend 1 spirit point to gain the following benefit for 1 minute: You gain resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, and thunder damage, but you cannot take reactions. The spirit of the bear makes you tough enough to steel yourself against any threat you can see coming.

Protective Ancestor Spirit. You have advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that you can

see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, you can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated. In addition, you can spend 1 spirit point to gain the following benefit for 1 minute: You can take the Disengage action as a bonus action.

Vengeful Ancestor Spirit. When you make an unarmed strike as a bonus action, you add your proficiency bonus to the damage roll if you hit. In addition, you can spend 1 spirit point to gain the following benefit for 1 minute: you can choose to have your unarmed strike inflict thunder damage instead of bludgeoning damage, and creatures who take this damage must make a Strength save against your druid spellcasting DC or be knocked prone. When you inflict thunder damage in this way, it creates an inhuman roar that is audible out to 60 feet. Any creature that hears it has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws against being frightened until the end of your next turn.

Wolf Spirit. Your allies have advantage on melee attack rolls against all creatures within 5 feet of you that are hostile to you. In addition, you can spend 1 spirit point to gain the following benefit for 1 minute: when you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, its speed is reduced by half until the end of your next turn. The spirit of the wolf makes you a leader of hunters.

CIRCLE AGAINST SPIRITS

Starting at 6th level, you can spend 1 spirit point as an action to ward the area around you against spirits. Each time you use this ability, you choose one of the following creature types to affect: celestial, elemental, fey, fiend, or undead. A 30-foot radius circle centered on you, traced in glowing light, burns itself into the ground at your feet. Each creature of the chosen type within the circle must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, such a creature is repelled from your presence for 1 minute, though the effect ends if the creature takes damage. A repelled creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it possibly can, and it can't willingly move to a space within the circle. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

This ability does not affect spirit companions. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

At 6th level, you gain an additional bonus ability when you are within your spirit companion's aura. Unlike the other benefits of the aura, these usually apply only to you, and not your companions. Some

of these abilities reference your pace while traveling, as per the normal travel pace rules (as described under "Movement"). The exact bonus abilities you gain depend on your spirit companion type, as follows:

Bear Spirit. You gain the might of a bear. While you are within the aura of your spirit companion, your carrying capacity (including maximum load and maximum lift) is doubled, and you have advantage on Strength checks made to push, pull, lift, or break objects. If you wish, you may substitute your spellcasting ability score for your Strength when making such checks.

Protective Ancestor Spirit. Your protective spirit advises you in vigilance. You are considered proficient in the Perception skill, and double your proficiency bonus when adding it to Wisdom (Perception) checks. In addition, you add your spellcasting ability modifier (minimum of 1) to Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Vengeful Ancestor Spirit. This spirit prompts you to visit terrible retribution on enemies. When a creature attacks or inflicts damage on you or an ally, you can use your reaction to mark it as your quarry. While that creature is your quarry, you sense the direction to the creature's location, as long as that creature is within 1,000 feet of you. If the creature is moving, you know the direction of its movement. This effect lasts until you mark another creature as your quarry, or until running water at least 10 feet wide blocks a direct path between you and the creature.

Wolf Spirit. You gain the hunting sensibilities of a wolf. While you are within the aura of your spirit companion, you can track other creatures while traveling at a fast pace, and you can move stealthily while traveling at a normal pace.

At 14th level, you can spend 1 spirit point to grant whichever one of these benefits you currently possess (if any) to another willing creature for 1 minute, as long as it is within the aura of your spirit companion.

FAMILY OF SPIRITS

At 10th level, you choose a second type of spirit companion besides the one you normally summon. From now on, whenever you summon a spirit companion, you select which type you want it to be from the two types you have chosen. You can never have more than one spirit companion summoned at a time; if you summon a spirit companion while you already have one, the previously summoned spirit companion ceases to exist until you summon it again. For example, you could choose a Wolf Spirit Companion the first time you summon a spirit companion during a day, and then choose a Protective Ancestor Spirit Companion the second time, causing the Wolf Spirit to vanish.

At 17th level, you choose a third type of spirit companion, and you can select from all three types each time you summon one.

OTHERWORLDLY SENSES

At 10th level, you gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma checks against all celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead. In addition, if you spend an action to focus your spiritual senses, you know if there is any location that is linked to another plane (such as a fey crossing, gate, portal, or teleport circle) within 3 miles of you. You also become aware of what direction it is from you and to what plane it is linked (the Nine Hells, the Feywild, the Shadowfell, the Abyss, the Elemental Plane of Fire, etc.).

The spirits also grant you portents of future events. When you finish a long rest, roll two d20s and record the numbers rolled. You can replace any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check made by you or a creature you can see with one of these prophetic rolls. You must choose to do so before the roll. Each prophetic roll can be used only once. When you finish a long rest, you lose any unused prophetic rolls.

INCARNATE SPIRIT

At 14th level, whenever you spend a spirit point, you gain a special bonus in addition to the other benefits of spending that spirit point. These depend on the type of spirit companion you currently have summoned or are hosting, as follows:

Bear Spirit. Whenever you spend 1 or more spirit points, you gain the following benefit for one minute: any creature within 5 feet of you that's hostile to you has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you or another character currently using this benefit (such as another druid of the Circle of the Heavens with this ability, or a 14th level barbarian of the Primal Path of the Totem Warrior with the Bear totem benefit). An enemy is immune to this effect if it can't see or hear you or if it can't be frightened.

Protective Ancestor Spirit. Whenever you spend 1 or more spirit points, you gain the following benefit for one minute: when a creature within 30 feet attacks you, you can use your reaction to give them disadvantage on that attack.

Vengeful Ancestor Spirit. Whenever you spend 1 or more spirit points, you gain the following benefit for one minute: When you

mark a creature as your quarry using the Spiritual Insight feature you gained at 6th level for this spirit type, you also have advantage on any Wisdom (Insight), Wisdom (Perception), or Wisdom (Survival) checks you make to find it or see through its attempts to deceive you, and you can use a bonus action to make an additional melee weapon attack or two unarmed strikes against it.

Wolf Spirit. Whenever you spend 1 or more spirit points, you gain the following benefit for one minute: you can use a bonus action on your turn to knock a Large or smaller creature prone when you hit it with a melee weapon attack or an unarmed strike.



Fighter

Fighters are often seen as "everyman" heroes: men, women, and others who don't rely on a particular supernatural gift, preferring to face their obstacles head on. Fighters can be found in every settled domain and can fill any niche requiring martial skill and physical prowess. They serve as armored knights in Darkon and Nova Vaasa and toil as soldiers in the armies of Invidia and Falkovnia, but their ranks may also include anything from a constable or a bodyguard to a thuggish bandit, or even just a peasant with long practice in defending her livestock from cunning wolves. Like anyone else, they seek to better their stations in life and secure their happiness. A fighter might pursue fame and fortune, quest for justice or vengeance, or simply follow their own moral imperatives. Fighters are often invaluable when battling physical threats, but without magical aid, they can find themselves all but helpless against some unnatural foes. The most legendary fighters were known for extraordinary allies as well as their own great deeds.

New Fighting Styles for Fighters, Rangers, and Paladins

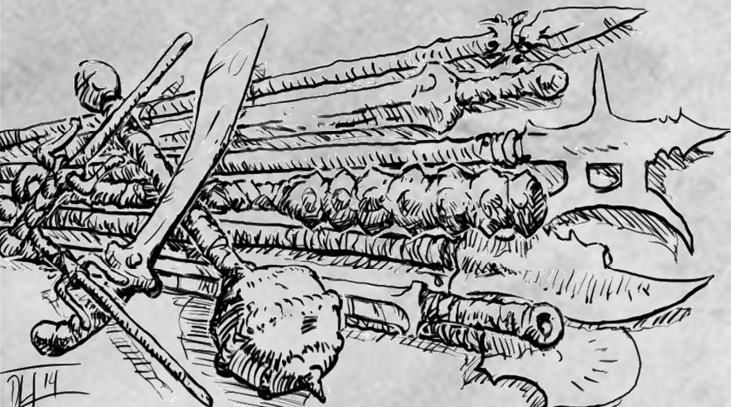
The following fighting styles are available to fighters and rangers in Ravenloft campaigns, in addition to those already available in the normal D&D rules. Paladins also gain access to the Mounted fighting style, but not Mobility. No matter how many times class features allow you to choose, you can never select a particular fighting style more than once.

• MOBILITY

When you are not using a shield or wearing any kind of heavy armor, you receive a +1 bonus to AC, and you gain a swimming speed and climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

• MOUNTED

When mounted, if you inflict damage with a successful weapon attack on an unmounted creature smaller than your mount, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against you or your mount for the rest of your turn, and you can re-roll any weapon damage die that rolls a 1. You must use the new roll.



NEW FIGHTER ARCHETYPE:

PRESCIENT DEFENDER

Like a paladin, it is your devotion to a cause that makes you extraordinary—granting you insight into the future. Yet your cause is an individual, rather than a faith, nation, or way of life. Early on, you figured out that protecting others would be your calling, and you've focused on doing so with single-minded vigilance.

In fact, focusing your mind so completely on your goals awakened a hidden potential in your mind. You have mystical powers fueled by your devotion to keeping those in your charge safe. Combined with your martial training, these abilities make you both uncannily aware of possible threats and preternaturally formidable when dispatching them. Fighters with this archetype train to put their own bodies in harm's way whenever necessary to shield those under their guard, and to slow the advance of any enemy who would threaten their charge. Many fighters of this archetype are members of ancient mystical orders devoted to the protection of members of bloodlines destined for important things. These prescient defenders learn their techniques at the fight of learned masters. Others, however, are so dedicated to protecting their charges that their determination is the spark which ignites their psychic talents,

PRESCIENT DEFENDER SPELLCASTING

Fighter Level	Cantrips Known	Spells Known	Spell Slots	Slot Level	Max. Psi Points
3rd	4	3	1	1st	2
4th	4	4	1	1st	4
5th	4	4	1	1st	5
6th	4	4	1	1st	6
7th	4	5	1	2nd	11
8th	4	6	1	2nd	12
9th	4	6	1	2nd	13
10th	5	7	1	2nd	14
11th	5	8	1	2nd	15
12th	5	8	1	2nd	16
13th	5	9	1	3rd	19
14th	5	10	1	3rd	20
15th	5	10	1	3rd	21
16th	5	11	1	3rd	24
17th	5	11	1	3rd	24
18th	5	11	1	3rd	24
19th	5	12	1	4th	24
20th	5	13	1	4th	24

SPELLCASTING

At 3rd level, your all-encompassing focus on protecting your charge has awakened your mental potential, allowing you to cast Metaphysician spells (see the new Metaphysician class in this document).

Cantrips. At 3rd level, you learn four cantrips.

These cantrips are *challenger's mark**, *minor telekinetic weapon**, and two other cantrips of your choice from the metaphysician spell list. You learn an additional Metaphysician cantrip at 10th level.

Spell Slot. You gain one spell slot to cast a spell. You can spend psi points to gain additional spell slots. The Prescient Defender Spellcasting table shows what the level of your spell slot is. To cast one of your spells of 1st, you must use a spell slot. You regain your expended spell slot when you finish a long rest.

For example, when you are 7th level, you have one 2nd-level spell slot. To cast a 1st or 2nd-level spell, you must expend a spell slot, and you cast it as a 2nd-level spell.

Spells Known of 1st-Level and Higher. You know three 1st-level spells: the *predictive focus** spell, plus two more 1st level metaphysician spells of your choice. At any given point in your career, at least half the spells (rounded down) of 1st-level or higher you know from this class must be divination spells. The Spells Known column of the Prescient Defender Spellcasting table shows when you learn more metaphysician spells of 1st level or higher, beyond the three spells you know at 3rd level. Each of these spells must be from the metaphysician spell list, and must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the table's Slot Level column for your fighter level. For instance, when you reach 7th level in your fighter class, you can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level.

Whenever you gain a level in this class, you can replace one of the metaphysician spells you know with another spell of your choice from the metaphysician spell list. The new spell must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the Prescient Defender Spellcasting table's Slot Level column for your level.

Spellcasting Ability. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your metaphysician spells, since your psychic magic comes from the power of your own mind and your personal discipline. You use your Intelligence whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a metaphysician spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Spellcasting Focus. You can use the crystal type of arcane focus as or the emblem type of holy symbol as a spellcasting focus for your spells.

Spell Components. Because they draw on their own psychic power rather than outside forces, prescient defenders do not require spoken words or gestures to catch their spells, and spells they cast do not have verbal or somatic components.

Limited Ritual Casting. You can cast divination spells you know as rituals if they have the ritual tag.

UNLOCKED MIND

At 3rd level, your use of psychic spells has evolved to give you greater versatility in their use than many other spellcasters enjoy. This increased spellcasting ability is represented by *psi points*, which allow you to create a variety of magical effects and cast spells. You have 2 psi points, and you gain more as you increase your fighter level, per the Prescient Defender Spellcasting table. Any spent psi points are regained when you finish a long rest. You may later discover ways to acquire additional psi points. You can never have more psi points than shown on the table for your level. When you finish a long rest, your number of psi points resets to your maximum. You can use these psi points for a variety of effects described below. Many of these effects enhance an attack in some way. You can use only one effect per attack.

Chosen Charge. You can expend 1 psi point to perform a meditative ritual lasting one hour to designate one willing living creature who is known to you as your Chosen Charge. The creature does not need to be present, but if they are not willing, the ritual fails. You can only have one Chosen Charge at a time.

When your Chosen Charge takes damage, you always instantly know the amount and type of the damage it took. When you cast a spell with a range of touch, your Chosen Charge can deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. Your Chosen Charge must be within 100 feet of you, and it must use its reaction to deliver the spell when you cast it. If the spell requires an attack roll, you use your attack modifier for the roll.

In addition, while your Chosen Charge is within 100 feet of you, you can communicate with it telepathically. As an action, you can see through your Chosen Charge's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of your next turn, gaining the benefits

of any special senses that the Chosen Charge has. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses.

You cannot have a familiar and a Chosen Charge at the same time. If you cast the *find familiar* spell while you have a Chosen Charge, you stop having a Chosen Charge the moment the familiar arrives. If you finish the Chosen Charge ritual while you have a familiar, the familiar disappears until you cast the *find familiar* spell again.

The creature ceases being your Chosen Charge if you die, if you perform the 1 hour ritual on a different creature, or if you use a 1 hour ritual to break your bond to that creature.

Creating Spell Slots. You can use your psi points to gain additional spell slots. You learn other ways to use your psi points as you reach higher levels. You can transform unexpended psi points into one spell slot as a bonus action on your turn. The Creating Spell Slots table below shows the cost of creating a spell slot of a given level. The highest level spell slot you can create is shown in the Highest Level Spell Slot column of the Prescient Defender Spellcasting Table.

CREATING SPELL SLOTS

Spell Slot Level	Psi Point Cost
1 st	2
2 nd	3
3 rd	5
4 th	6

You cannot convert a spell slot into psi points. It is a one-way transaction for you.

Cover Escape. As a bonus action, you can spend 1 psi point to enter a defensive stance that lasts until the start of your next turn. While in this stance, you can make opportunity attacks without using your reaction, and you can use your reaction to make a

melee attack against a creature that moves more than 5 feet while within your reach.

Focused Totality. When you hit a target with the weapon created by your *minor telekinetic weapon* cantrip or by the *major telekinetic weapon* spell, you can spend 1 psi point to inflict an additional 1d8 radiant damage on that creature. If the target is not a living creature (such as if it is an undead or construct), the radiant damage is increased by an amount equal to your Intelligence modifier. If you are 7th level or higher in your fighter class, you can spend up to 3 psi points on a single use of this effect, inflicting an extra 1d8 radiant damage for each additional psi point spent. If you are 13th level you can spend up to 5 psi points, and if you are 19th level you can spend up to 6, increasing the damage by 1d8 for each extra psi point.

Living Wall. When a creature within 5 feet of you is attacked, you can spend 1 psi point as a reaction to grant them half cover against all attacks and effects, including against the triggering attack, until the start of their next turn. This effect ends immediately if you and the creature are more than 5 feet away from each other, or if you are incapacitated. If you choose, you may grant three-quarters cover rather than half-cover to the creature, but if you do so, you take disadvantage on all attack rolls, Dexterity checks, and Dexterity saves until the beginning of the creature's next turn. If the creature is your Chosen Charge, it also gains 1d8 temporary hit points when you spend the psi point.

Liberating Strike. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can expend 1 psi point to maneuver one of your comrades out of harm's way. You add your Intelligence modifier to the attack's damage roll, and you choose a friendly creature who can see or hear you. That creature can use its reaction to move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks from the target of your attack. If the creature is your Chosen Charge, it can move its full speed rather than half.

Slowing Strike. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack roll, you can spend a psi point to reduce its speed by half until the beginning of your next turn.

Unfocusing Strike. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack roll, you can spend a psi point to disrupt the creature's focus in combat with your mental attack. The creature can't take reactions until the end of your next turn, and if it is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration.



DEFENSIVE FORESIGHT

Beginning at 7th level, you are adept in using your mystic powers to defend your charge. Whenever a creature takes damage from a cantrip you cast, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against allies of yours within 5 feet of you until the beginning of your next turn. For the same duration, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against your Chosen Charge, no matter how far away your Chosen Charge is. If a creature under this effect inflicts damage on your Chosen Charge, it takes psychic damage equal to your Intelligence modifier. You also learn the *augury* spell and one extra cantrip from the following list: *booming blade****, *far hearing**, *mage hand*, *mindspeak**, *quickling step**, *project object**, *remote viewing**, *shifting shadow**, *steal speed**, *uncanny balance**, *wall run**, or *warning roar**. The spell and cantrip you learn from this feature do not count against your number of cantrips known or spells known as shown on the Prescient Defender Spellcasting table.

UNCANNY PROTECTION

Starting at 10th level, when an ally within 10 feet of you is hit with an attack, you can spend 1 psi point as a reaction to halve the damage inflicted. If the ally hit is your Chosen Charge, you can also make a weapon attack against the creature that hit them. If the creature is within 15 feet, you can make that attack with a melee weapon you have in hand as if the weapon's reach were 15 feet.

CONSTANT PROTECTOR

Starting at 15th level, when you are reduced to 0 hit points and are not killed outright, you can choose to drop to 1 hit point instead. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest. Additionally, no effect can cause you to fall asleep unless you choose to sleep, and you have advantage on death saves.

MYSTIC WARRIOR

Starting at 18th level, when you use your action to cast a cantrip or 1st-level spell, you can make one weapon attack as a bonus action. In addition, you learn the *premonitory vision* spell if you don't already know it (if you do know it, you learn another 4th-level divination spell of your choice from the Metaphysician Spell List). This spell does not count against your number of cantrips known or spells known on the Prescient Defender Spellcasting table.

Monk

In some ways, monks have much in common with clerics. They primarily concern themselves with matters of the spirit. Unlike clerics, however, monks are more concerned with their own spiritual experience, rather than with the activities of a larger church. A monk turns her eyes inward, seeking to use strict discipline, intense meditation, and focusing exercises to perfectly purify her spirit (or ki) and, through it, her flesh. In the Domains of Dread, monastic traditions vary across many different cultures, not merely among those with philosophies based around ki or the martial arts. Such monasteries are nestled in realms as varied as Barovia, Rokushima Taiyoo, Sri Raji, and Paridon. Barovia's hidden monastery—the Order of Contemplative Thought, outside the village of Immol—conceals monks who have thus far avoided Strahd's ire (though not his notice) as they explore their own psychic potential (practicing the Way of the Boundless Mind, described below). The Rokushiman monks are spread in many different monasteries, practicing all the monastic traditions common on other worlds, all drawn into that domain's endless strife. Sri Raji's monks test their inner strength by inflicting sometimes-grotesque physical punishments on themselves, such as piercing their flesh with iron skewers and hooks. In the lonesome city of Paridon, the local adherents meld monastic practices with occult lodge traditions to create the "theological philosophy" they call the Divinity of Mankind (another version of the Way of the Boundless Mind). Tales also exist of lone monks who wander other domains. Rather than joining monasteries, these monks often learn under a single master and pass on their teachings to a single apprentice. Some monks are selfish, purifying their

spirits in the pursuit of power, but other monks wander to help steer those souls who lack the enlightenment to protect themselves from corruption.



NEW MONASTIC TRADITION:

WAY OF THE BOUNDLESS MIND

A small and esoteric monastic tradition, these monks learn to channel their ki through the unlocked psychic capabilities of an awakened consciousness. They teach that the boundaries that isolate individuals are illusory, and that all mortal minds are linked, both to each other and to the divine. Through focused meditation, telepathic instruction, and a combination of physical deprivation and exercise, they unite their minds and bodies while learn to link their own thoughts with those of others around them.

Spell Equivalents. Some of your abilities with this monastic tradition may allow you to cast the equivalent of a spell, which may require you to make a spell attack. Your attack bonus with such a spell attack equals your proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier. If the spell calls for a saving throw, the DC is the same as the DC for other saving throws against your ki features.

Barovia's Secret Psychic Monks

In Barovia, an order of lawful good monks called the Order of Contemplative Power practice this monastic tradition in a hidden monastery outside Immol. Strahd has suffered them to live within the confines of Barovia so long as they do not challenge his authority. (Secretly, he is curious about their psychic powers as well.) Once, their sacred icon was a two-foot-long crystalline rod they called the *Sacred Barrier*, their symbol of hope against the forces of darkness that hold sway over them, and though their understanding of it was limited, they psionically imbued it, over several generations, with the power to protect both its location and the minds of those who bow to it. However, the *Sacred Barrier* was stolen by the vampire Lyssa von Zarovich, making life that much more hopeless for this embattled monks. (See the 2nd Edition D&D adventure *Thoughts of Darkness* for details.)

CONTEMPLATIVE FOCUS

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you have mastered the rudiments of your traditions psychic training. You learn the *catfeet**, *mage hand*, and *mindspeak** cantrips, and choose one more cantrip to learn from the following list: *fist of rage**, *friends*, *minor illusion*, *quickness step**, *prestidigitation*, *steal speed**, *thought blast**, *uncanny balance**, *wall run**, or *warning roar**. At 6th level, and again at 11th level, you learn one additional cantrip of your choice from that same list. Whenever you cast the *mage hand* cantrip, the spectral hand is made of invisible force and cannot be seen.

KI OF THOUGHT

At 3rd level, you can manipulate your mental ki to create a variety of magical psychic effects. As a reaction when you would take psychic damage, you can spend 1 ki point to give yourself resistance to psychic damage until the end of your next turn. In addition, you can spend 2 ki points to cast one of the following spells, using the normal casting time required for that spell, without the need for any material components: *catapult***, *command*, *comprehend language*, *frightful strike**, and *telepathic link**.

SWIFT MIND

At 6th level, when you use your action to make an unarmed attack or attack with a monk weapon, or take any action that requires you to spend one or more ki points, you can use your bonus action to cast a cantrip you learned from this monastic tradition that normally has a casting time of 1 action.

In addition, choose two of the following spells: *beast sense*, *blur*, *calm emotions*, *crown of madness*, *enthrall*, *hold person*, *levitate*, *phantasmal force*, *silence*, *spider climb*, or *suggestion*. You can spend 3 ki points to cast one of the two chosen spells, using the normal casting time required for that spell, without the need for any material components.

PSYCHIC MONK

At 11th level, choose two of the following spells: *clairvoyance*, *haste*, *invasive id**, *magnetism**, or *sending*. You can spend 5 ki points to cast one of those chosen spells, using the normal casting time required for that spell, without the need for any material components. At 13th level, you can also spend 7 ki points to cast *Rary's telepathic bond* or *telekinesis* in the same way. In addition, as long as you have 1 or more ki points, you have advantage on all Intelligence and Charisma saving throws, and on Wisdom saving throws against become charmed.

UNASSAILABLE MIND

At 17th level, as long as you have 1 or more ki points, you are immune to psychic damage and the charmed condition, and whenever a creature hits you with a melee attack, you can spend 1 ki point as a reaction to force that creature to make an Intelligence saving throw. If the creature fails, it takes 2d10+5 psychic damage and its speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn. If the creature succeeds, it takes psychic damage equal to your 5 plus your Wisdom modifier.

NEW MONASTIC TRADITION:

WAY OF THE FIVE DEADLY VENOMS

Your monastic tradition is for those who have been wronged, and the path to righting those wrongs is not always clean. You seek vengeance for a deeply held grudge, or you have already claimed vengeance and seek to help others claim theirs. It may be that the wrongs which motivate you are long-standing, and it is your larger quest to visit a final retribution on those who committed them, or on those who continue to benefit from such sins. To this end, you study not only how to marshal your ki for greater health and martial prowess, but how to disrupt ki, how to taint it, poison it, reverse it, or turn it against itself. As such, you are an expert in poison and disease, well-studied in medicine but as adept at causing harm as healing it. Your deep study of others' ki gives you the insight to impersonate them as well, and members of this order supplement their skill in stealth with a master of disguise.

In the Domains of Dread, it is said the first monks of this tradition came from the cursed creatures known as the *ermordenung*, whose venomous natures alienate them from other mortal creatures. Fleeing their home domain of Borca, they founded a secret monastery in Rokushima Taiyoo, where they taught disciples to emulate their poison in their own flesh. It is common for orders devoted to this tradition to have various ways for common people who seek reciprocity to petition them, whether via direct contact or detailed written messages. If it suits their criteria, the monks will make such a cause their own, and woe to the target who receives their vengeance.

Spell Equivalents. Some of your abilities with this monastic tradition may allow you to cast the equivalent of a spell, which may require you to make a spell attack. Your attack bonus with such a spell attack equals your proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier. If the spell calls for a saving throw, the DC is the same as the DC for other saving throws against your ki features.

DISRUPTING KI

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you can manipulate ki in yourself and others for a variety of magical effects. By spending ki, you can do any of the following:

- **Deadly Venoms Poison Fist.** As an action, you can spend 2 ki points to cause your fists and feet to blacken with a devastating poison that harms only

those you choose. Choose one or two creatures within 5 feet, and roll an attack roll against each target as if you were attacking with your unarmed strike. On a hit, instead of your normal unarmed strike damage, the target takes 2d10 poison damage and must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it is also poisoned until the end of your next turn. You can spend 1 extra ki point when each attack hits to cause that particular target to take an extra 1d10 poison damage.

- **Merciless Reprisal.** As a reaction, when a creature within 5 feet hits you with a melee attack, you can spend 1 ki points to make an unexpected unarmed attack against that creature. If the attack hits, it inflicts necrotic damage instead of bludgeoning damage, and if you spend 1 ki point when the attack hits, it also deals an extra 1d10 necrotic damage.
- **Redirect Disruption.** As a reaction when you would take damage, you can spend 1 ki point to give yourself resistance to acid, poison, and necrotic damage until the end of your next turn.
- You can spend 2 ki points to cast one of the following spells, using the normal casting time required for that spell, without the need for any material components: *create poison**, *detect poison and disease*, *disguise self*, *lesser restoration*, and *protection from poison*. You gain more of these spell-like abilities as you gain levels. At 6th level, you can also spend 3 ki points to cast *alter self*, *greater acupuncture**, or *spider climb*. At 11th level, you can spend 5 ki points to cast *lesser water to poison** or *vampiric touch*. At 17th level, you can spend 6 ki points to cast *greater water to poison** or *contagion*.

In addition, you learn the cantrips *punishing strike**, *lesser acupuncture**, and *reaver's touch* if you did not already know them.

(* indicates a new spell appearing in this document).

VENGEFUL ASSASSIN KATA

At 3rd level, you master your ki both internally and externally, helping you to seek a reckoning for wrongs. Your spells and attacks treat immunity to poison damage as if it were only resistance to poison damage. In addition, you gain proficiency with disguise kits and the Deception skill.

PERFECT RETRIBUTION TECHNIQUE

Starting at 6th level, you can spend additional ki points to increase the level of spells you cast with your Vengeful Assassin Kata feature, provided the spell has an enhanced effect at higher level (as *create poison* does). The spell's level increases by 1 for each additional ki point you spend. The maximum number of ki points you can spend in this way (including the base cost of the spell and any additional ki points you spend to increase its level) is equal to 1+ your proficiency bonus.

VENOMOUS METABOLISM

At 6th level, your body produces powerful corrosive poisons that are as much a part of you as your blood or tears. You have resistance to poison damage and acid damage, and advantage on all saves against the poisoned condition. In addition, poison damage that your attacks, spells, and class or monastic tradition features would inflict is automatically converted to acid damage if that would increase the amount of damage the creature takes.

LIVING POISON

Beginning at 11th level, you can exude poison from your very flesh. You are immune to poison and necrotic damage, and if a creature touches you continuously for more than 2 rounds, or if it succeeds in a grappling you, you can spend 1 ki point without using an action to force the creature to make a Constitution saving throw. If it succeeds, it only takes poison damage equal to half your monk level. On a failed save, it takes poison damage equal to your monk level and is poisoned until the end of your next turn. If a creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, its Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. At 15th level, when you successfully grapple a creature, you can use this ability against them as a reaction.

This ability comes with a price. Any friendly creature with which you make skin-to-skin contact lasting more than a minute must make a Constitution

saving throw immediately once they have not been in contact with you for over an hour. If they fail, their Constitution score is reduced by 1d4, and they must make another Constitution save whenever they finish a long rest, reducing their Constitution by an additional 1d4 whenever they fail. Success on any Constitution save against the effect ends it immediately, though reduced Constitution must be regained normally. If a creature under this effect makes skin-to-skin contact lasting more than a minute with you again, you can attempt to manipulate their ki to help them if you wish. You may spend 1 ki point to cause their next saving throw against this effect to be made at advantage.

KI REVERSAL

At 17th level, you can disrupt your own ki to reverse the flow of ki in another's body entirely. You can spend 7 ki points to cast *finger of death*, but the range of the spell is reduced to touch, and when you do so, you must instantly spend three of your own Hit Dice, but you do not regain any hit points from spending them.

LINGERING POISON

At 17th level, you have an absolute mastery of the poison within you. You are immune to the poisoned condition, and when an opponent fails its saving throw against your Living Poison feature two rounds in a row, you can spend 3 ki points as a reaction to infect it with an unnoticeable lingering poison,

which lasts for a number of days equal to your blood hunter level. This lingering poison is harmless unless you choose to activate it. To do so, you and the target must be on the same plane of existence. When you use this action, the creature must make a Constitution saving throw. If it fails, it is reduced to 0 hit points. If it succeeds, it takes 5d8 poison damage and 5d8 necrotic damage. You can have only one creature under the effect of this feature at a time. You can choose to expend the lingering poison harmlessly without using an action.

If you touch the corpse of a humanoid you have killed with this ability, you can choose for it to rise at the start of your next turn as a zombie that is permanently under your command, following your verbal orders to the best of its ability.



Paladin

In the Lands of Mists, no one simply decides to become a paladin. They are extremely rare, the chosen ones of divine forces, selected for their spiritual purity. These divine forces imbue paladins with holy powers, appointing them to champion justice and live their sacred oaths. Of course, true paladins understand the difference between the pure, unremitting evil of a vampire and the misguided wrongs of a drunken bully, and they react appropriately. Like clerics, paladins do not feel the same divine guidance here they do in other worlds, and in many ways the deck seems stacked against them. The forces that grant paladins their special abilities are as faceless as the Dark Powers themselves—in fact, some believe the Dark Powers grant paladins those gifts in the Domains of Dread. The proof offered for this is how often and quickly paladins blinded by hubris become servants of the evil that rules these lands. Other scholars, however, point to evidence that paladins are an aberration in the grand tapestry the Dark Powers have woven for themselves. They may seek to destroy paladins in their realm, or provide them with fitting challenges to test, tempt, and corrupt them. It is the rare paladin indeed who dies of old age here; many become fatalistic as they proceed through life, knowing that the examples they leave after their deaths will be as important as the actions they took in life.

NEW PALADIN OATH:

OATH OF DEFIANCE

The Oath of Defiance binds a paladin to resist tyranny and oppression with all their might. Sometimes called knights of the shadows, liberators, paladins of freedom, or cloaked knights, these paladins cannot respect the laws of the province in which they dwell, because they are incompatible with their own code of conduct. Such laws may represent cruelty, arbitrary punishment, crushing tyranny, illegitimate usurpation, blasphemous abominations, or the rule of evil. Instead, those who swear the Oath of Defiance are sworn to undermine that authority, preserving common folk from its injustice and overthrowing such a regime if they can.

There are quite a few adherents of this oath who serve gods of chaos and good, and express their deity's teaching in resistance to unjust rule. Because they must often work in secret, these paladins

almost always wear cloaks or similar garments, both for practical reasons and as tokens of their work. The traditional symbols of freedom and justice—including the torch of liberty, the scales of justice, an eagle or other bird in flight, the gavel of a just judge or magistrate, a blindfold, or the anthropomorphic representations of liberty or blind justice as divine female humanoids bearing one or more of the other symbols—are also important signs they use to recognize their allies, and such heraldry is often worked into their arms or armor.

Loyal Equivocation

As part of the protocols by which they protect themselves and their comrades, paladins of this oath practice a philosophy that they refer to as "Loyal Equivocation." This system of belief requires them to speak only truth. However, it also assumes that when they are asked a question that could affect someone's safety, there is a fundamentally different question behind the words being posed to them. They respond to what the person is *truly* asking, rather than what the mere words of their question seem to say.

An example of this might be if a loyal subject of a lord whose domain had been invaded by enemy soldiers were hiding that lord in her home, and those enemy soldiers came to her door, asking "Is your lord here?" Under the philosophy of Loyal Equivocation, the sinister purpose of the soldiers makes their deceptively simple question a mask for what they really want to know. What they're truly asking when they say "Is your lord here?" is "May we murder your houseguest?" Thus, it is both ethical and honest for the loyal subject to answer, "No."

Conversely, the situation is very different if a knight following these tenets is approached by someone with no ill intent—such as a scared commoner seeking help—and asked "Are you a Knight of the Shadows?" To such a question and such a questioner, the paladin is honor-bound to answer "Yes, I am."

In the Domains of Dread, these techniques and ideals were developed by members of the knightly secret society known as the Circle. As the archetypal examples of this oath in the Land of Mists, they now lend this practice and also their nickname—the knights of the shadows—to all paladins who swear the Oath of Defiance.

TENETS OF DEFIANCE

Clarity. The better future you fight for is more important than the difficulties of the present, and though you may not live to see it, keeping that vision at the forefront of your mind will sustain you in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword. They can kill you, but no one can kill your vision.

Conviction. Do not entertain doubts about your cause, but devote yourself to freedom and justice for those around you. Never surrender to an unjust authority.

Discretion. The lives of those who fight alongside you are in your hands, and their silence preserves your life as well, earning your devotion and loyalty. You must tender their secrets as dearly as your own, and sacrifice when necessary to help your allies fight on.

Equivocation. Never speak words you know to be lies in your heart, but when your revelation could cause evil to occur, answer the real question behind your enemies' interrogations. (See *Loyal Equivocation*, on the previous page, for details).

Tradecraft. You practice a trade as practical and specific as any artisan or guildmaster, but your vocations are spying and armed resistance. Never deviate from the procedures and protocols that keep you and your co-conspirators alive.

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin level listed.

OATH OF DEFIANCE SPELLS

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>disguise self, illusory script</i>
5th	<i>calm emotions, invisibility</i>
9th	<i>beacon of hope, nondetection</i>
13th	<i>freedom of movement, hallucinatory terrain</i>
17th	<i>modify memory, hold monster</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options:

Hidden Purpose. You can use your Channel Divinity to dissuade enemies from attempting to discern your secret cause. You use your action to pray silently for good

fortune, and for 1 minute any creature that takes an action to discern information about you, your plans, your location, or your thoughts (including effects that would read your thoughts or compel you to speak the truth) must first make a Wisdom saving throw against your paladin spell DC. On a

failed save, the creature takes psychic damage equal to your half your paladin level, and they must choose to either take some other action—one that would not attempt to discern such information—or waste their action second-guessing themselves. They do not realize you are the source of this effect. When you reach 5th level in your paladin class, you can use this effect as a reaction when a creature attempts to discern information of the types described above. When you reach 7th level in your paladin class, when a creature takes psychic damage from this effect, you may choose to expend one spell slot to do additional psychic damage to that creature. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8.

Prayer of Liberation. You can use your Channel Divinity to liberate those around you from fear, hatred, and other effects that would enslave or entrap them. As an action, you present your holy symbol, and for 1 minute, each creature of your choice within 30 feet is immune to being charmed or frightened, and they gain advantage on saving throws against effects that would reduce their speed or cause them to be restrained or paralyzed. If a creature you target with this effect is already charmed or frightened, any effect causing them to be so is suppressed for the duration. When the duration ends, any suppressed effect resumes, provided that its duration has not expired in the meantime.

DIVINE FREEDOM

Beginning at 3rd level, you add your Charisma modifier to all ability checks to avoid being grappled, and all saving throws against effects that would reduce your speed or cause you to be charmed, frightened, or restrained.

AURA OF ESCAPE

At 7th level, creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you have advantage on ability checks to avoid being grappled, and opportunity attacks against those creatures are made at disadvantage. At 18th level, the range of this effect increases to 30 feet.

JUSTICE UNFETTERED

Beginning at 15th level, you are always under the effects of a *freedom of movement* spell.

UNBOUND

When you reach 20th level, your prayers for liberation are answered with the power to defy all tyranny and restraint. Using your action, you gain the following abilities for one minute:

- You gain the benefits of the *mind blank* spell.
- Any creature within range of your weapon that makes an opportunity attack against you or an ally within 10 feet of you provokes an opportunity attack from you.
- You have advantage on all saving throws against divination and enchantment spells.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



Ranger

Like the barbarian and druid, rangers are most at home in the wilderness. Unlike those classes, rangers are often welcome in civilized lands, particularly rustic communities where the wilds press close. Like druids, rangers strive to maintain an uneasy balance between nature and civilization. Where the druid protects nature from the intrusions of mankind, however, rangers often guard civilized peoples from nature's savagery.

Rangers in settled lands are usually employed as game wardens for noble estates. In Sithicus, elven rangers patrol the deep forests astride monstrous stag beetles, hunting evil creatures and discouraging foreign visitors. In untamed lands like Vorostokov, they may hunt game to provide for their clans or scout out new territory. Most folk consider rangers somewhat rustic, but their skills are generally respected. Some patrol the wilds to protect or provide for their homelands. Others—particularly the lycanthrope rangers who infest many domains—prey on the innocent, becoming more dangerous than any beast.

NEW RANGER ARCHETYPE:

DEEP DWELLER

You always knew that you had the taint in your flesh. At some point, your forebears mixed their blood with the offspring of an ancient aberration, for reasons best left un contemplated. The community your ancestors came from was on the coast of a sea or great lake, and some of their relatives spent more time beneath the waves than on land. These aquatic kin brought their neighbors plentiful fishing as well as mysterious wealth from the depths, and the land-dwellers protected and hid them from any outsiders. The less amphibious ones showed only minor signs of their heritage, perhaps slightly bulging fish-like eyes, a narrow aspect to the skull, diminished ears, or rougher texture to their skin. Those with more of “the Look” would develop gill-like folds on their neck, small down-turned mouths, and even scales, and it is said that they built hidden metropoli in deep trenches and reefs. Yet they were all united by the secret of their descent, and by a strange religion with ways alien to more established faiths. Whatever path your own parents and grandparents walked, it put you in a position to choose a life separate from that history if you wished. You could’ve lived among untainted members of your race, with your features overlooked by those close to

you. At some point, however, you made a choice to embrace the strange roots of your family line. Many rangers come to this path out of a desire to protect their favored wilderness from the encroachment of civilization, or to seek justice for a great wrong against those they care about. Regardless of your reasons, you got more than bargained for. By means of practice, ritual, a dark pact, or other means, you can now take on the amphibious traits of your hybrid family entirely, at will, but their instincts and otherworldly ways of thinking challenge your sanity and self-control. You have a strange yearning to spend entire days, weeks, or even years in this alternate form, under the sea, listening to seductive whispers borne on the current, and that urge ebbs and flows with the cycle of the tides. Most troubling of all, a bestial thirst for violence is never far beneath your surface thoughts, and the thrill of assuming your more powerful form to devastate your enemies is a constant temptation.

BLOOD OF THE DEPTHS

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain a swimming speed equal to your walking speed, you can breathe both air and water, and you have advantage on saving throws versus cold. You gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet, unless you already have darkvision, in which case you increase the range of your existing darkvision by 30 feet. In addition, you are naturally adapted to cold climates, and you gain the following Flaw: *“I can hear the waves calling to me, especially in my dreams.”*

TRANSFORMED HYBRID

Starting at 3rd level, you can use your bonus action to transform into your Batrachian Hybrid form, a warm-blooded amphibious shape reminiscent of a muscular sahuagin with shining, slippery, greyish-green scales. This form lasts for 10 minutes or until you use an Action to revert to your normal form. You can speak, use equipment, and wear armor in this form. If you are underwater, this form’s duration is increased, and you may remain in this form for longer than 10 minutes as long as you stay submerged in water. If you leave the water after being in this form for 10 minutes, you automatically revert to your normal form. You also revert to your normal form at any time if fall unconscious outside of water, drop to 0 hit points, or die. You can use this feature twice. You regain expended uses when you finish a short or long rest. When in your Batrachian Hybrid form, you gain the following traits:

- **Hybrid Strength.** You have advantage on all Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and your carrying

capacity (including maximum load and maximum lift) is doubled.

- **Cunning Grab.** You add your Wisdom modifier to grapple checks and checks to avoid or escape a grapple, and your speed when moving a grappled creature is not halved unless they are larger than you are.
- **Scaly Hide.** You have resistance to nonmagical slashing damage, and while you are not wearing heavy armor or using a shield, you gain a +1 bonus to your AC. When you reach 11th level, you have resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning damage and piercing damage as well.
- **Vengeful Strike.** When you hit a creature with a weapon attack that has inflicted damage on you within the last minute, or that is your favored enemy, it takes 1d4 additional damage. This damage increases by an extra 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4). You can deal this extra damage only once per turn.
- **Bloodthirst.** At the start of your turn, if you've taken any damage since the beginning of your last turn, you must make a Wisdom saving throw or you will lash out in rage. The DC is 10 unless you are below half your hit point maximum, in which case it is equal to your ranger spell DC. If you fail, before taking any other actions this turn, you use your bonus action to make a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within your reach. If there is no creature within reach, you use your bonus action to attack an object within reach, with preference for an object smaller than yourself. If there is no object within range, you use your bonus action to move 5 feet closer to something you can attack (this movement may provoke opportunity attacks), unless there is no empty space into which you can move, in which case you lose your bonus action.

GROWING TAINT

At 7th level, the taint in your blood grows more powerful, quickening your instincts and infusing you with greater endurance, but making the use of your hybrid form more tempting. You gain resistance to cold damage, the range of your darkvision increases to 120 feet, and opportunity attacks are made against you with disadvantage.

At the start of your turn, if you've taken any damage since the beginning of your last turn, and if you are not in your Batrachian Hybrid form but have uses of your Batrachian Hybrid form remaining, you must make a Wisdom saving throw to remain in your normal form. The DC is 10 unless you are below half your hit point maximum, in which case it is equal to your ranger spell DC. If you fail, before taking any other actions this turn, you use your bonus action to assume your Batrachian Hybrid form.

CALL OF THE SEA

At 11th level, the bestial instincts of your Batrachian Hybrid form are becoming a part of you in your normal form as well. When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points on your turn, you gain temporary hit points equal to your ranger level plus your Strength modifier, and you can use your reaction to make a weapon attack against another creature within range of your weapon. Additionally, if you are surprised at the beginning of combat and aren't incapacitated, you can act normally on your first turn, but only if you are in your Batrachian Hybrid form or enter that form before doing anything else on that turn.

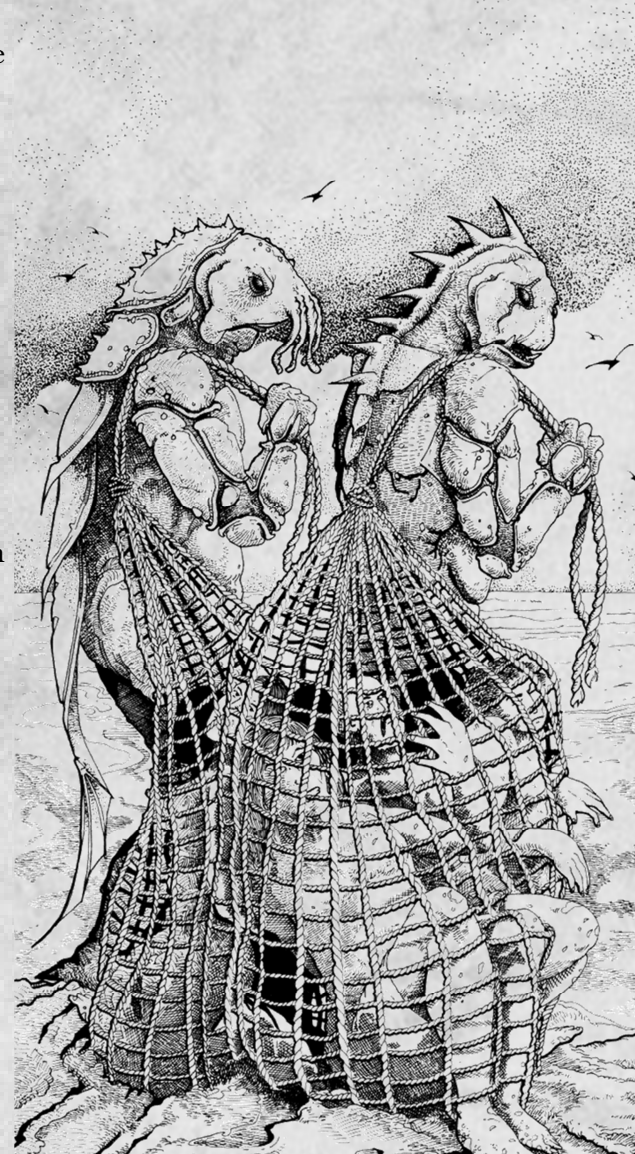
DROWNING HOLD

At 11th level, if you are within 20 feet of a body of water large enough to contain both you and the creature you have grappled, you can use your bonus action to move your speed with a grappled creature your size or smaller in the direction of that water.

RETALIATORY INSTINCT

At 15th level, when you take damage from a creature that is within 5

feet of you, you can use your reaction to make a weapon attack against that creature. In addition, you can now use your Batrachian Hybrid form three times between rests, instead of just once.



Rogue

Few are born to become a paladin or a sorcerer, but anyone with the aptitude and the desire can be a rogue. Beyond cleverness and skill, the only requirement is a preference for solving problems through guile, stealth, and cunning rather than direct confrontation or supernatural powers. There's no point in battling a chamber full of zombies if you can find the secret passage that bypasses them. Like fighters, rogues are often seen as an "everyman" sort of adventurer, and the heroes of tales told in the Domains of Dread are almost never spellcasters, but overwhelmingly fighters and rogues. With extensive expertise in skills, usually accompanied by an impressive bag of tricks, rogues can be invaluable when creeping through ancient tombs or interacting with suspicious locals. Rogues are commonly associated with thieves and tricksters, but they can just as easily be explorers, investigators, or even a mere—if sharp-witted—townsperson. Rogues often adventure in the name of personal gains—they like to know "what's in it for them"—yet a rogue is just as likely to adventure to ensure the safety of a loved one or to gain the satisfaction of a mystery solved.

PSYCHIC CULT MASTER SPELLCASTING

Rogue Level	Cantrips Known	Spells Known	Spell Slots	Slot Level	Max. Psi Points
3rd	4	3	1	1st	2
4th	4	4	1	1st	4
5th	4	4	1	1st	5
6th	4	4	1	1st	6
7th	4	5	1	2nd	11
8th	4	6	1	2nd	12
9th	4	6	1	2nd	13
10th	5	7	1	2nd	14
11th	5	8	1	2nd	15
12th	5	8	1	2nd	16
13th	5	9	1	3rd	19
14th	5	10	1	3rd	20
15th	5	10	1	3rd	21
16th	5	11	1	3rd	24
17th	5	11	1	3rd	24
18th	5	11	1	3rd	24
19th	5	12	1	4th	24
20th	5	13	1	4th	24

NEW ROGUISH ARCHETYPE:

PSYCHIC CULT MASTER

You have become a leader—or *the* leader—of a hermetic cabal with secret fanatical beliefs. Together, you've explored the rare gifts of your own awakened minds, using the lore of ancient mystics as your guide. You learned how to move objects with your mind, cloud others' thoughts, and predict an enemy's moves before they make them. At the same time, the secretive group's activities taught you other skills, less mystical but just as useful. You honed your talents for stealth and uncovering hidden secrets, working your way up to a level of authority. Maybe you left a larger cult to found a cabal of your own, or you worked your way up in the ranks of a group you joined before your psychic abilities developed—perhaps you even took over leadership from a previous leader, by peaceful means or otherwise.

At the level you've reached, any leader sees that that an esoteric conspiracy like yours thrives by finding the right mix of deep occult truths and creative theatricality, and the ratio between the two varies greatly based on the particular cult. Whether you are true believer doing what you must to keep the group unified and devout, an opportunistic charlatan bilking obedient followers, or a pragmatic leader straddling the balance between real eldritch secrets and necessary propaganda for the good of the larger group, your own capabilities are very real. To enemies of your order, you are a deadly enemy. You are an expert in acquiring information that ensures your cult's security. Your ability to wait undetected until just the right moment, combined with your talent for avoiding detection and your uncanny psychic gifts make you a force to be reckoned with. As an adventurer, you support your cult's day-to-day needs as required, seeking esoteric lore, occult relics, allies and opportunities for expansion, and even operating funds if times get tough. However, you know that your investment in this cabal will be repaid many times over when the time is right.

OCCULT KNOWLEDGE

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with the Arcana skill (if you are already proficient in that skill, you gain proficiency in another Intelligence-based skill of your choice).



SPELLCASTING

At 3rd level, the deep internal discipline you developed as a rogue has evolved into the psychic ability to focus your mental energies into casting Metaphysician spells (see the new Metaphysician class in this document).

Cantrips. At 3rd level, you learn four cantrips. These cantrips are *minor illusion*, *psychic shock**, and two other cantrips of your choice from the metaphysician spell list. You learn an additional Metaphysician cantrip at 10th level.

Spell Slot. You gain one spell slot to cast a spell. You can spend psi points to gain additional spell slots. The Psychic Cult Master Spellcasting table shows what the level of your spell slot is. To cast one of your spells of 1st, you must use a spell slot. You regain your expended spell slot when you finish a long rest.

For example, when you are 7th level, you have one 2nd-level spell slot. To cast a 1st or 2nd-level spell, you must expend a spell slot, and you cast it as a 2nd-level spell.

Spells Known of 1st-Level and Higher. You know three 1st-level spells: the *predictive focus** spell, plus two more 1st level metaphysician spells of your choice. At any given point in your career, at least half the spells (rounded down) of 1st-level or higher you know from this class must be enchantment spells.

The Spells Known column of the Psychic Cult Master Spellcasting table shows when you learn more metaphysician spells of 1st level or higher, beyond

the three spells you know at 3rd level. Each of these spells must be from the metaphysician spell list, and must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the table's Slot Level column for your rogue level. For instance, when you reach 7th level in your rogue class, you can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level.

Whenever you gain a level in this class, you can replace one of the metaphysician spells you know with another spell of your choice from the metaphysician spell list. The new spell must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the Psychic Cult Master Spellcasting table's Slot Level column for your level. You can choose one of the metaphysician spells you know and replace it with another spell from the metaphysician spell list, which also must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your metaphysician spells, since your psychic magic comes from the power of your own mind and your personal discipline. You use your Charisma whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Charisma modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a metaphysician spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier

Spellcasting Focus. You can use the crystal type of arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells.

If you have thieves' tools on your person, you can also use any one item held in your hand from that set of tools (such as a lockpick) as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells. If you hold a weapon in the same hand, you cannot use this kind of focus to cast spells.

Spell Components. Because they draw on their own psychic power rather than outside forces, psychic cult masters do not require spoken words or gestures to catch their spells, and spells they cast do not have verbal or somatic components.

UNLOCKED MIND

At 3rd level, your focus on using your mental potential to dispatch those who darken your homeland has awakened hidden psionic potential within you. This increased spellcasting ability is represented by *psi points*, which allow you to create a variety of magical effects and cast spells.

You have 2 psi points, and you gain more as you increase your rogue level, per the Psychic Cult Master Spellcasting table. Any spent psi points are regained when you finish a long rest. You may later discover ways to acquire additional psi points. You can never have more psi points than shown on the table for your level. When you finish a long rest, your number of psi points resets to your maximum. You can use these psi points for a variety of effects described below. Many of these effects enhance an attack in some way. You can use only one maneuver per attack.

Creating Spell Slots. You can use your psi points to gain additional spell slots. You learn other ways to use your psi points as you reach higher levels. You can transform unexpended psi points into one spell slot as a bonus action on your turn. The Creating Spell Slots table below shows the cost of creating a spell slot of a given level. The highest level spell slot you can create is shown in the Highest Level Spell Slot column of the Psychic Cult Master Spellcasting Table.

CREATING SPELL SLOTS

Spell Slot Level	Psi Point Cost
1st	2
2nd	3
3rd	5
4th	6

You cannot convert a spell slot into psi points. It is a one-way transaction for you.

Cloud Minds. When you cast the *minor illusion* cantrip, you can spend 1 psi point to use both options (sound and image) if you wish, rather than just one. When you do so, you may also choose to change the casting time to 1 bonus action (instead of 1 action) for this casting.

Mental Weapon. When you make a weapon attack roll, you can spend 1 psi point to imbue your strike with mystical power. The target does not benefit from half cover or three-quarters cover, and the damage from your attack is considered psychic damage.

Mesmerizing. When you cast an enchantment spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist its effects, you can spend 2 sorcery points to roll 1d6 and subtract the number rolled from the saving throw one target makes against your enchantment spell. You must choose to use this ability before the saving throw is rolled.

Occult Stealth. When you use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action feature to take the Hide action, you can spend 1 psi point to roll 1d4 plus your Charisma modifier to the stealth check.

Occult Strike. When you hit a creature with an attack and had neither advantage nor disadvantage on the attack roll, you can spend 1 psi point to use your sneak attack on that creature, even if another enemy of the target is not within 5 feet. All the other rules of the sneak attack feature still apply to you.

Unfocusing Strike. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack roll, you can spend a psi point to mentally disrupt the creature's focus in combat. The creature can't take reactions until the end of your next turn, and if it is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration.

ESOTERIC MASTERY

Beginning at 9th level, when you cast the *psychic shock** cantrip, you can spend 1 psi point to change the casting time to 1 bonus action (instead of 1 action) for this casting. Also, when a creature you target with your *psychic shock* cantrip is also the subject of your *predictive focus** spell, your *psychic shock* cantrip inflicts additional damage on that creature equal to your Charisma modifier.

Also, whenever you cast the *minor illusion* cantrip, you can use both options (sound and image) if you wish, rather than just one. When you cast *minor illusion*, you can still spend 1 psi point to use the Cloud Minds option of your Unlocked Mind feature if you wish, changing the casting time to 1 bonus action for that casting.

Finally, you learn one extra cantrip from the following list: *catfeet**, *far hearing**, *mage hand*, *mindspeak**, *quikling step**, *prestidigitation*, *project object**, *remote viewing**, *shifting shadow**, *steal speed**, *uncanny balance**, or *wall run**. This cantrip does not count against your number of cantrips

known as shown on the Psychic Cult Master Spellcasting table.

LURKER IN THE SHADOWS

Starting at 13th level, you can psychically enhance your sneak attack, inflicting less damage but giving yourself an edge in some other way. When you inflict the damage from your sneak attack, if you have spent at least one psi point this turn, you can choose to roll d4's instead of d6's for your sneak attack damage dice, in order to inflict one of the following additional effects on the target:

- The target falls prone if it is your size or smaller, and you may push it up to 10 feet away from you if you wish
- The target's speed is reduced by half until the end of your next turn, and your speed is increased by 15 feet for the same duration
- The target decreases one of the following ability scores of your choice by 1 point: Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. At the end of this turn, you regain one of the psi points you spent.

ELDRITCH PROPHECY

Starting at 17th level, whenever you finish a short rest, you regain 3 of your expended psi points.

Psychic Cult Master Downtime Features

The abilities below are intended to represent the psychic cult master's true power: their network of fanatical followers. However, because they use less common game mechanics and can have larger effects on your party's ability to defeat encounters, they require your DM's approval before you acquire them in-game.

Fanatical Follower

At 3rd level, whenever you are in a settlement with at least 1,000 inhabitants, you can spend 4 downtime days to summon a **cultist** from your cult to perform a task you assign to them. The cultist stays with you until they have performed their assigned task, provided it is reasonable and possible for them to perform, or until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they depart to see to other matters.

Recruit Believers

At 9th level, your ability to sway others sensitive to your belief system has grown so much that you can recruit new followers even when far away from your cult's base of power. At the beginning of a game session, or at another time the DM deems appropriate, you can spend 10 downtime days to recruit three **cultists** to your cause, as long as you are within 100 miles of a place where humanoid creatures dwell. They stay with you until they have performed their assigned task, provided it is reasonable and possible for them to perform, or until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they return to their previous lives, but await the opportunity to serve you again.

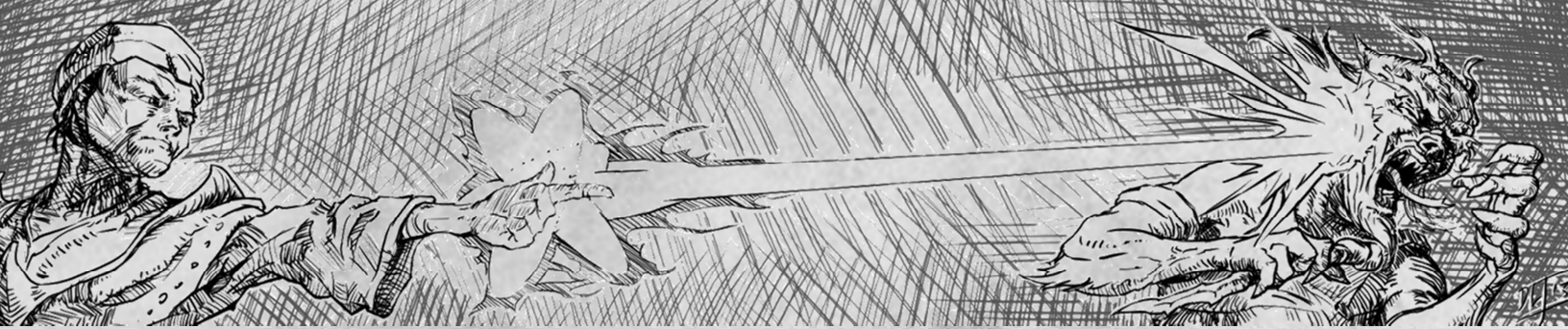
Psychic Summons

Starting at 13th level, you are such a revered cult leader that higher-level followers with real occult powers will answer your summons whenever necessary, even crossing great distances to fight by your side. At the beginning of a game session, or at another time the DM deems appropriate, you can spend 15 downtime days to perform a psychic ritual which summons a total of three **cult fanatics** to serve you in completing your current quest. The cult fanatics stay with you until they have performed their assigned task, provided it is reasonable and possible for them to perform, or until they have assisted you in combat on two separate occasions, after which time they return to your legion and report what has occurred.

Political Intrigues

At 17th level, your leadership of your cult makes you an influential mover-and-shaker in your region. By spending 20 downtime days whenever you are in a settlement with at least 1,000 inhabitants, you can cause an **assassin** loyal to you and your cult's beliefs to target and attempt to kill a humanoid of your choice. It is up to the DM to determine how long the assassination attempt takes to plan and execute, whether or not it succeeds, and how long it takes you to get word of the result.





Sorcerer

The spells of a sorcerer arise from neither pact nor study, but from their own nature. Depending on one's point of view, these inherent magical powers may be a fantastic gift or a wretched curse. As a rule, natives of the Domains of Dread are highly suspicious of any beings with inherent magical powers, viewing them as both more and less than human. Common folktales, however misguided, claim that sorcerers are changelings left by the fey, or reviled practitioners of witchcraft, or even that they gain their powers through trafficking with fiends—in short, that they are warlocks, who are mistrusted in almost all domains, and in some even hunted and killed. Even sorcerers not tainted by such superstitions are wise to reveal their magical gifts only to those they trust. As supernatural anomalies themselves, sorcerers are often fascinated by other strange phenomena. Though the dark nights in the Lands of Mists hide dire threats, sorcerers frequently seek to explore distant domains and places spoken of only in tales, hoping to unravel the riddle of their own existence.

NEW SORCEROUS ORIGIN:

REANIMATED

You died, but that wasn't the end. Before your death, you were no sorcerer, but now you have become something else. Driven by madness, genius, passion, or all three, a magical artificer re-created your body and infused it with ghoulish life. Using a combination of alchemy, necromantic knowledge, and blasphemous medical lore, they stitched a new body together for you, replacing portions of you that could not be revived with pieces of a half-dozen other corpses. Yet the final ingredient was lightning, a primal elemental spark that reignited life in your constructed form, but also imbued your soul with magical power.

You are much like a flesh golem, but represent a far more advanced and subtle level of magical craftsmanship, allowing you to retain the mental faculties you knew in life, and perhaps even some or all of your former memories and personality. Your scars are hard to miss unless you endeavor to hide

them, but your parts are well-matched and artfully assembled. No remnants of wire or metal staples mar your fleshly visage, and your movements are neither clumsy nor artificial.

Your soul is as mortal as any other, but like your body it has been rejuvenated by the crackling power of the tempest, and that arcane potential grows every day. In some ways, as you must teach yourself what it is to walk as one of the living once more, magic comes more easily to you than the everyday activities of your former life. The one who created you is no longer a part of your existence—perhaps they were gone before you woke up alone in their laboratory, or you fled from them in shocked revulsion at what you had become, or some other quirk of destiny sent out into the world on your own. Whatever purpose drove your creation, you are now free to choose your own path.

LIGHTNING VITALITY

At 1st level, the lightning used to return you to life continues to sustain your reanimated state.

Whenever you are subjected to lightning damage, you take no damage, and you may also choose to regain a number of spent Hit Dice equal to the highest level spell slot you have remaining. Once you choose to regain Hit Dice this way, you may not do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

In addition, you are below half your hit point maximum at the start of your turn, you regain 1 hit point as long as you have at least 1 of your Hit Dice remaining. Whenever you regain hit points by any means, if you place a severed body part on the place from which it was removed, the part reattaches as you heal.

Finally, you learn the *shocking grasp* cantrip. It does not count against your number of cantrips known as listed on the Sorcerer table.

REANIMATED FLESH

At 1st level, your flesh was once dead, but is now alive and has been reassembled, making you more resilient in some ways but more vulnerable in others. You gain the following traits:

- Even though you were re-constructed from dead tissue, you are a living creature. You are immune to disease. You do not need to eat or breathe, but you

can ingest food and drink if you wish, and you rest each day just as you did when you were alive.

- You have resistance to bludgeoning and poison damage, but also vulnerability to slashing and fire damage.
- If you are below half your hit point maximum when you take slashing damage from an attack, you must make a Dexterity save. The DC equals 10 or one quarter of the slashing damage you take, whichever number is higher. If you fail, some small part of your limbs—a quarter of your foot, half your hand, the top of your shoulder, etc.—has been cut from your body. This reduces your speed by half for 1 minute, and the end of which time, the dismembered part has found its way to you (by rolling, creeping, or some stranger means) and reattached itself, and you regain your speed. The part cannot be prevented from rejoining you by any means unless you wish it.
- If you are below half your hit point maximum when you take fire damage, you must make a Wisdom save. The DC equals 10 or one quarter of the fire damage you take, whichever number is higher. If you fail, you are frightened until the end of your next turn.
- Living creatures sense something frightening about you, even if you hide your scars. You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks against living humanoids and beasts, but disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) rolls against them.

FLESH GOLEM STRENGTH

At 6th level, the energies sustaining your reconstructed form have caused it to become superhumanly strong and tough. You have advantage on all Strength checks and Strength saving throws, your carrying capacity (including maximum load and maximum lift) is doubled, and you can roll a d6 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed strike.

In addition, whenever you cast a cantrip or spell that inflicts lightning damage, you can spend 1 sorcery point to enter a state of increased resilience. While in this state, you have resistance to piercing damage, you are immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition, and when you aren't wearing armor, your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

BERSERK CONSTRUCT

Starting at 6th level, if you become frightened, it affects you differently. You do not have disadvantage on attack rolls from the frightened condition, but while you are frightened, the first thing you do at the beginning of each turn is use your bonus action to make a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within your reach. If there is no creature within reach, you use your bonus action to attack an object within reach, with preference for an object smaller than yourself. If there is no object, you use

your bonus action to move 5 feet away from the source of fear (which may provoke opportunity attacks), unless there is no empty space into which you can move, in which case you lose your bonus action.

SPARK OF LIFE

Starting at 14th level, you can use the life-giving lightning that keeps you alive to increase the power of some lightning spells. When you cast a wizard spell of 1st through 5th level that deals lightning damage, you can deal maximum damage with that spell. The first time you do so, you suffer no adverse effect. If you use this feature again before you finish a long rest, you decrease your maximum hit points by 2d8 for each level of the spell, immediately after you cast it. Once that happens, for each additional time you use this feature before finishing a long rest, you decrease your maximum hit points by 1d8 plus an additional 1d8 for each previous time you've used this feature since your last long rest.

RAMPAGING GOLEM

When you reach 18th level, you can give in to your nature as a construct temporarily, becoming a brutal engine of destruction. Whenever you are reduced to less than half your hit point maximum, you can spend 7 sorcery points as a reaction to consciously unleash your instincts while attempting to retain control, which requires your concentration (as if you were casting a concentration spell). For 1 minute or until you lose your concentration, you gain the following traits:

- You are immune to poison damage and to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine.
- You are immune to the charmed, exhausted, paralyzed, petrified, and poisoned conditions, and to any spell or effect that would alter your form.
- At the beginning of your turn, you regain hit point equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier if you have been subjected to lightning damage since the beginning of your previous turn.
- You can roll a d12 in place of the normal damage of your unarmed strike, and your unarmed strikes are considered magical, and inflict extra damage equal to your Charisma modifier.
- You become a construct, and are no longer affected by effects that target humanoids (though you are affected by effects that target constructs).
- When you take damage from a creature that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature.
- If your turn ends and you haven't attacked or damaged a hostile creature since your last turn, you must use your reaction to make a melee attack against a randomly determined creature or object

within your reach. If there is no target within reach, you must make a Constitution saving throw against your own spellcasting DC. If you fail, you lose concentration on this effect.

- If you cast a spell with a range of touch that inflicts damage, you can add your Strength modifier to one damage roll of that spell.

When this effect ends, you do not lose these traits right away unless you are not conscious. If you are conscious, you must immediately make a melee attack against all creatures or objects within 5 feet when this effect ends, with a separate attack roll for

each target. These attacks do not use any action, and they are made against all creatures, regardless of if they are friend or foe. After these attacks, you immediately lose all the traits gained from this effect. You then fall unconscious until the beginning of your next turn. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short rest.



Warlock

Of all the classes, none is more distrusted or feared in the Domains of Dread than the warlock.

Populations that live under the mercy of dark forces have good reason to distrust those who draw power from such things. Those bargaining for power in the Mists risk more than just their soul, as their pacts might twist their body and mind as well. In these benighted realms, warlocks are sometimes uncertain of the name or nature of their patron, simply knowing it as a voice in the wind, a figure in a vision, a smiling shadow in the corner of the eye, or a spirit of nature. Some warlocks believe their patron is benevolent, such as a nature spirit or animistic being, but most sages name this as a lie. Wiser warlocks know their pact-holders by name, but this is often little advantage and even less comfort. In realms such as Tepet and Nidala, inquisitors exist to actively hunt warlocks and the sorts of beings associated with them. Folk wisdom tends to attribute a warlock's power to fey, fiends, and other dark powers, even the Mists themselves—illustrating that folk wisdom is not always mere mythology. Depending on the particular Domain of Dread in which they find themselves, warlocks often seek to disguise them as the spellcasting abilities of a class less likely to be seen as anathema by the locals. Of course, in some regions, all spellcasters are tarred with same brush, and warlocks become adept at hiding their true natures entirely.

NEW OTHERWORLDLY PATRON:

THE REALMBOUND TYRANT

The immortal entity you made your pact with does not watch you from some distant realm, but physically dwells with and rules over the people of your homeland. Your patron could be Strahd von Zarovich of Barovia or another darklord of a Domain of Dread, an undying sorcerer-king draining arcane might from the dwindling life of the city-state around him like Kalid-ma of Kalidnay, or a dragon overlord whose malicious will reshapes the very geography of her dominion. It has been proven to you time and again that rebelling against the Realmbound Tyrant is pointless, because a supernatural bond bends the land itself to their will. The holder of your pact may have rivals outside the borders of their realm, but within it, their connection to the land make their rule absolute beyond what any mortal dictator could imagine. Recognition of this reality has made you an extension of their power, even if you oppose their

rule. You know your patron has ambitious beyond even their current status—perhaps they seek to ascend to some greater state of arcane power, or simply wish to escape the curse of the Dark Powers—and one way or another, your pact furthers those ambitions. You may willingly act as the agent of the Realmbound Tyrant who holds your pact, helping keep the peace among their subjects and enforce laws, or you perhaps you are secretly connected to a clandestine resistance. Either way, the power—both temporal and arcane—granted by your connection to your patron is undeniable.

EXPANDED SPELL LIST

The godlike power of your tyrant patron within their realm lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

REALMBOUND TYRANT EXPANDED SPELLS

Spell Level	Spells
1st	<i>catapult**</i> , <i>sanctuary</i>
2nd	<i>aid</i> , <i>calm emotions</i>
3rd	<i>invasive id*</i> , <i>wall of sand**</i>
4th	<i>pain*</i> , <i>premonitory vision*</i>
5th	<i>modify memory</i> , <i>telekinesis</i>

PSYCHIC ARMOR

Starting at 1st level, the power you draw from your pact strengthens your mind, allowing you to protect both your body and your mental sovereignty. You are immune to being charmed, and when you aren't wearing armor, your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

VIGILANCE OF FEAR

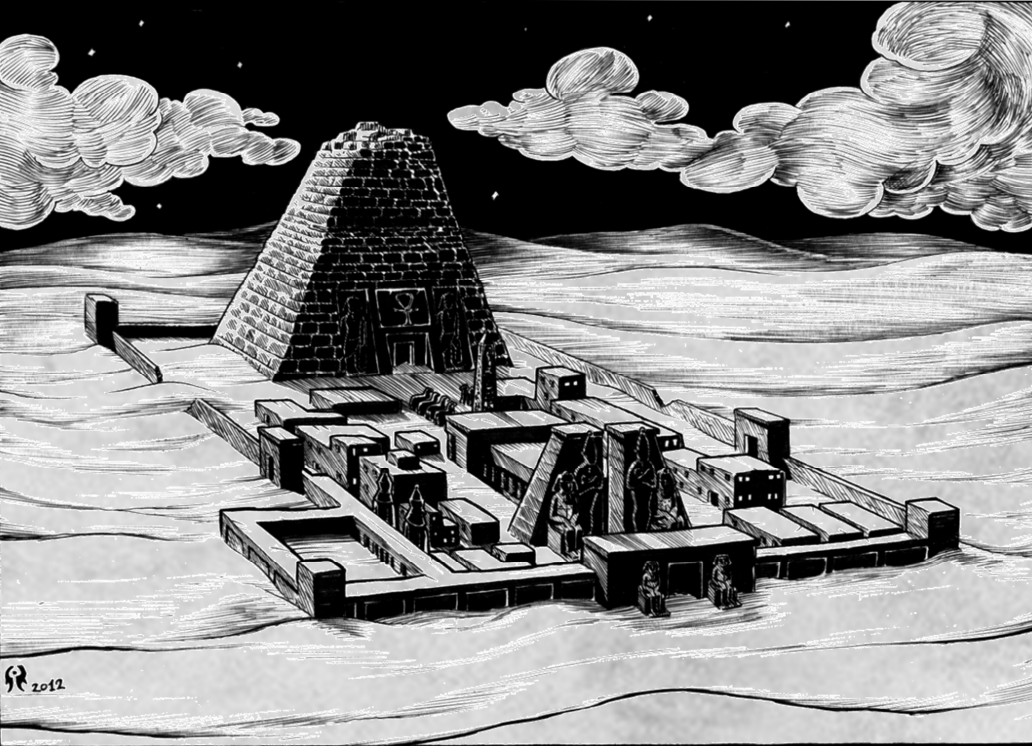
At 1st level, since you live in constant fear of both your patron and your patron's enemies, you are always wary of sudden attack. You can substitute your Charisma modifier for your Dexterity modifier when rolling initiative, and when you are surprised, you can still take a single action or bonus action (but not both) during the surprise round. You cannot move with this action unless you take an action that specifically allows you to move (such as the Dash action).

IMPLACABLE PURSUER

At 6th level, you are highly adept at apprehending those who defy your authority. When you hit with an attack roll, the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn, and while its speed is reduced, opportunity attacks against it are made at advantage.

INTIMIDATING PRESENCE

Beginning at 10th level, you can use your action to frighten someone with your menacing presence.



NEW WARLOCK PACT OPTION:

PACT OF THE GLOOM

This pact option is an alternative to the Pacts of the Blade, Chain, or Tome. The Pact of the Gloom allows you to call upon the magical substance of shadow, said to have been infused into all things at the beginning of time, from pieces of primordial chaos rejected in the creation of matter. When in darkness, you can weave shadows into a cloak that helps you hide from enemies.

PACT OF THE GLOOM

When you are in dim light or darkness, you can use your bonus

action to create a gloom cloak, a magical mantle of shadow that appears on your person. When you create this garment, you can choose its style and appearance, which can be in the form of any sort of cloak, cape, long coat, or jacket, but it always has an inky black color. Your gloom cloak disappears if it is more than 5 feet away from you for 1 minute or more. It also disappears if you use this feature again, if you dismiss the cloak, or if you die. While you wear your gloom cloak, you can substitute Charisma for Dexterity when rolling Stealth checks. In addition, whenever you use your reaction to cast a spell or cantrip, you can take the Disengage or Hide action as part of the same reaction. You can transform one magical cloak into your gloom cloak by performing a special ritual while you wear that cloak. You perform the ritual over the course of 1 hour, which can be done during a short rest. You can then dismiss the cloak, shunting it into an extradimensional space, and it appears whenever you create your gloom cloak thereafter. You can't affect an artifact in this way. The magic item ceases being your gloom cloak if you die, if you perform the 1-hour ritual on a different item or if you use a 1-hour ritual to break your bond to it. The magical cloak appears at your feet if it is in the extradimensional space when the bond breaks.

When you do so, choose one creature that you can see within 30 feet of you. If the creature can see or hear you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your warlock spell save DC or be frightened of you until the end of your next turn. On subsequent turns, you can use your action to extend the duration of this effect on the frightened creature until the end of your next turn. This effect ends if the creature ends its turn out of line of sight or more than 60 feet away from you. If it succeeds on its saving throw, you can't use this feature on that creature again for 24 hours.

DEFILING DRAIN

Starting at 14th level, when you hit a creature with an attack, you can stop it in its tracks, then drain its life force into yourself. The creature takes 6d8 extra psychic damage, and until the end of the next turn, its speed becomes 0 and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed. At the end of its next turn when the speed reduction ends, that creature (and only that creature) is targeted as if by an *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*** spell, so that it must make a Constitution saving throw against your warlock spell DC, taking 10d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. (Per that spell, constructs and undead aren't affected, and plants and water elementals make the saving throw with disadvantage.) However much necrotic damage the creature ends up taking from the *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*** effect, you immediately regain hit points equal to half the amount of that necrotic damage. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

action to create a gloom cloak, a magical mantle of shadow that appears on your person. When you create this garment, you can choose its style and appearance, which can be in the form of any sort of cloak, cape, long coat, or jacket, but it always has an inky black color. Your gloom cloak disappears if it is more than 5 feet away from you for 1 minute or more. It also disappears if you use this feature again, if you dismiss the cloak, or if you die. While you wear your gloom cloak, you can substitute Charisma for Dexterity when rolling Stealth checks. In addition, whenever you use your reaction to cast a spell or cantrip, you can take the Disengage or Hide action as part of the same reaction.

You can transform one magical cloak into your gloom cloak by performing a special ritual while you wear that cloak. You perform the ritual over the course of 1 hour, which can be done during a short rest. You can then dismiss the cloak, shunting it into an extradimensional space, and it appears whenever you create your gloom cloak thereafter. You can't affect an artifact in this way. The magic item ceases being your gloom cloak if you die, if you perform the 1-hour ritual on a different item or if you use a 1-hour ritual to break your bond to it. The magical cloak appears at your feet if it is in the extradimensional space when the bond breaks.

Wizard

What a sorcerer gains through reluctant birthright, and a warlock receives through an eldritch pact, wizards must earn through years of study and toil. Able to call on an astonishing variety of arcane spells to bend reality to their will, wizards must trust themselves to control that power without even the veneer of spiritual guidance divine spellcasters receive. Endless years of research and practice, combined with their need for forethought, often result in wizards developing at least mildly obsessive and controlling personalities. Some wizards grow drunk on their own power or are corrupted by the evil forces inherent in their spells, believing they are the sole arbiters of their fate. Wizards are respected or even admired in some domains, such as Darkon and Hazlan, but often conceal their arcane powers in less accepting lands. Wizards can be found in nearly any domain, however, often lurking in remote towers or secretly using magic to further their goals in other arenas.

NEW ARCANES TRADITION:

SCHOOL OF NETHERMANCY

You focus your studies on shadow magic, a method for extricating the magical substance of primordial shadow from various environments, then blending it with arcane forces to create magical effects. Among other manifestations, such spells excite or dull the senses, spin creatures from raw shadow, and punch holes through reality. Many are quick to distrust a wizard who uses the substance of shadow, but shadow magic's apologists defend their art by claiming that the spells are no more evil than a hammer or a knife. The spells are simply tools or weapons, depending on how they are used—it is the misapplication of any magic that makes it evil. Yet the association between darkness and evil is so strong in the minds of most mortal creatures that nethermancers face mistrust and hostility regardless of their inclination.

UMBRAL SIGHT

Beginning at 2nd level when you choose this arcane tradition, you can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 120 feet

CASTING SHADOWS

Starting at 2nd level, nearby shadows assist you in concealing your spellcasting and scaring your enemies. When you are in dim light or darkness, spells you cast do not require verbal components,

and you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

STEP INTO DARKNESS

At 6th level, you add the *darkness* spell to your spellbook if it is not there already. Whenever you cast *darkness*, for 1 hour you also gain the ability to step from one shadow into another. When you are in dim light or darkness, as a bonus action you can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space you can see that is also in dim light or darkness. You can take the Hide action as part of the same action.

UNRAVELING SHADOWS

Beginning at 10th level, you can sense and sometimes direct a silent malevolent awareness in the magical currents of shadow magic, a presence that seeks out weakness. When you cast a spell that inflicts necrotic or psychic damage, you can choose one target of that spell. If the target has vulnerability to any damage types, the damage is of those types. If the target has no vulnerabilities, you inflict extra damage on that target equal to your Wisdom modifier. You know how much extra damage you inflicted, but you cannot tell what damage types the target is or is not vulnerable to from this effect; the hungry shadows hide what kind of damage they inflict, even from you.

SHADOW SUMMONING

Starting at 14th level, you can choose to substitute shadowy apparitions for creatures you would conjure with magic. Whenever you summon or create a creature with a conjuration spell, you can choose for the space in which that creature appears to be heavily obscured by magical darkness until the end of your next turn. When you summon or create a creature in this way, if that creature can see, it also gains 15 temporary hit points, darkvision out to a range of 60 feet for 1 minute, and advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks until the end of its next turn. However, while in sunlight, creatures you summon or create in this way have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Dusk Elves and Shadow Magic

According to legend, both the Nethermancy school of wizardly magic and the warlock Pact of the Gloom were first researched and developed by dusk elves, during the era when they were first separated from their elven kin. Many of them were already the finest illusionists and white necromancers among their people, and they sought further magical means of hiding from those who would hunt them. For more details, see the Dusk Elves section of the Races chapter.

New Class: Metaphysician

Stepping over the unconscious bodies of the defeated cultists, the human constable puts away her hand crossbow and buries both hands in the pockets of her coat. As her unblinking stare mesmerizes the lone zealot still standing, her fingers find a carved shard of crystal. The mad cult leader swears to himself that he'll never reveal his master's hidden lair, and the constable manages not to smile as she sees its image in the fanatic's mind. Deep in the buried library of a forgotten order of mystics, a bespectacled tiefling looks up wide-eyed from the dusty scroll in his gloved hands, struck by

a sudden epiphany. As the inhuman cannibals entombed in these tunnels for generations break down the barricaded door, he uses his new insight to cloud their minds. They tear the chamber apart seeking him, but he calmly walks behind them and exits invisibly through the demolished doorway, bearing a backpack full of ancient secrets. Charging headlong into the trio of undead, the dusk elf runs up the wall of the alley to avoid their grasping arms, conjuring a blade made of her own thoughts to behead the tallest one before she somersaults to the pavement behind them. She puts down the other two before they can even turn around to attack her, then takes to the rooftops to rush back her laboratory. She stows the severed head in her pack, confident she can use it to cure the zombie plague infecting the city. Metaphysicians are sages, scholars, and scientists devoted to the study of mystical powers. These experts are neither true users of psionic power nor traditional arcane spellcasters, but driven academic investigators whose studies unleash the psychic potential of their own minds as a source of spellcasting power. These experts on the occult view all supernatural phenomena—from psionic powers to arcane spells to the nature of the undead—not as esoteric mysteries or mystical philosophies or

FEARLESS LOGIC

mysticism, but simply fields of science that have yet to be fully explored. In all dealings with the supernatural, the metaphysician remains cool and calm. They try to examine every encounter with the dispassionate eye of the scholar. They believe that the application of logic, reason, and learning to the macabre and the unusual will eventually result in a complete understanding of that which seems to defy explanation. This approach has allowed them to unlock the inner mysteries of the self and use psychic powers in the form of magic spells. Unlike wizards and warlocks, magic and power are not the point of their researches. The quest for knowledge is what drives them. The energies they seek to understand don't emanate from distant entities or unknowable dimensions, but from their own minds and bodies, and the hidden potential in all living things. They're curious about everything, of course, from the nature of deities to fiends of the Abyss, but they do not give themselves up to forces they do not understand. By drawing power from their own minds—trained and disciplined minds



strengthened by years of study and rigor—they believe they can study mystical phenomena without getting lost in the temptations of power or the fanaticism of blind faith. This is not to say that metaphysicians are never religious—many begin by studying as students in theology or novices in monasteries—but they do not rely on anything they cannot explain or understand for themselves. While they endeavor to keep up-to-date with the latest research and findings by other leading scholars, metaphysicians also spend their much of their time looking for records and relics from times long past, seeking clues to historical mysteries as well as searching for ancient texts and rituals. In their studies, they also search for ways to cast more spells or knowledge about how to cast spells more effectively.

To the disciplined mind, no mystery is so dark, no creature so fantastic that it cannot be mastered through application of the scientific method. Observe, hypothesize and test; that is the motto of the metaphysician.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

These scholars devote their entire lives to the pursuit of knowledge and education. As a rule, such characters almost always have some affiliation with a college, museum, or similar institution devoted to research and learning.

No matter how bizarre the situations in which they find themselves, metaphysicians do not lose sight of the many academic disciplines their investigations might advance. They drive themselves to discover new knowledge using precise methodology. Their insistence on logic and consistency is off-putting to some, and some metaphysicians may also be seen as introverted and cold. Yet they pursue their work with passion and two-fisted determination.

CREATING A METAPHYSICIAN

As a metaphysician, you had the skills and education to be a well-respected sage or leading researcher in any field, but you chose a far less understood path. What did you see, learn, or experience that led you to analyze the nature of mystical powers so deeply that you unlocked your own mental potential?

Metaphysicians tend to be a mix of the insecurity of an outsider and the arrogance of a visionary. Their discoveries make sages who do not recognize the supernatural as a valid area for research seem like ignorant fools. Seeing the truths of arcane phenomena and psychic powers firsthand, and mastering them for your own use, you know that your techniques can be taught to others for the

betterment of all. Do you seek to share what you've learned? How do you deal with blind ignorance or superstition with which others approach your discoveries?

Bookish by nature, at one point or another most metaphysicians preferred the comforts of the lab and library to the rigors of field research. Do you still long for such a life? Or did that end when you began your adventuring career? One day, do you intend to return to a less dangerous lifestyle, where you can focus on cataloging, testing, and analyzing your findings, or teaching your unique abilities to others? What keeps you out adventuring? Is it dire necessity, a yearning for excitement, a groundbreaking theory that can only be proven by unorthodox methods, the camaraderie of their companions, a need for wealth to finance your research, or some other reason?

Metaphysicians tend to be lawful, given the discipline their studies require, and they are seldom of evil alignment, since there are easier routes to selfish power and personal gain. For you, knowledge is more often an end in itself than a means to an end. Some unscrupulous researchers will permit no ethical concerns to restrain their quest for knowledge, but even they have a higher sense of purpose. How does your alignment affect your quest to uncover hidden truths? What is the personal motivation that drives you? How do you want your discoveries to change the world?

QUICK BUILD

You can create a metaphysician quickly by using these guidelines. First, Intelligence should be your highest ability score, followed by either Constitution or Wisdom. Second, choose the Sage background. Third, choose the *thaumaturgy* and *thought blast** cantrips, and the *charm person* and *ego lash** and spells.

(*="=New spells or cantrips appearing this document.)

CLASS FEATURES

As a metaphysician, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 1d6 per metaphysician level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d6 (or 4) + your Constitution modifier per metaphysician level after 1st

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light armor, shields

Weapons: Simple weapons, hand crossbows

Tools: Alchemist's supplies and any one other set of artisan's tools of your choice

Saving Throws: Intelligence, Wisdom

Skills: Choose three skills from Arcana, History, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Religion, and Survival.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a quarterstaff or (b) a mace or (c) a handaxe
- (a) a hand crossbow and 20 bolts or (b) 5 javelins
- (a) a scholar's pack or (b) an explorer's pack or (c) a monster hunter's pack (from *Curse of Strahd*)
- Leather armor

SPELLCASTING

As a disciplined scholar of psychic phenomena and the power of the mind, you've developed the ability to focus your mental energies into casting spells.

New Spell List. Your cantrips and spells come from the Metaphysician spell list. This new spell list appears at the beginning of the Spells chapter of this document.

Cantrips. 1st level, you learn four cantrips. These cantrips are *mage hand*, *mindspeak*, and two other cantrips of your choice from the Metaphysician spell list. Whenever you cast the *mage hand* cantrip, the

spectral hand is made of invisible force and cannot be seen. You learn additional cantrips of your choice from this list at higher levels, as shown in the Cantrips Known column of the Metaphysician table.

Spell Slots. The Metaphysician table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

You do not need to prepare your spells; you can cast any spell of a level which you have slots to cast. For example, if you know the 1st-level spell *ego lash* and have a 1st-level and a 2nd-level spell slot available, you can cast *ego lash* using either slot.

Spells Known of 1st-Level and Higher. You know two 1st-level spells of your choice from the metaphysician spell list.

The Spells Known column of the Metaphysician table shows when you learn more metaphysician spells of 1st-level or higher. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For instance, when you reach 3rd level in this class, you can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the metaphysician spells you know and replace it with another spell from the metaphysician spell list, which also must be of a

THE METAPHYSICIAN

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Spells Known	Cantrips Known	—Spell Slots per Spell Level—								
					1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+2	Spellcasting, Psychic Armor, Supernatural Scholar	2	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Metaphysical Archetype	2	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Learned Expertise, Psychic Senses	3	4	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	3	5	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3		4	5	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+3	Metaphysical Archetype feature	4	5	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+3	Memory Palace	4	5	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	5	5	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+4	Psychic Resonance	5	5	4	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
10th	+4	Intellect Barrier	6	6	4	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	+4		6	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	7	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	—	—	—
13th	+5	Memory Fortress	7	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
14th	+5	Metaphysical Archetype feature	7	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	—	—
15th	+5	Greater Supernatural Scholar	8	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	8	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	—
17th	+6		9	6	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18th	+6	Metaphysical Archetype feature	9	6	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	10	6	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20th	+6	Living Library	10	6	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1



level for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your metaphysician spells, since the power of your magic comes from your disciplined mind and rigorous studies. You use your Intelligence whenever a metaphysician spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a metaphysician spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Ritual Casting. You can cast a metaphysician spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag.

Spellcasting Focus. You can use the crystal type of arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells. If you have alchemist's supplies on your person, you can also use any one item held in your hand from that set of supplies as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells. This item used as a spellcasting focus is too large or delicate for you to hold a weapon with the same hand. (This is assumed to be a beaker or decanter of some alchemical concoction, that you either imbibe or inhale fumes from, but can be described in another appropriate form with the DM's permission).

Spell Components. Because they draw on their own psychic power rather than outside forces, metaphysicians do not require spoken words or gestures to catch their spells, and spells they cast do not have verbal or somatic components.

PSYCHIC ARMOR

Beginning at 1st level, your psionic energies help protect your person from harm, compensating for your lack of heavy armor. When you are wearing no armor and not wielding a shield, your AC equals 12 + your Dexterity or Intelligence modifier (whichever is higher). When you are wearing light armor, you receive a +1 bonus to AC.

SUPERNATURAL SCHOLAR

At 1st level, you are a leading scholar of linguistics among other fields, and you are aided in your studies by your psychic abilities. You learn 1 additional language of your choice, and you also know the *comprehend languages* spell. This spell does not count against your number of spells known. Whenever you cast *comprehend languages* as a ritual, you can choose to do so in 1 minute instead of the hour a ritual normally requires. However, when you do so, the spell's duration is reduced to 10 minutes.

At 2nd level, 4th level, and 8th level, you may choose to learn one additional language or gain proficiency with one additional set of artisan's tools.

METAPHYSICAL ARCHETYPE

At 2nd level, you choose a Metaphysical Archetype, a focus for growth in your burgeoning vocation as a metaphysician, as detailed at the end of this class description. Three metaphysical archetypes are described in this document: the Eradicator, the Mentalist, the Materialist, and the Savant. Your choice grants you features when you choose it at 2nd level, and again at 6th, 14th, and 18th level.

LEARNED EXPERTISE

At 3rd level, choose up to two of the following skills with which you are proficient: Arcana, History, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Religion, or Survival. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of the chosen skills.

PSYCHIC SENSES

Beginning at 3rd level, your mental powers and disciplined mind give you a preternatural eye for detail. If your passive Perception, passive Insight, or passive Investigation score includes your proficiency bonus, you double your proficiency bonus when including it in those passive scores.

In addition, you learn the *detect thoughts* spell, and it does not count against your number of spells known. Whenever you are using it to detect a creature or sense its thoughts, you do not need to see that creature to affect it with a metaphysician spell that normally can only target creatures you can see, as long as the creature is within range of that spell.

Finally, if you have directly communicated with a creature using a metaphysician spell since the beginning of your last turn, that creature does not need to be able to hear you in order for you to affect it with a metaphysician spell that normally can only target creatures who can hear you, as long as the creature is within range of that spell.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

MEMORY PALACE

At 7th level, you have organized your mind using your spatial memory, creating an imaginary palace in your mind where you associate pieces of your vast knowledge with the palace's features, allowing you to call up learned information on demand, giving you the following benefits:

- You can accurately recall anything you have seen or heard within the past month. If you gain this feature again from another feature or feat, you can accurately recall anything you have seen or heard within the past year.
- Whenever you fail a Wisdom or Intelligence check that lets you add your proficiency bonus, you can re-roll that roll and use the higher of the two rolls. You can use this ability twice. You regain expended uses of this ability when you finish a short or long rest.

PSYCHIC RESONANCE

At 9th level, whenever you cast a spell that inflicts psychic damage, you can add your Intelligence modifier to one damage roll of that spell.

INTELLECT BARRIER

At 10th level, your supernatural willpower and unflinching vigilance make your mind near impregnable to assault. You gain proficiency with Charisma saving throws, and whenever you apply your proficiency bonus to an ability check or saving throw you make to resist any attempt to discern information about you, your plans, your location, or your thoughts, you double your proficiency bonus for that roll. This includes effects that would read your thoughts or compel you to speak the truth.

RECOVERY TRANCE

You can use a brief meditation to cause your body to recover more efficiently. Whenever you spend two or more Hit Dice at the end of a short rest, you can also choose to do one of the following:

- Regain additional hit points equal to the total number of Hit Dice you spend.
- Gain resistance to psychic damage for one hour.
- Recover one spell slot of 3rd-level or lower. The level of the spell slot recovered cannot be greater than the number of Hit Dice you spend.

MEMORY FORTRESS

At 13th level, the intellectual rigor and focused willpower you apply to your memory palace are truly superhuman. You gain the following benefits:

- Whenever you make an Intelligence check that lets you add your proficiency bonus, you can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.
- When you make a roll that gains the bonus from your Intellect Barrier feature, you also gain advantage on that roll. If you succeed on the roll, you choose one creature whose attempt to discern information about you prompted that roll and force them to make an Intelligence saving throw against your Metaphysician spell DC. The creature takes psychic damage equal to your Metaphysician level on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

GREATER SUPERNATURAL SCHOLAR

Starting at 15th level, your psychic abilities and mastery of linguistic principles allow you to understand all spoken and written languages. Moreover, any creature that can understand a language can understand what you say, and if you use your Recovery Trance feature to regain a spell slot when you spend Hit Dice, that spell slot can be 4th level or lower.

LIVING LIBRARY

At 20th level, your mind is a repository of knowledge comparable to entire academic institutions rather than mere individuals, unifying your intellect with your body and soul and allowing you to unlock the greater psychic potential within your physical form. This grants you a number of benefits:

- You can always accurately recall anything you have seen or heard since you became 20th level.
- You can add your proficiency bonus to any Intelligence check you make that doesn't already include your proficiency bonus.
- When you fail any saving throw or any Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check, you can treat the d20 roll as a 20. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

METAPHYSICAL ARCHETYPES

The science of the metaphysician is new, representing both a bold frontier in the exploration of the mind and a novel paradigm through which to examine the arcane powers of magic rationally.

Because the vistas opened by this new field of inquiry are so vast, metaphysicians channel their studies through certain vocations and specialties, known as metaphysical archetypes.

In selecting your metaphysical archetype, you choose not only a focus for your research—both supernatural and mundane, though you approach both with the same scientific methodologies—but a particular area of growth for your psychic abilities and a viewpoint for your understanding of the uncanny. You know that even seemingly impossible phenomena have a rational explanation, and it is this approach that will guide you in finding it.

Casting Bonus Action Spells

An often-overlooked rule for all spellcasters that especially bears repeating here is the following:

If you cast a spell of 1st-level or higher using a bonus action, you can't cast another spell during the same turn, except for a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

ERADICATOR

Deep studies of the realm you call home have revealed a hidden truth: the world is sick. As a plague takes hold of the body, a darkness has infested the land. It takes many forms: undead, lycanthropes, hags, fiends, unclean spirits, and the like. You do not view these horrors superstitiously, but clinically. They are a disease that must be cured.

You have become an expert on these shadowy threats. Like a naturalist cataloguing plant and animal specimens, you use a variety of techniques to discern the true nature of the infection. From stealthy observation to researching poorly understood ancient writings, capture to vivisection, you use any tool you can to extract every secret. How does mortal flesh sustain a zombie's unlife? Why is silver better than steel against a werewolf? How does a mummy infect its victims with rot? You need these answers in order to turn the tables on these unnatural predators and eradicate them for the good of all mortals.

Your psychic powers are a means to this end, and you fight fire with fire. You learn how to influence another's mind, the better to free victims charmed by the gaze of a vampire. Mastering disguise yourself helps you to pierce a doppelganger's



deceit. When a poltergeist hurls objects around a room, you can resist it with your own telekinetic strength. You may be driven by a personal grudge or a sense of calling, or even mere curiosity, but you don't let your feelings cloud your rational mind. Of all metaphysicians, eradicators are the most likely to have deep religious beliefs. Seeing the way divine power can be channeled to defeat undead, fiends, and other formidable monsters leaves a lasting impression. Whatever you believe, you tend to be just as rational about them as you are about everything else. Eradicators always find a way to reconcile faith and science, and they have a natural suspicion of zeotry. In many ways, your drives to understand divinity and the forces of darkness are two sides of the same coin.

EXORCISM SPELLS

When you choose this archetype at 2nd level, you learn the *detect evil and good*, *protection from evil and good*, and *predictive focus** spells.

At 4th level, you learn the *gentle repose* and *major telekinetic weapon** spells.

At 6th level, you learn the *intellect redoubt** spell.

At 7th level, you learn the *locate creature* and *staggering smite* spells. At 9th level, you learn the *dispel evil and good* spell. At 17th level, you learn the *imprisonment* spell. Spells learned from this feature do not count against your normal number of metaphysician spells or cantrips known.

MONSTER HUNTER

At 2nd level, you can use a holy symbol as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells, and you have advantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks to discern information about any creature that is an aberration, construct, elemental, fey, fiend, or undead, as well as any other creature that you know to be a shapechanger. You also learn the *shillelagh* cantrip, and when you cast it, you can choose for a wooden weapon you cast it on to sharpen, becoming a piercing weapon for the duration of the spell (this allows you to be used as a wooden stake for the purpose of defeating vampires and similar creatures).

SPECIES FOCUS

Starting at 2nd level, you choose a type of monster you know more about than any other. You can choose one species focus from the following: aberrations, constructs, elementals, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, oozes, plants, or undead. Alternatively, you can shapechangers of any type as your species focus. Work with your DM to determine an appropriate type of monster for the campaign.

Once during your turn, when you inflict damage with a metaphysician spell or with a magical weapon on a creature that is your species focus or the subject of your *predictive focus* spell, you can choose one such creature to take an additional 1d8 psychic damage. At 6th level, any creature that takes this damage cannot benefit from advantage on any Intelligence or Wisdom saving throw until the end of your next turn.

ABSOLUTE EFFORT

At 6th level, you can marshal your own life force to empower your psychic vigilance. When you cast the *detect evil and good* and *intellect barrier** spells, you may choose to lose 1 hit die to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

PSYCHIC TURNING

Starting at 6th level, you can attempt to repel dark forces with the strength of your convictions. As an action, you present a spellcasting focus you can use for your metaphysician spells (such as a holy symbol), and each creature within 30 feet of you that is undead or your species focus must make an Intelligence saving throw against your Metaphysician spell DC. On a failed save, such a creature is repelled for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1), though the effect ends if the creature takes damage. A repelled creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it possibly can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action. Once you use this feature once, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

SERENITY OF SPIRIT

At 14th level, you are an island of calm resolution in a sea of fear and aggression. You cannot be charmed or frightened, and you can cast the *calm emotions* spell at will.

HUNTING THE HUNTERS

At 18th level, you are immune to psychic damage, and hostile creatures you choose who take psychic damage during your turn must roll Intelligence saves against your Metaphysician spell DC or become frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

MENTALIST

When you first began to study the powers of the mind, you focused on a particular kind of psionic spellcasting. Like a surgeon or healer discovering they want to specialize in a certain region of the body, this focus was determined by both your intellectual curiosity and an intuitive level of understanding. You don't just see your own psychic powers as a means of gaining knowledge—rather, they are the specific subject you seek knowledge about. You strive to be the world's most advanced authority on your chosen specialty.

Mentalists achieve greater mastery of their supernatural abilities than other metaphysicians, and tend to be the most physically formidable. They are also the metaphysicians most comfortable with accepting weirdness for which they don't have a rational explanation yet—emphasis on the *yet*, as they view their mastery of their chosen area of mentalism to be the key to eventually unlocking all supernatural mysteries.

PSYCHIC SPECIALIST

When you choose this archetype at 2nd level, you gain a *magisterium*, an area of specialty which grants you a list of new cantrips and spells. Magisteria are listed at the end of this archetype description. In addition, you gain proficiency with one martial melee weapon of your choice that does not have the heavy or two-handed qualities.

AWAKENED MIND

At 2nd level, your specialized studies of your branch of psychic magic have unleashed hidden psionic potential within you. This increased spellcasting ability is represented by *psi points*, which allow you to create a variety of magical effects and cast additional spells.

Psi Points. You have 2 psi points, and you gain more as you increase your metaphysician level, per the table below. Any spent psi points are regained when you finish a long rest. You may later discover ways to acquire additional psi points. You can never have more psi points than shown on the table for your level. When you finish a long rest, your number of psi points resets to your maximum.

Metaphysician Level	Max. Psi Points	Metaphysician Level	Max. Psi Points
1st	-	11th	11
2nd	2	12th	12
3rd	3	13th	13
4th	4	14th	14
5th	5	15th	15

6th	6	16th	16
7th	7	17th	17
8th	8	18th	18
9th	9	19th	19
10th	10	20th	20

Creating Spell Slots. You can use your psi points to gain additional spell slots. You learn other ways to use your psi points as you reach higher levels. You can transform unexpended psi points into one spell slot as a bonus action on your turn. The Creating Spell Slots table shows the cost of creating a spell slot of a given level. You can create spell slots no higher in level than 5th.

Creating Spell Slots

Spell Slot Level	Psi Point Cost
1st	2
2nd	3
3rd	5
4th	6
5th	7

You cannot convert a spell slot into psi points at this level. It is a one-way transaction until you attain greater mastery.

EMPOWERING MEDITATION

Starting at 6th level, as a bonus action on your turn, you can expend one spell slot and gain a number of psi points equal to the slot's level. If you wish, as part of the same bonus action, you may also cast a spell that has a casting time of 1 bonus action. Whenever you spend 1 or more psi points, you can spend 1 additional psi point to gain resistance to psychic damage for 10 minutes.

SWIFT SPELL

At 6th level, when you cast a spell of 1st-level or higher that has a casting time of 1 action, you can spend 2 psi points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

In addition, if the cantrip you learned from your magisterium has a casting time of 1 action, whenever you cast it, you can change the casting time to 1 bonus action for that casting. Casting the cantrip you learned from your magisterium in this way does not require any expenditure of psi points, but this ability only applies to that particular cantrip.

PSYCHIC METAMAGIC

At 14th level, your careful study of spells cast with psychic energy allows you to tailor your spell effects to the situation at hand. When you cast a spell, you can spend 1 psi point to do either of the following (or spend 2 psi points to do both):

Careful Spell. When you cast a spell that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, you can protect some of those creatures from the spell's full force. To do so, you spend 1 psi point and choose a number of those creatures up to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of one creature). A chosen creature automatically succeeds on its saving throw against the spell.

Mindbending Spell. When you roll damage for a spell that inflicts psychic damage, you can spend 1 psi point to reroll a number of the damage dice up to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of one). You must use the new rolls.

MASTER PSYCHIC

At 18th level, your nearly perfected understanding of psychic energy allows you to empower your own spells, and also to resist the psionic powers of others. When you cast a spell that forces a creature to make an Intelligence saving throw to resist its effects, you can spend 3 psi points to give one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw made against the spell.

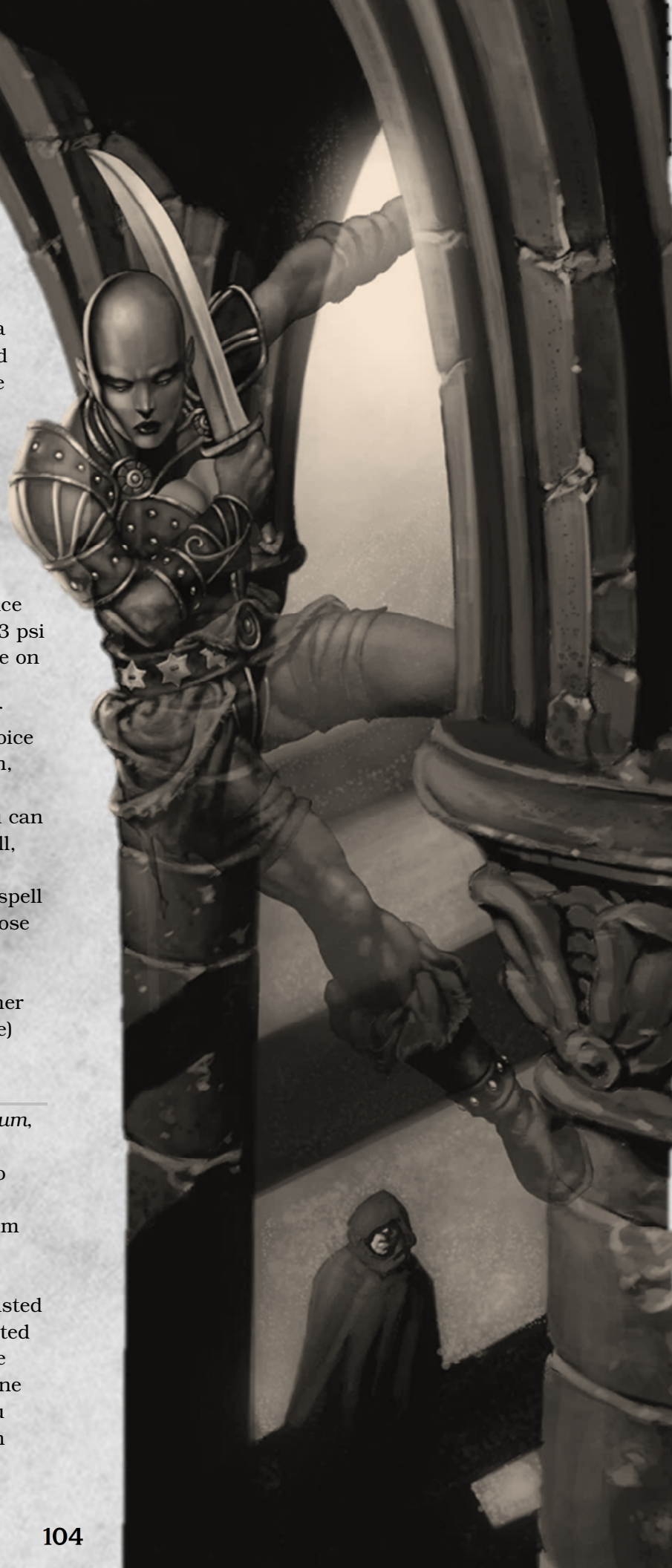
In addition, you learn the *psychic shield* spell (or another 1st-level metaphysician spell of your choice if you already know *psychic shield*). As a reaction, whenever you make an Intelligence or Charisma saving throw or would take psychic damage, you can spend 2 psi points to cast the *psychic shield* spell, even if you have no spell slots remaining.

Finally, when you inflict psychic damage with a spell of 1st-level or higher, once per turn you can choose one creature who took that damage. That target must roll an Intelligence save against your metaphysician spell DC. If they fail, they are either charmed by you or frightened of you (your choice) until the end of your next turn.

MAGISTERIA

Certain metaphysicians specialize in a *magisterium*, a regimen of training and meditation that allows them to learn certain related spells in addition to those they acquire from being a metaphysician. Cantrips and spells gained from your magisterium do not count against your normal number of metaphysician spells or cantrips known.

The spells you gain from your magisterium are listed by your level in this class. When you gain the listed level in your metaphysician class, you gain those spells. When you gain a magisterium, if it lists one or more spells or cantrips you already know, you immediately replace those spells or cantrips with



new spells of the same level from the metaphysician list.

The magisteria also offer additional options for spellcasting foci in using your metaphysician spells. In all cases, the object used as a focus is too large or delicate for you to hold anything usable as a weapon in the same hand.

MAGISTERIUM OF ATMOKINESIS

You are a student of the weather, including how elemental forces interact to create it and how psychokinetic energies can impact those processes. You are very careful with your abilities, as manipulation of the skies in one place can cause droughts, storms, or floods in another. Sometimes, you even worry that you unintentionally affect nearby weather with your moods. These concerns prompt you to exercise a deeper level of self-control and personal detachment than even your fellow mentalists practice. With the precision of a mathematician or an architect, you track weather patterns in your local region, both to understand the limits of your own power and be able to predict the effects of your interference.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *gust*** cantrip, and you can use an abacus as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>fog cloud, feather fall</i>
3rd	<i>gust of wind, warding wind</i> **
5th	<i>call lightning, sleet storm</i>
7th	<i>storm sphere</i> **
9th	<i>maelstrom</i> **
11th	<i>chain lightning</i>
17th	<i>storm of vengeance</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF DISAPPARATION

Unlike those who master powers that propel objects through space, you've become convinced of an alternate theory: that space itself is malleable via psychic arcana. You first apply this ability to move short distances, sometimes while standing still, and to bend the world around you to hide your very presence in it. Growing in this field of study allows you to link places together with your mind, traveling impossible distances, perhaps even transcending the mortal plane. The chief mental flaw that accompanies such studies is a tendency towards egocentrism, believing that the visible world revolves around you. After all, when everything around you can move and change, the only fixed point you can perceive is yourself.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *shifting shadow** cantrip, and if you have navigator's tools on your person and are proficient with them, you can also use any one instrument held in your hand from that set of tools as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>longstrider, sanctuary</i>
3rd	<i>misty step, rope trick</i>
5th	<i>blink, nondetection</i>
7th	<i>dimension door</i>
9th	<i>teleportation circle</i>
11th	<i>arcane gate</i>
17th	<i>gate</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF ECTOPSYCHOSIS

Even among other mentalists, your studies are considered esoteric and unorthodox. You have gained insights into other planes and the intelligences that inhabit them, threatening your sanity not with disorienting delusions, but the clarity of truths beyond mortal ken. Sharing your enlightened perceptions can expose others to these same knowledge, as well as the eldritch forces attached to them. Even as you struggle to resist madness, you can blast the sanity of others by unleashing otherworldly forces, or simply by helping them see the world from a perspective like your own. In addition to the spells below, you learn the *reaver's touch** cantrip, and you can use the orb type of arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells, but that orb must be made of clear, colorless crystal (this does not change the cost of the item).

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>alienated mind</i> *, <i>dissonant whispers</i>
3rd	<i>augury, crown of madness</i>
5th	<i>hunger of Hadar, invasive id</i> *
7th	<i>confusion</i>
9th	<i>contact other plane</i>
11th	<i>eyebite</i>
17th	<i>gate</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF PHANTASMAGORIA

Your intense examination of the workings of the mortal mind have led you to explore the powers of perception, and how they can be misled. You begin with the simple ability to project the input of a single sense, such as hearing or sight, but eventually you can compose complex hallucinations. Over time, you learn how to discern exactly what sensory input will frighten or perplex a certain creature. Getting

insight into others' fears and misunderstandings helps you relate to them, but sometimes knowing how inaccurate even your own senses are makes the world around you seem dreamlike and insubstantial.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *minor illusion** cantrip, and you can use an item from any one of the following sets of artisan's tools as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells: calligrapher's supplies, painter's supplies, a disguise kit, or a forgery kit.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>color spray, silent image</i>
3rd	<i>mirror image, phantasmal force</i>
5th	<i>fear, major image</i>
7th	<i>phantasmal killer</i>
9th	<i>Mislead</i>
11th	<i>programmed illusion</i>
17th	<i>Weird</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF PSYCHOKINETICISM

The ability to move objects and exert force with your mind via the *mage hand* cantrip is where you began your studies, but you have grown greatly in knowledge and power since. The strength of a hulking warrior is dwarfed by the increasing physical potency of your mind. With but a thought, you learn to move the heaviest objects in your presence, and use them defensively or aggressively. The earth itself becomes your plaything as you advance in mastery. Often these mentalists become so accustomed to manipulating the physical world with their thoughts that they barely lift the fingers of their actual bodies. You have to be vigilant about not neglecting the needs of your flesh and blood form, or else your health may decline, as you wither into a mere shell containing an increasingly inhuman power.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *thunderclap*** cantrip, and you can use the wand type of arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells, but that wand must be made of wood (this does not affect the cost of the item).

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>catapult***, telekinetic slam*</i>
3rd	<i>cordon of arrows, levitate</i>
5th	<i>erupting earth**, wind wall</i>
7th	<i>animate objects</i>
9th	<i>telekinesis</i>
11th	<i>move earth</i>
17th	<i>Imprisonment</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF PSYCHOMETABOLISM

Your own body is the focus of your studies, and you seek to perfect it through knowledge and discipline. These kinds of mentalists often eat special diets and practice strict routines of regular exercise as part of their mastery of their own bodily energies. They also tend to be among the most unstoppable of all metaphysicians in direct hand-to-hand confrontation. You have to be careful to remain alert to danger, as your growing personal fortitude means you sometimes fail to notice more insidious threats, or serious danger that could harm others. You sometimes have trouble connecting with common folk, as their seem so fragile and short.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *blade ward* cantrip. You can use a vial of antitoxin or the emblem type of divine focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells, but if you use an emblem, it must feature an alchemical symbol of your own design.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>frightful strike*, speed of thought*</i>
3rd	<i>enhance ability, enlarge/reduce</i>
5th	<i>feign death, sustaining meditation*</i>
7th	<i>stoneskin</i>
9th	<i>greater restoration</i>
11th	<i>unleash instincts*</i>
17th	<i>Foresight</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF PSYCHOVELOCITY

Either time or space would be a massive field of study in itself for any scholar, but your psychic abilities give you deep insights into both. Your particular interest is the speed of objects in motion, and you increase your own swiftness to superhuman levels. Eventually, you learn to manipulate time itself, decreasing or increasing the speed of others, moving so quickly you generate vortexes of wind, and eventually learning to move on a completely different scale of time from those around you. Your own perceptions of time can alienate you from others, as the slow-moving and predictable creatures around you become sources of boredom and frustration. The feeling is something like that of a practiced artisan, waiting impatiently for an unschooled apprentice to slowly blunder through a task they themselves could execute quickly and easily, except you feel that way about practically *everyone*. When you move at the upper limits of your speed, there is a strange feeling of temptation to push past even those boundaries, moving on permanently to some as yet undiscovered plane of existence, so that is a call you must resist as well.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *steal speed* cantrip, and you can use an hourglass as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>expeditious retreat, speed of thought*</i>
3rd	<i>blur, spider climb</i>
5th	<i>haste, slow</i>
7th	<i>freedom of movement</i>
9th	<i>swift quiver</i>
11th	<i>investiture of wind</i>
17th	<i>time stop</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF PYROKINESIS

You focus your psychic studies on controlling the element of fire. At first, you can only manipulate existing fire, but eventually you learn to cause combustion in flammable items around you, and at higher levels you can ignite fire out of thin air from your own mental energies. You know have chosen an area of psychic power where it is easy to lose control, for many reasons. Often, creating flame with your mind requires you to summon up intense feelings of rage within yourself, and mentalists of this magisterium are often seen as short tempered. Fire also behaves in ways not unlike a living animal, and sometimes it is hard not to think of it as a living thing that must be calmed and placated or, at times, fed. Its purity is seductive, and the instinct to unleash it everywhere is a lure you must resist as well.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *control flames*** cantrip, and you can use a container of alchemist's fire as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>absorb elements**, fiery wrath*</i>
3rd	<i>heat metal, pyrotechnics**</i>
5th	<i>fireball, flame arrows**</i>
7th	<i>wall of fire</i>
9th	<i>immolation**</i>
11th	<i>investiture of flame</i>
17th	<i>meteor swarm</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF SPECTROLOGY

Like other mentalists, you study the mind, but you do so as a means for divining the secrets of the soul. In your chosen field, you delve into deeper mysteries than any other kind of metaphysician. How do souls migrate from the mortal body they once inhabited? Do spirits have any substance or weight? Is the soul one whole, or does it have parts? You may never

truly answer even one such question, but it is your life's work to try. In that pursuit, you discover ways to externalize expressions of your own soul as disembodied entities or the animating force behind constructs, to transubstantiate your own body into something more like spirit, to communicate with the departed. The heights of power may allow you to leave your body, whether to walk in others' dreams, possess the body of another sentient creature, or even take others with you to explore the astral plane. Yet definitive answers always seem to linger beyond reach, and your unsatisfied curiosity may propel you to reckless risks and making trouble for your comrades.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *spare the dying** cantrip, and

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>soul homunculus*, unseen servant</i>
3rd	<i>invisibility, pass without trace</i>
5th	<i>gaseous form, speak with dead</i>
7th	<i>greater invisibility</i>
9th	<i>dream</i>
11th	<i>magic jar</i>
17th	<i>astral projection</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF TELECOGNITION

You have mastered techniques for contacting the minds of other intelligent creatures, sharing your thoughts directly with them and thinking their thoughts as your own. At higher levels of mastery, you can use this ability to exert influence over thoughts as well, sometimes even taking total control. When you encounter another mind directly with your own, keeping track of the boundaries of your own identity requires deep self-knowledge and strength of will. Your powers may threaten the very concepts of free will or privacy, and you must be on guard against the temptation to use them in mundane situations and personal relationships. If friends and loved ones feel as if they cannot trust their own thoughts around you, you will quickly become an isolated pariah.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *psychic shock** cantrip, and you can use an unbroken mirror as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>command, telepathic link*</i>
3rd	<i>hold person, suggestion</i>
5th	<i>control thoughts*, sending</i>
7th	<i>compulsion</i>

9th *Rary's telepathic bond*

11th *mass suggestion*

17th *power word kill*

MAGISTERIUM OF TELEMPATHY

You focus not on reading others' thoughts, but on sensing their emotions. Beyond the ability to intuit the feelings of those around you, you can project your own emotions into other creatures, causing them to feel as you wish them too. Eventually, you can overwhelm the passions of others to the point where they are inspired to heroic deeds—or past the point at which they can move or function. At the same time, it becomes harder and harder to tell where the emotions of others end, and where your own begin. Those who would dare this path must have the ability to overcome great fear, rage, desire, and other powerful emotions. They require increasing levels of willpower to remain in control. In addition to the spells below, you learn the *fist of rage** cantrip, and you can use a lantern (hooded or bullseye, whether or not it is lit) as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>charm person, Tasha's hideous laughter</i>
3rd	<i>calm emotions, enthrall</i>
5th	<i>beacon of hope, hypnotic pattern</i>
7th	<i>pain</i>
9th	<i>hold monster</i>
11th	<i>Otto's irresistible dance</i>
17th	<i>weird</i>

MAGISTERIUM OF ZOOPATHY

Your studies have unlocked the more primal and animalistic energies of your mind, and you are in touch with the instincts of beasts around you. At first you can only calm or communicate with them. Over time, however, you learn to emulate bestial traits to your advantage, swimming like a fish or striking with the claws of panther. Later, you can summon groups of animals and control them, and empower yourself far beyond the normal abilities of mortals. Retaining control over your instincts becomes challenging, as the primal urges within you grow stronger as your connection to nature deepens.

In addition to the spells below, you learn the *warning roar** cantrip. You can use a vial of antitoxin or the emblem type of divine focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells, but if you use an emblem, it must feature a totemic symbol representing an animal with which you feel an affinity.

Metaphysician

Level	Spells Learned
2nd	<i>animal friendship, beast bond**</i>
3rd	<i>alter self, beast sense</i>
5th	<i>conjure animals, fly</i>
7th	<i>dominate beast</i>
9th	<i>commune with nature</i>
11th	<i>unleash instincts*</i>
17th	<i>shapechange</i>

Mentalist Multiclassing

If you are using the optional multiclassing rules, you may eventually gain psi points from another class. If you do, the maximum number of psi points you can have at once is equal to the total of the maximum psi points permitted by each of your classes that grants them, added together.

SAVANT

You know things, and that's it—but that is more than enough. Unlike other metaphysicians, you don't claim to have any magical powers, your understanding is that you are simply well-educated and extremely practiced in certain techniques. Even the most miraculous seeming feats you can perform have a more mundane explanation, which you can discuss at depth. You're convinced that the magical powers of wizards and the like have less mystical



explanations as well. You seek to understand those phenomena, but your worldview does not allow for the kinds of irrational superstitions others rely on to explain phenomena such as spirits or the walking dead. Logic, applied with rigor, can explain anything. The universe is not an inexplicable game played with dice by unknowable gods. It is a place of deep yet comprehensible wonder, where some creatures and forces are so great and powerful that they currently *seem* beyond mortal ken. In time, however, if enough knowledge is collected, analyzed, and understood, the scientific method will yield understanding of everything. You do your part to bring that future closer.

You love a challenge, and no challenge engages your faculties more than unraveling what others don't want you to know. The combination of your deductive reasoning, encyclopedic education, and ability to improve the efficiency of your body with your powerful mind make you more than a mere investigator or detective. You have an uncanny ability to read people and situations, allowing you to predict your opponent's moves before they happen, uncover complex conspiracies with a bare handful of clues, and act with preternatural quickness before anyone else realizes what has happened.

Most who see you believe your extraordinary capabilities to be magic. You know that even your most miraculous leaps of intuition or uncanny feats of prediction are merely byproducts of a level of education, intuition, and self-discipline any person of intelligence could achieve—you're sure magic has nothing to do with it!

Due to the loss of spell slots that is a consequence of choosing this archetype, you gain an extra archetype feature at 11th level, as well as the levels at which other Metaphysician archetypes gain a feature.

DEEP PROFICIENCY

When you choose this archetype at 2nd level, you gain a deep level of mastery in certain skilled pursuits. You gain proficiency with two tool or vehicle types of your choice (you could choose thieves' tools and water vehicles, disguise kits and calligrapher's supplies, etc.) In addition, you choose one of the following Deep Proficiency options:

- **Cautious.** You gain proficiency with medium and heavy armor. When wearing medium or heavy armor, you gain +1 to AC.
- **Cerebral.** You gain proficiency in one Intelligence-based skill, and you can add half your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to any Intelligence check you make, whether it already includes your normal proficiency bonus or not.

- **Influential.** You gain proficiency in one Charisma-based skill, and you can add half your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to any Charisma check you make, whether it already includes your normal proficiency bonus or not.
- **Intuitive.** You gain proficiency in one Wisdom-based skill, and you can add half your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to any Wisdom check you make, whether it already includes your normal proficiency bonus or not.
- **Tactical.** You gain proficiency with medium armor and all martial weapons. Weapon attacks you make outside of your own turn inflict +2 damage.

GENIUS INTELLECT

Beginning at 2nd level, your spell progression changes from that shown on the metaphysician table. When you choose this archetype, you do not gain spell slots of 2nd level or higher from your metaphysician class. Instead, you receive *intellect dice*, special dice you use to perform prodigious acts that mark your genius. As you grow in your metaphysician class, you gain different numbers of dice, which can be of various types (d6's, d8, d10's, d12's). The various dice you gain are shown in the Intellect Dice per Day table, below.

INTELLECT DICE PER DAY

Metaphysician Level	-Intellect Dice-			
	d6's	d8's	d10's	d12's
2nd	1d6	-	-	-
3rd	2d6	-	-	-
4th	3d6	-	-	-
5th	3d6	1d8	-	-
6th	3d6	2d8	-	-
7th	3d6	3d8	1d10	-
8th	3d6	3d8	2d10	-
9th	3d6	3d8	3d10	1d12
10th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
11th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
12th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
13th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
14th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
15th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
16th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
17th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
18th	3d6	3d8	3d10	2d12
19th	3d6	3d8	3d10	3d12
20th	3d6	3d8	3d10	3d12

You can use these intellect dice for a variety of *exploits*, stunning demonstrations of your mental discipline. Exploits are listed at the end of this archetype. If an exploit requires a saving throw, it uses your metaphysician spellcasting save DC. You

can never spend more than one intellect die during the same turn.

You regain all expended intellect dice whenever you finish a long rest.

In addition, you are able to use a magnifying glass as a spellcasting focus for your metaphysician spells.

NARROWLY FOCUSED SPELLS

At 2nd level, you focus on certain talents that are effectively spells, but which you know are merely demonstrations of mental discipline. You learn the *dread mercy**, *predictive focus** and *psychic shield** spells, as well as the *adept skill** and *vicious mockery* cantrips.

From now on, whenever you learn a new spell per the Spells Known column of the Metaphysician table, it can never be a spell of 2nd level or higher. Spells gained from other sources (such as class features, racial traits, or the features of this archetype) are not affected by this feature.

Starting at 4th level, whenever you inflict psychic damage on a creature with a cantrip, that damage is increased by your Intelligence modifier.

MARTIAL DETERMINATION

At 6th level, focused meditation and an increased level of martial training make you a more resilient combatant, capable of acting and reacting with preternatural speed. Your hit point maximum increases by 6, and increases by 1 again whenever you gain a level in this class. In addition, you can take a bonus action on each of your turns in combat. This bonus action can be used only to take the Disengage action, to cast the *vicious mockery* cantrip, or to make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), Intelligence (Investigation), or Wisdom (Perception or Insight) check.

SLEUTH'S INSIGHT

Starting at 6th level, if you spend at least 1 minute observing or interacting with another creature outside combat, you can learn certain information about its capabilities compared to your own. The DM tells you if the creature is your equal, superior, or inferior in regard to two of the following characteristics of your choice:

- An ability score of your choice
- Armor Class
- Current hit points
- Total class levels (if any)
- Levels in a particular class (if any)

At the DM's option, you might also realize you know a piece of the creature's history or one of its personality traits, if it has any.

When you use this ability on a creature, you can also cast *predictive focus** on it without any components and without using a spell slot. Once you cast *predictive focus** on a creature without using a spell slot in this way, you cannot do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

If you wish to use this ability more quickly, or in combat, you may do so as an action without the minute of interaction, but must succeed on a Wisdom (Insight) check opposed by the target's Charisma (Deception) check as part of that action. You gain advantage on the roll if the creature is currently Friendly towards you. If you fail, this creature is immune to your analyzing gaze feature for 1 minute.

If a creature you have used this ability on within the last hour is the target of your *predictive focus** spell, you roll 1d12 for your bonus damage from that spell against the creature, instead of a d6.

UNEQUALLED INSIGHT

At 11th level, the uncanny unity of body, mind, and senses granted by your unparalleled self-discipline grant you extraordinary powers most would consider magic, but which you know to be extraordinary feats of mental clarity. Once per day, you can cast *true seeing* (on yourself only) without spending a spell slot. You must finish a long rest before you can do so again. At higher levels, you gain more metaphysician spells of your choice that can be cast in this way, as follows:

- At 13th level, once per day, you can cast *regenerate* (on yourself only) without spending a spell slot.
- At 15th level, once per day, you can cast *glibness* without spending a spell slot.
- At 17th level, once per day, you can cast *foresight* (on yourself only) without spending a spell slot.

You regain all uses of your unequalled insight spells whenever you finish a long rest.

FIRST BLOW

Beginning at 14th level, your preternaturally quick mind gives you a crucial edge when a fight begins. If you make an unarmed strike against a creature who has not yet acted in the combat, you can roll a d6 in place of your normal unarmed strike normal damage, and you can use Intelligence instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls. If the unarmed strike hits, the target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against your metaphysician spell DC or be knocked prone.

UNEXPECTED RESPONSE

At 14th level, you are always one step ahead of danger. When you roll initiative, before anyone else can act, you can immediately take an extra turn.

During this turn, you can only take one action, and you can only use it in certain ways. You can take the Dash or Hide action, make an unarmed strike, or take any one of the bonus actions permitted by your Insightful Action feature.

If more than one creature in an encounter has a feature that allows them to take an extra turn before anyone else can act, then all creatures with such abilities act first, in order of initiative, then the regular initiative order begins.

If you would normally be surprised at the start of an encounter, you are not surprised, but you do not gain this extra turn.

FORESEEN POSSIBILITY

At 18th level, your ability to predict events and actions around you is psychically infallible and practically omniscient, allowing you to predict your near future like moves on a chessboard and change your own choices in response. Once per day, at the end of your turn, before anyone else acts in the combat, you can announce that what just happened during your turn was not what actually occurred, but was simply your character visualizing what might happen and psychically sharing that information with their comrades. At that point, everything that has happened since the beginning of your turn—including dice rolls, any damage inflicted or healed, movement, conversation, spellcasting, even death and the passage of time itself—is undone, because in the world of the game, it *never actually happened*. That turn never took place at all. You then immediately take your turn again, making new choices or similar ones as you wish, with entirely new actions, responses, dice rolls, effects, and outcomes. In game terms, you have effectively taken a “mulligan” on that turn, ignoring what occurred and playing it over again. You must use the results of the re-played turn, even if at the end of it you realize you prefer the previous version. Every player character that had perceived your original turn in-game still remembers what might have been, because they are also magically aware of what would have happened if that turn had actually taken place. In order to make such an accurate prediction, your character had to psychically reflect his own observations to and from his allies’ minds as well as his own. Non-player characters, however, do not know what the turn that never happened was like, unless they are Friendly towards you and you choose for them to have seen it.

Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

EXPLOITS

The exploits available to this archetype are described below, in alphabetical order.

Alchemical Salve. You can use this exploit to create special alchemical salves that have healing power comparable to some potions. You can spend 10 minutes (which can be part of a short rest) making these salves by gathering and mixing ingredients. At the end of those 10 minutes, you may expend a number of your intellect dice equal to or less than your Intelligence modifier. Each intellect die spent creates a separate alchemical salve, which heals an amount of damage dependent on the intellect die spent, as follows:

Alchemical Salve Healing

Intellect Die Spent	Healing Value
1d6	2d6
1d8	3d8
1d10	3d10
1d12	4d12

These alchemical salves cannot be applied effectively by anyone but you. As an action, you can apply one of your alchemical salves to yourself or a creature within 5 feet of you. The creature to which you apply the salve instantly regains hit points equal to the healing value shown on table above. Your alchemical salves lose potency within a day or so. The next time you finish a long rest, all alchemical salves you have created lose all healing properties, becoming a tingly unguent with no exceptional healing properties (though it can ease muscle pain). Reusing expired salve halves the time required the next time you create a batch.

When you reach 5th level in your metaphysician class, alchemical salves you create with this exploit confer additional healing equal to twice your Intelligence modifier.

Battlefield Geometry. You can expend a intellect die as a bonus action during your turn to move up to half your walking speed. When you expend a intellect die for this exploit, until the end of your turn you add half the result of your intellect die roll to your AC (rounded down to a minimum of 1) and do not expend extra movement when moving over difficult terrain. Once you use this exploit twice, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

When you reach 7th level in your metaphysician class, you add the full roll of your intellect die to your AC until the end of your turn, instead of half. When you reach 11th level in your metaphysician class, you can use this exploit to move up to your full walking speed, instead of half.

Brew Acid and Alchemist’s Fire. If you are proficient with alchemist’s supplies, you can use them make special temporary versions of alchemist fire or basic acid for your own use. You can spend 10 minutes brewing these alchemical concoctions (which can be part of a short rest). At the end of those 10 minutes, you may expend a number of your intellect dice equal to or less than your Intelligence modifier. Each intellect die spent creates a separate canister of improvised acid or alchemist’s fire like those

described under Adventuring Gear in the core rules. Instead of inflicting the normal damage, however, each canister inflicts damage based on the intellect die spent, as follows:

BREWED ACID/ALCHEMIST'S FIRE DAMAGE

Intellect Die Spent	Improvised Acid Damage	Improvised Alchemist's Fire Damage
1d6	4d6	2d6
1d8	4d8	3d8
1d10	4d10	3d10
1d12	4d12	4d12

Otherwise, the acid works as normal, but the alchemist's fire works slightly differently.

When a creature is struck by your improvised alchemist's fire, it immediately makes a Dexterity saving throw against the effect. The DC for this first Dexterity save is your metaphysician spellcasting DC rather than the normal alchemist's fire save DC. On a successful saving throw, the creature takes half the fire damage both for this round and any subsequent round in which it takes fire damage. On a failure, it takes the full damage. Either way, it takes this damage when struck as well as at the beginning of its next turn. If a creature succeeds on its initial saving throw, it has advantage on its subsequent Dexterity saves to extinguish the flames from this effect.

The improvised acid and alchemist's fire you create lose potency within a day or so. The next time you finish a long rest, they become an inert and useless gelatinous liquid. Reusing this expired alchemical concoction halves the time required the next time you create a batch of acid or alchemist's fire.

When you reach 4th level in your metaphysician class, you can throw acid or alchemist's fire created with this ability up to 50 feet instead of 20 feet. Once during your turn, you may do so as if throwing a weapon with which you are proficient, rather than an improvised weapon. When you reach 5th level in your metaphysician class, when you throw acid or alchemist's fire prepared with this exploit, once during your turn you can quickly add an additional ingredient that gives the acid or alchemist's fire different properties, as follows:

- **Spraying Acid.** This acid reacts when it consumes flesh or other substances, spraying acidic droplets and caustic vapor in directions you can precalculate. When you make your ranged attack roll, choose up to three other creatures within 10 feet of the target. You may make this ranged attack roll using your Intelligence modifier in place of your Strength or Dexterity modifier if you choose. If the attack hits, any of the other three creatures you chose whose Armor Class would've been struck by that attack roll also take the acid damage. When you reach 11th level in your metaphysician class, you may choose up to four extra creatures instead of three, so long as all are within 10 feet of your target; when you reach 17th level in this class, you choose as many as five.
- **Explosive Alchemist's Fire.** This alchemist's fire explodes almost immediately after you add the extra

ingredient. Instead of making an attack roll, you choose a point within 75 feet of you. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw against your metaphysician spell save DC. A target that succeeds on its saving throw takes the normal damage for alchemist's fire you create with this exploit; targets that fail their saves take double damage. The fire spreads around corners. It ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

Clockworks. If you are proficient with tinker's tools, you can expend one intellect die to use them to make a single use of the rock gnome's Tinker racial ability, spending 1 hour and 10 gp of materials to create one Tiny clockwork device. You may add the number rolled on your Intellect die to the clockwork devices's base Armor Class of 5. You can only have three clockwork devices at once, which all work as per the Tinker ability description. If you already possess the Tinker ability (probably from being a rock gnome), you gain an additional bonus when you use this exploit: you may add the number rolled on your Intellect die to the clockwork devices's base 1 hp, as well as to its base Armor Class.

Discern Vulnerability. When you make a weapon attack, you can expend one intellect die to inflict extra damage if the attack hits. You must choose to do this before you make the attack roll. You choose whether the extra damage is psychic damage or damage of the same type as the weapon. The extra damage inflicted is determined by the size of the intellect die you spend, as follows: d6 = 4d6 extra damage, d8 = 4d8 extra damage, d10 = 4d10 extra damage, d12 = 4d12 extra damage.

Mnemonic Fortification. Whenever you use a spell slot to cast a spell of 1st level, you can spend a intellect die to recover that spell slot, as if it had never been used. In addition, whenever a spell you cast with this exploit has an enhanced effect when cast with a higher level spell slot (as *frightful strike** does), you cast it at a higher level if you use an intellect die of a certain type, as follows: d6 = 2nd level spell slot, d8 = 3rd level spell slot, d10 = 4th level spell slot, d12 = 5th level spell slot. Whenever you expend a intellect die for this exploit, you also gain temporary hit points equal to your intellect die roll.

As you gain higher levels, you can use intellect dice to cast certain spells of higher level as well, but the types of intellect dice you can use in this way are limited, as follows:

- At 3rd level, you can spend an intellect die as an action to cast the *calm emotions* spell or the *detect thoughts* spell as an exploit.
- At 5th level, as an action, you can spend a d8, d10, or d12 intellect die to cast the *haste* spell as an exploit, or to cast the *read object** spell (using its usual casting time of 10 minutes).
- At 7th level, you can spend a d10 or d12 intellect die as an exploit to cast the *premonitory vision** spell as a reaction or the *prescient sense** spell as an action.
- At 9th level, you can spend a d12 intellect die as an action to cast the *dominate person* as an exploit, or to

cast the *legend lore* spell (using its usual casting time of 10 minutes).

If any of the above listed spells are rituals, you can cast them as rituals normally, without having to spend an intellect die, just as any other spellcaster would.

Read Evidence. While you are or a companion are tracking or about to begin tracking one or more other creatures, you can spend an Intellect die as an action to touch an imprint or mark left on your environment by the touch of one of the creatures and sense information about them. When you do so, you get an image of that creature's appearance, its relative size, whether it was traveling alone, and a sense of its emotional state, as if you had used the *read object** spell on an object it had touched. For the next 10 minutes, you add your Intellect die roll to all Wisdom checks you make to find that creature or gain insight into its motivations.

Tactical Insight. By imparting advice or instruction to an ally, you allow them to move and make an extra attack. When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can forgo one of your attacks and use a bonus action to direct one of your companions to strike. When you do so, choose a friendly creature who can see or hear you and expend one intellect die. That creature can immediately use its reaction to make one weapon attack, adding the intellect die to the attack's damage roll. You choose whether the extra damage is

psychic damage or damage of the same type as the weapon. The creature can also move up to half its walking speed as part of the same reaction. When you reach 7th level in your



metaphysician class, when you use this exploit, the ally may move up its full walking speed as part of its reaction, instead of half. When you reach 11th level, you add your Intelligence modifier to the extra damage. When you reach 17th level, all extra damage from this exploit is doubled.

The Challenge of the Savant

If you choose to play a metaphysician with the Savant archetype, you get to play a kind of character often depicted in fantasy and historical fiction: the intellectual hero of reason, often skeptical of superstition (and magic) but trusting absolutely in knowledge and education. This type of protagonist or ally includes types as diverse as George R.R. Martin's Maesters of the Citadel, Vizzini and Miracle Max in *The Princess Bride*, Leonard of Quirm in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series (paralleled by his Roundword counterpart, Leonardo da Vinci), the Craftsmasons in the role-playing game *Mage: The Sorcerer's Crusade*, Cid in the *Final Fantasy* video game series, and many assorted alchemists, steampunk inventors, and others. The main examples in D&D come from the *Dragonlance* setting, including gnome inventors like Gnimsh and the Ascetics who serve Astinus the Historian. From sleuths like Sherlock Holmes to mad scientists like Victor Frankenstein (and his Ravenloft equivalent Victor Mordenheim), this archetype is part of a rich tradition. However, it also comes with a challenge. Unlike other metaphysicians, savants do not learn spells above 1st level, but in terms of the rules, they do still cast "spells" of 1st level or lower. It's up to you whether your character believes they don't use magic but actually does (and thereby must have a nonmagical explanation for every spell they do cast), or if your cantrips and 1st-level spells only appear to be magic to the superstitious, and are in fact merely astounding feats of physical training and mental discipline. Whatever the case, you need a logical rationale for any spells you do cast. Some are more easily explained than others: the *adept skill* cantrip is just you displaying the concentration and personal genius that let you achieve superior results, The *jump* spell represents your amazing athletic ability, *charm person* is merely leveraging your studies of human nature, *psychic shield* is just your personal force of will, etc. Others are harder to explain—perhaps you describe your character as hurling some tiny alchemical object as part of casting the thunderclap cantrip, or hypnotizing an opponent with a swinging pocketwatch before they believe your *silent image*. This added level of creativity is part of the fun, but it's also a bit of extra effort, so when choosing this archetype—and choosing the limited number of spells you learn from it—make sure flexing those extra imaginative muscles is part of the experience you want in play.

Chapter 5:

Secret Societies

No one knows exactly how many secret societies hide in the shadows of the Domains of Dread. An ancient Vistani verse, roughly translated, states “*The Mists hide truths and lies, heroes and villains, triumphs and tragedies. Most of all, the Mists hide the secrets of a thousand tortured souls.*”

For centuries, the most observant men and women of these benighted lands have known that there was more to the world around them than met the eye. Many Barovians have long suspected that Strahd von Zarovich is not the normal man he pretends to be. Some have similar suspicions about the darklords of Valachan, Darkon, and others. However, when it became clear that it was as dangerous to be astute as to be unobservant, the wisest of these citizens decided to close ranks and keep their secrets to themselves. This was the origin of many secret societies.

Using Secret Societies in Your Game

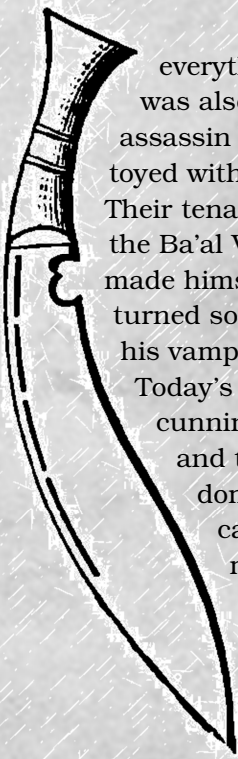
These cryptic allegiances can fulfill many roles in a campaign. In most cases, the way in which a secret society fits into a given storyline depends upon the actions and alignments of the player characters. If the organization shares alignments or goals with the player characters, then it can serve as a patron. Indeed, it might even be possible for the heroes to join the order and fully embrace its ultimate plans. A fine example of such groups might be the Circle or the Keepers of the Feather. A member of an evil secret society (or one that merely seeks to accomplish things the heroes find objectionable) can make a fine villain for an adventure. In such scenarios, it might even be possible for the heroes to confront their enemies without ever learning the society's true nature or objectives. Of course, a secret society can also be used merely as a distraction or red herring. In the course of the adventure, the characters might come across members of a mysterious order who get in their way but are not the actual focus of the adventure. This type of encounter can easily foreshadow future plot twists.

THE BA'AL VERZI

“IN THESE CIVILIZED TIMES, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO IMAGINE THE KIND OF SOCIETY THAT HAD ASSASSINS AS OPEN, THRIVING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY. FOR MUCH OF OUR COUNTRY'S TURBULENT HISTORY, BEING AN ASSASSIN, OR BA'AL VERZIM, WAS COMPARABLE TO BEING A POLITICIAN OR POPULAR ARTIST. ONE COULD NAME ONE'S PRICE AND DID, OFTEN RECEIVING HUGE SUMS OF MONEY FROM INDIVIDUALS FOR PROTECTION...THE BA'AL VERZI WORE COLORFUL, DECORATIVE CLOTHING, WITH THEIR SYMBOL-- THE BLEEDING SKULL-- PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED. THEIR WEAPON WAS A BLADE OF GREAT BEAUTY AND FRIGHTENING SIGNIFICANCE. THE HILT WAS MADE OF THE SKIN FROM THE BA'AL VERZI'S FIRST VICTIM, AND THE ASSASSIN HIMSELF CRAFTED IT. THE FIRST KILL HAD TO BE SOMEONE THE BA'AL VERZI KNEW. THAT WAS DEMANDED BY TRADITION, TO DISCOURAGE ALL BUT THE MOST HARDENED FROM KNOWING THE SECRETS-- AND EARNING THE PROTECTION-- OF THE BA'AL VERZI...”

SKIN AND STEEL: A HISTORY OF THE BA'AL VERZI, A TOME FOUND IN THE LIBRARY OF STRAHD VON ZAROVICH AT CASTLE RAVENLOFT

The Ba'al Verzi (bay-AL VAYR-tzee) was a legendary guild of assassins before Strahd von Zarovich's rise to power. They operated openly, but used disguise and deception to kill, and it was said that anyone could be a Ba'al Verzi. The paranoia the assassins' legend instilled made their work all the easier. Thriving amid the game of betrayal and vengeance waged by three of Barovia's most powerful families during the reign of Strahd's father, the cabal later declined, but never vanished completely. In 350 BC The signature weapon of the Ba'al Verzi is a curved dagger, with a hilt wrapped in black, red, and gold. One such dagger was used to kill used to kill Strahd's brother, Sergei von Zarovich. Though they enchanted these weapons and many of their other tools, the Ba'al Verzi assassins relied on merciless cunning, not sorcery, for their deadly edge. The Ba'al Verzi is all but forgotten in present-day Barovia because Strahd has gone to great lengths to exterminate the order and, for the most part, has been successful. A small cohort of the Dilisnya family, a noble house of old Barovia, have kept the traditions of the Ba'al Verzi alive along with their bloodline. The Dilisnyas and other Ba'al Verzi leaders were trapped in Barovia when it was claimed by the Mists, but the cabal's resurgence has come only recently. For years, fearing Strahd's wrath, the assassins who had once been so brazenly open about their trade acted with utmost secrecy, taking only a few promising students as apprentices. It was a contract on a wicked Barovian boyar that changed



everything. The boyar, Nicu Moldonesti, was also a vampire, and had been an assassin himself before his undeath, and he toyed with those who attempted to kill him. Their tenacity amused him, and he decided the Ba'al Verzi could be a useful tool. Nicu made himself the leader of the cabal, and turned some of its most elite members into his vampiric servants.

Today's Ba'al Verzi are even more amoral, cunning, and greedy than their forebears, and the vampires who lead them dominate unwitting innocents into carrying out truly diabolical murders. They use their mind control powers on trusted friends, beloved relatives, or loyal servants of their intended quarry, sometimes never even setting eyes on the victim themselves.

They accept any target for the right price, and will work for even the most depraved purposes, but have one line they refuse to cross: No matter how high the price, they never accept a contract to kill Strahd von Zarovich, nor will they ever work on the undead Count's behalf.

Ba'al Verzi Dagger

Weapon (dagger), uncommon (requires attunement by a non-good creature)

Crafted via an unholy rite practiced by an allegedly extinct order of brazen assassins, this blade has a wickedly curved blade and a hilt bound in the skin of a humanoid. A Ba'al Verzi assassins made their dagger using the remains of their first victim, and wrapped the handle in black, red, and gold colors.

To most attuned users, this dagger grants a +1 to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. To unlock its full powers, you must be proficient in the use of a poisoner's kit, and in the following skills: Deception, Disguise, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth.

If you are attuned to this weapon and fulfill these additional requirements, you receive a +2 to attack and damage rolls when wielding it. In addition, a critical hit made with this weapon inflicts an additional +2d6 poison damage when the wielder fulfills all its requirements (whether they are attuned to the dagger or not).

Whether or not you meet the proficiency requirements, this dagger grants you one additional power when you are attuned to it: When you hit with a melee attack using this magic dagger and reduce the target to 0 hit points, if the target is a living creature (not undead or a construct), you have advantage on all ability checks and saving throws to avoid being found, detected, or noticed until the end of your next turn.

THE CIRCLE

Few families have suffered as much at the hands of the dark powers as the Shadowborn clan. For centuries, this proud and noble line produced some of the most pious heroes and heroines imaginable, yet their scions have met dark and cruel ends in their struggle. Much of this misfortune was suffered due to the influence of the intelligent and diabolically evil sword known as Ebonbane.

Despite the tragic history of this family, their descendants remain dedicated to the service of truth and justice. To that end, young Alexi Shadowborn founded an order of knighthood known as the Circle, based on an extinguished order of paladins his family had been members of the past. Members of the Circle became known as Knights of the Shadows. Since its inception some decades ago, the Circle has been one of the few bright spots in the Demiplane of Dread. Because directly facing and defeating a domain lord is almost impossible, they often attempt to cripple them by destroying their chief lieutenants.

Alexi Shadowborn is gone, but the Circle seeks to bring the light of truth and justice into a world seemingly devoid of such virtues. They do so by opposing the evil of the Dark Lords wherever they can. Such activities would be almost suicidal if members of this order did not take such great care to protect themselves.

While these Knights do not conceal their identities, as they are constrained by their vows to speak the truth, they rely heavily on safehouses and subtle strategies to remain one step ahead of the lords who would see them exterminated. Yet a Knight of the Shadows is easily recognized by those familiar with the organization and others of their order.

While they preserve their secrecy by using the philosophy of Loyal Equivocation (described under the Paladin Oath of Defiance, allowing a truthful person avoiding revealing information that would cause harm to their allies or cause by speaking on a higher level of truth), that same philosophy also constrains them never to tell a flat lie. A Knight of the Shadows never speaks words they know in their heart to be untrue in the context of that moment. Even in the most perilous of situations, a member of this society will take no steps to directly hide their membership in the Circle from anyone asking with honest and innocent intent. Because of this, they are the most famous of the secret societies in the Domains of Dread.

Knights of the Shadows always wear plate-mail armor adorned with the eclipsed sun that stands as the signet of the group, based on the sun symbol of the original Circle. This icon also serves as a clasp to secure the distinctive traditional black and gold cloak that all members wear, so as to hide from their enemies, but be seen by those who need them. To join, one must have suffered a great loss, and swear to protect a group of helpless people of the Knight's choosing.

The Circle meets once a year at a circle of standing stones located in a hidden grove somewhere in the domain of Avonleigh in the Shadowborn Cluster. Failure by a Knight of the Shadows to make this annual pilgrimage results in dismissal from the order. Apart from this, the Circle has no recognized headquarters.

The Circle's current leader is an infamous warrior from the world of Abeir-Toril, the rebel Gondegal, called the Lost King of Arabel. Known for his short-lived conquest of a kingdom of his own making from lands taken from some of that world's most powerful nations, Gondegal and his army were swallowed by the Mists on the eve of what would have been a great battle. Unlike most outlanders, Gondegal's time in the Domains of Dread has changed him for the better. His former life was one of cynicism and self-interest, but Gondegal is now absolutely devoted to the Circle's mission. His ultimate cause is the welfare of the people of Falkovnia, who live under the sadistic military tyrant Vlad Drakov. He spends most of his time in that domain, working tirelessly to free it from its murderous dictator.

Playing a Member of the Circle

Whether or not they are paladins (and almost all of them are), members of this secret society strive to obey or at least show respect for the tenets of the paladin Oath of Defiance (as described in the Paladin section of the Classes chapter). All members are trained in the art of Loyal Equivocation, as described under that oath.

CARNIVAL

Carnival is a traveling collection of entertainers, merchants, and exhibitors - assembled with an eye toward the macabre and supernatural. Visitors to this mysterious festival find tests of skill, games of chance, freak shows, dancers, musicians, and countless other ways to pass their time and spend their money.

The master of this carnival is an unusual and beautiful woman named Isolde. Isolde and her motley collection of wanderers usually appear outside of a town suddenly, perform for a night or

two (though they have been known to stay up to a week), and then disappear just as mysteriously. Strangely enough, residents seem to always know in advance that Carnival will be arriving soon, though they can't say where they heard the news.

On the surface, Carnival appears to be a normal enough traveling show. In actuality, it is far more than that. Isolde has a very specific goal, though few know it. What other members of the Carnival do know is that Isolde seems to have no fear of the domain lords. Indeed, in her travels around the Core, she has harbored enemies of the darklords on more than one occasion. It seems, in fact, that the powers of these deadly masters of the Domains of Dread cannot affect Isolde or those under her protection. How this might be possible is a question none can answer. Isolde appears to have no loyalty to anyone, though she takes great care to protect those in her employ.

Isolde recruits performers and employees for Carnival from all across the Domains of Dread. The company of outcasts and freaks she has assembled see her as their savior, for she has given them a life better than any they had before. In order to become one of Isolde's performers, a character must have some unusual characteristic or exceptional ability. This might be a deformity, talent, or even a collection of oddities that can be displayed.

The roster of Isolde's employees is not large; at no time does she carry more than sixty people in her employ. Many of her performers have a small tattoo of a rearing horse on the back of their heads. No record of Carnival exists prior to the Grand Conjunction, but some claim it has actually been around much longer. Isolde and her performers are very tight-lipped on the matter.

Carnival has no headquarters, unless one considers the wagon in which Isolde resides to be such. This ordinary looking wagon always sits at the center of the carnival. It is from this grand conveyance that Isolde operates all of Carnival's affairs. No one, not even her performers, has ever seen the inside of this wagon.

The Twisting

One of the horrifying truths of Carnival is that it does not merely recruit outcasts and freaks—it actually creates them as well. Anyone who remains within the presence of the Carnival too long is warped physically. Their bodies shift in an expression of their inner nature. The change is not permanent, but it takes much longer to reverse than the time that it has been in effect.

This does not always happen. It seems that it is Isolde who decides if the Twisting happens or not. Whenever a creature spends more than a week traveling with Carnival

or within its boundaries, every time it finishes a long rest in the Carnival's company after that week, it must roll a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 plus the number of days it has spent with Carnival. If it fails, it is affected as if by a Vistani curse. The creature's appearance changes in a sinister yet purely cosmetic way. For example, the Twisting can make the creature's hair look like lifeless snakes, turn the creature's teeth into yellow fangs, or transform its facial features into those of an animal or goblinoid. If a creature already suffers the effects of the Twisting currently, it is unaffected and does not need to make future saving throws. The source of the curse is Isolde herself, rather than a Vistana (she is not one of the Vistani). The curse of the Twisting persists as long as the creature remains with Carnival, and even after it leaves. The change in appearance created by the Twisting does not end until the creature has been away from Carnival for a continuous amount of time equal to twice the amount of time it spent within it. When the curse ends, Isolde takes psychic damage just as a Vistana would from their curse.

Once per day, Isolde can use an action to inflict the Twisting purposefully. This action forces a creature within 30 feet that she can see to make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 1d4+17. If they fail, they are affected by the same curse.

If Isolde wishes it, any creature affected by the Twisting can also experience effects equivalent to those of an *alter self* spell when it is changed. However, rather than the creature itself choosing the effects (as the caster of an *alter self* spell does), they either reflect the creature's true nature or are chosen by Isolde herself. On at least one occasion, she has used this power to change the appearance of someone who had been transformed by a separate magical effect. This *alter self* effect lasts as long as the Twisting, or can be permanent if Isolde wishes it. Isolde is said to be a moral being, whatever she is, but she does not seem to be troubled ethically by the Twisting. She has said she deems it to be perfectly appropriate that one's appearance expresses one's true nature.

THE FRATERNITY OF SHADOWS

The Fraternity of Shadows is an alliance of wizards, warlocks, sorcerers, and other magic-users devoted to unravelling the magical secrets behind the Domains of Dread. They understand that their land is unique, and they seek to learn why this is the case. If the Fraternity sought only knowledge, they might be considered harmless. Their ultimate goal, however, is to use the knowledge they acquire to take control of Ravenloft and become the masters of all creatures who dwell there.

All of the members of the Fraternity work toward a single goal: the attainment of ultimate understanding and power. They recognize that the Mists hide many secrets, and they strive endlessly to increase their knowledge. It is quite possible that the

members of the Fraternity know more about the Domains of Dread than anyone else who dwells within them.

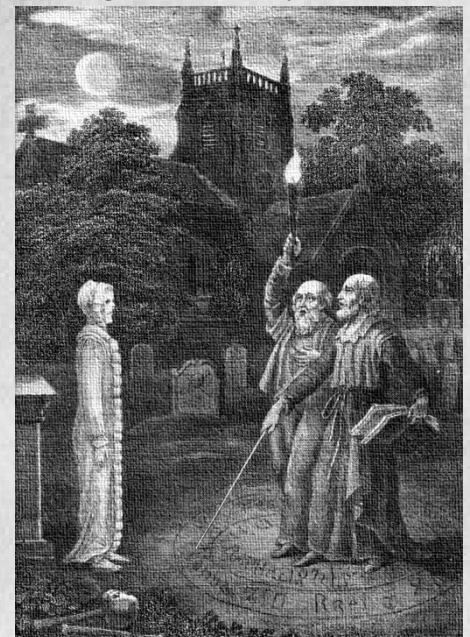
Most members of this loosely-knit organization carry out their research in their home domains. From time to time, however, a member will undertake an expedition to another domain to learn something their research has not been able to uncover.

While the Fraternity of Shadows maintains no central headquarters, the need for meetings between members is recognized. Whenever a number of members come together, they will do so at a place that represents knowledge and power. Past meetings have taken place (secretly, of course) at the school of magic in Lekar, Falkovnia and at the Great Library in Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu.

The writings of the vampire hunter Rudolph Van Richten have revealed that the leaders of the Fraternity are known as the Umbra. According to the Van Richten, the president of the University of Dementlieu, Lord Balfour de Casteelle, is one of the Umbra. It is also believed that the Brautslava Institute in Darkon is a center of their power.

Due to centuries of tradition, the Fraternity is strongly slanted to favor those who share as many traits as possible with the members of the Umbra. As the leading wizards are illusionists, for example, they demand some facility with illusion spells as a condition of membership. Generally, the Umbra rely upon the tests they administer to all would-be members as a way of weeding out those least like themselves, biasing their questions and required tasks accordingly. Afterwards, the failure of those who fail these rigged tests is privately discussed among members, as proving the inferiority of the various groups they exclude, reinforcing their institutional prejudices.

The Fraternity's beliefs about esoteric paths to occult power are intertwined with misogynistic conjecture about the inferiority of female scholars and spellcasters, and so while no formal rule about



rejecting would-be members who are not men exists, in practice only males are admitted. In a few rare cases, female immediate family members of the highest-ranking leaders have been allowed in, but they are kept from leadership positions, and their research is approached as naïve or, at best, precocious.

Joining the Fraternity of Shadows

As part of the initiation into their order, the Fraternity's leaders perform a ritual that divines if the potential member is good-aligned. Such members are never permitted. The ritual also detects if the would-be initiate has a lawful or chaotic alignment, as such members are only admitted in special cases. They are not outright rejected, but the Fraternity seeks only those members who have no moral or ethical concerns that will restrain their pursuit of arcane secrets and power at all costs. The leaders and upper echelons of the Fraternity of Shadows are all neutral evil human or half-elf male wizards devoted to the arcane tradition of the School of Illusion. Sharing those traits is not necessarily required to join the Fraternity, but strong preference is given to candidates who most closely resemble the leaders (especially in terms of gender). Some level of power over illusion magic is required. As part of the same ritual, the initiate must demonstrate the ability to cast the *minor illusion* cantrip or one illusion spell of 1st-level or higher.

Ring of the Fraternity of Shadows

Ring, uncommon, requires attunement by a non-good creature who has been through the Fraternity's initiation ritual and can cast one illusion spell and at least one other spell of 2nd-level or higher

Each member of the Fraternity of Shadows wears a silver ring in the shape of two intertwined asps. The mouths of these vipers form the setting into which an onyx stone is placed. The Fraternity presents one of these rings to each member upon acceptance.

If attuned to the ring, you gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class and can use it to cast the *minor illusion* cantrip, as well as to cast *darkness* as a 2nd level spell without using a spell slot. Once you cast *darkness* in this way, you must finish a short rest before doing so again.

Demonstrating their ability to cast *darkness* with the ring is often used as a test of a Fraternity member's loyalty and authenticity.

THE ILDI'THAAN

About 150 years ago, in a region known as Thaan on the slopes of Mt. Makab, a people called the Thaani somehow lived in the unearthly domain known as Bluetspur. They knew of the horrors that lived below the rocks, but were able to survive there nonetheless. They were protected in some unknown manner from this danger.

According to legend, one day a dense mountain fog descended upon their lands, swallowing them whole.

When it lifted, the Thaani people were gone. Villages and towns were left empty, devoid of any human life.

Not all were in their homes that day. Those people in the fields or away from their home town or village survived. They knew nothing of what had happened to their family and friends. Upon entering the towns and villages, they found them deserted. There were no clues as to the whereabouts of the other Thaani.

That first night after the discovery of the horror, everyone left alive suffered from horrible nightmares. Many of them went insane, gibbering about unspeakable monsters slithering up from the depths to devour everything in sight. Those Thaani who were still sane fled the mountain, convinced it was haunted by the spirits of the missing.

Their once-friendly mountain was now ringed by a wall of mist. Half-formed aberrations drifting through the fog convinced the people to keep moving. Finally they found refuge in the lands of Barovia in the town of Immol. According to the legend, there were only 13 survivors of Thaan. Some stayed in Immol, while others moved on, restlessly searching for some place to hide from their own memories and haunting dreams.

Before going their own ways, the 13 survivors created 13 texts. When gathered together, they would reveal the whole tale of the Thaani, including the secret of their power over the elder masters. If even one text is missing, the rest are useless. Each survivor was charged with safeguarding a text.

Some people still remember the tale of Thaan. Every now and then a madman wanders down from the mountains of Bluetspur into Kartakass, Barovia or Hazlan. Some mention the Ildi'Thaan as if that were their name for their own race. They jabber about the elder masters and unspeakable horrors. This tends to support the theories of those who believe in the legends of Thaan.

The Ildi'Thaan was supposedly formed by the only known person to get out of Bluetspur sane. The legend of Thaan was over a century old at the time. He never spoke publicly of his experiences in that domain, but began to secretly recruit people who dreamed of great power and wealth. He spun them a tale of learning the hidden powers of the mind and the riches to be found in the hidden passageways of the elder masters.

The Ildi'Thaan want to discover the lost secret of their ancestors via the 13 texts of Thaan, which together describe how to recover the ancient knowledge. With this knowledge, they believe that they can lay claim to the treasures of Bluetspur and open the secrets of the mind. Anyone reading the

texts will supposedly be granted power to make wizards tremble.

Today, The Ildi'Thaan attracts those who believe in the inner power of the mind but shun the practice of magic. It spins a seductive web of power and gold for whomever is clever enough to obtain the secret. As a result, there are no wizards in the Ildi'Thaan. There are also no true mystics, monks, or metaphysicians in the society, since they are painfully aware that the hidden powers of the mind are acquired through discipline and hard work, not through some mystical mumbo jumbo. Ildi'Thaan members tend to be greedy and willing to perform any service for the right price in gold.

The rumored leader of the Ildi'Thaan is the legendary Chorin Mur'Thaan. He is supposedly the founder of the Ildi'Thaan, and the only sane man to ever escape Bluetspur. Given the dates involved, it is likely that even if Chorin existed, he is now dead.

The membership of the Ildi'Thaan is divided into *the echelon* and *the hopeful*. Members of the echelon are all reputed to some kind of innate psychic powers. The hopeful are just normal people. They never see the faces of the echelon. Echelon members always wear blood-red robes and hoods when meeting with the hopeful. Among themselves, they do not hide.

The hopeful who have proved themselves to the echelon are awarded a red sash, which is to be worn only at ceremonial occasions. They are still considered to be members of the hopeful, but they are now entrusted with missions of substance and some small bit of secret knowledge. They are referred to as the hopeful of the sash.

Since not everyone who tries develops any kind of psionic power or psychic wild talent, the society still has a place for those who try and fail. They are never permitted to sit among the echelon since they are clearly not worthy. Their sashes are marked with a black stripe. Technically they have the same level of authority as the hopeful, but in practical terms they bear more responsibility. Ildi'Thaan lore says that they shall have another chance to prove themselves when they confront the elder masters.

The easiest way for any echelon member to prove himself as an Ildi'Thaan is to demonstrate his special power. Of course others may have such powers, but this will convince most members of the hopeful that they are dealing with a genuine member of the echelon, not just a liar in a red suit.

The Ildi'Thaan have developed an elaborate set of hand signals. The signs are not very subtle. The person seems to be casting a spell or attempting an

arcane form of sign language. It is a complete enough system that long-standing members of the society can carry on entire conversations silently.

Among those who are not fortunate enough to develop the psionic powers to join the echelon, this is the easiest way to recognize other members. If the Ildi'Thaan does not get the proper response to his hand signal query, he knows that he is not dealing with another member of the society.

The exact location of the Ildi'Thaan headquarters is unknown. However, it is somewhere in Barovia, near the village of Immol. Only echelon members are allowed to go there. Most meetings of the Ildi'Thaan are held outdoors in hidden groves of trees. Most are held in the early morning. In Barovia or Kartakass, it is not uncommon for members to spy a lone wolf watching from deep under the trees. So long as the Ildi'Thaan are not a irritant to the lords of these domains, they are allowed to exist. Besides, why destroy the society when it may be able to serve you some day?

Playing the Ildi'Thaan

Many might consider the Ildi'Thaan delusional, but there is at least a kernel of truth to their beliefs—The Thaani immigrants of Immol did undoubtedly escape from Bluetspur, though many were experimented upon by mind flayers first. In any case, Thaani and their descendants do have a predisposition for psychic abilities. It is between DM and player as to whether it is most fun for the Ildi'Thaan are gullible dilettantes taken in by lies, seekers after a true source of occult wisdom, a mix of both, or something else entirely.

Members of this secret society should not be members of the wizard, metaphysician, or monk classes, or any other class that develops mystical abilities through practice and discipline—such techniques are antithetical to the Ildi'Thaan philosophy. Low-level sorcerers are good fit for the echelon, as are warlocks whose Otherworldly Patron is the Great Old One. Members of the hopeful can be treated as regular characters, with no specific rules required. For a member of the echelon, apply one or more feats that grant spells or other powers similar to psionic abilities—such as the Magic Initiate feat with the right spells, or new feats like Living Poltergeist or Mind Reader, introduced in this document. For the DM, such a feat can also be added to an NPC pretty easily, without raising their Challenge Rating. If your campaign does not use the optional Feat rules, a DM can use the capabilities in the described feats as a suggestion for how to handle the abilities of a member of the echelon. Otherwise, player characters can acquire this feat normally as part of character creation or level advancement. For more description and details on the Thaani people themselves, descended from the survivors of Bluetspur, see the sidebar “Immigrants to Barovia: The Thaani”, in the Barovia section of Chapter 2.

THE KARGATANE

One of the most powerful, widespread, and dangerous organizations in all the Domains of Dread, the Kargatane foment discord, murder, steal, and sabotage across the Core and other domains, in accordance with the goals of their leaders.

The original Kargat vampires were the state police force of the Domain of Dread known as Darkon, undying servants of its darklord, the lich Azalin. Beneath this vile group of spies and assassins was the Kargatane, an assembly of mortals who did the bidding of the Kargat—though they seldom knew the true nature of their masters. They had been promised eternal life for service, not realizing the only immortality the Kargat could offer was the curse of vampirism, and that even this was almost always withheld.

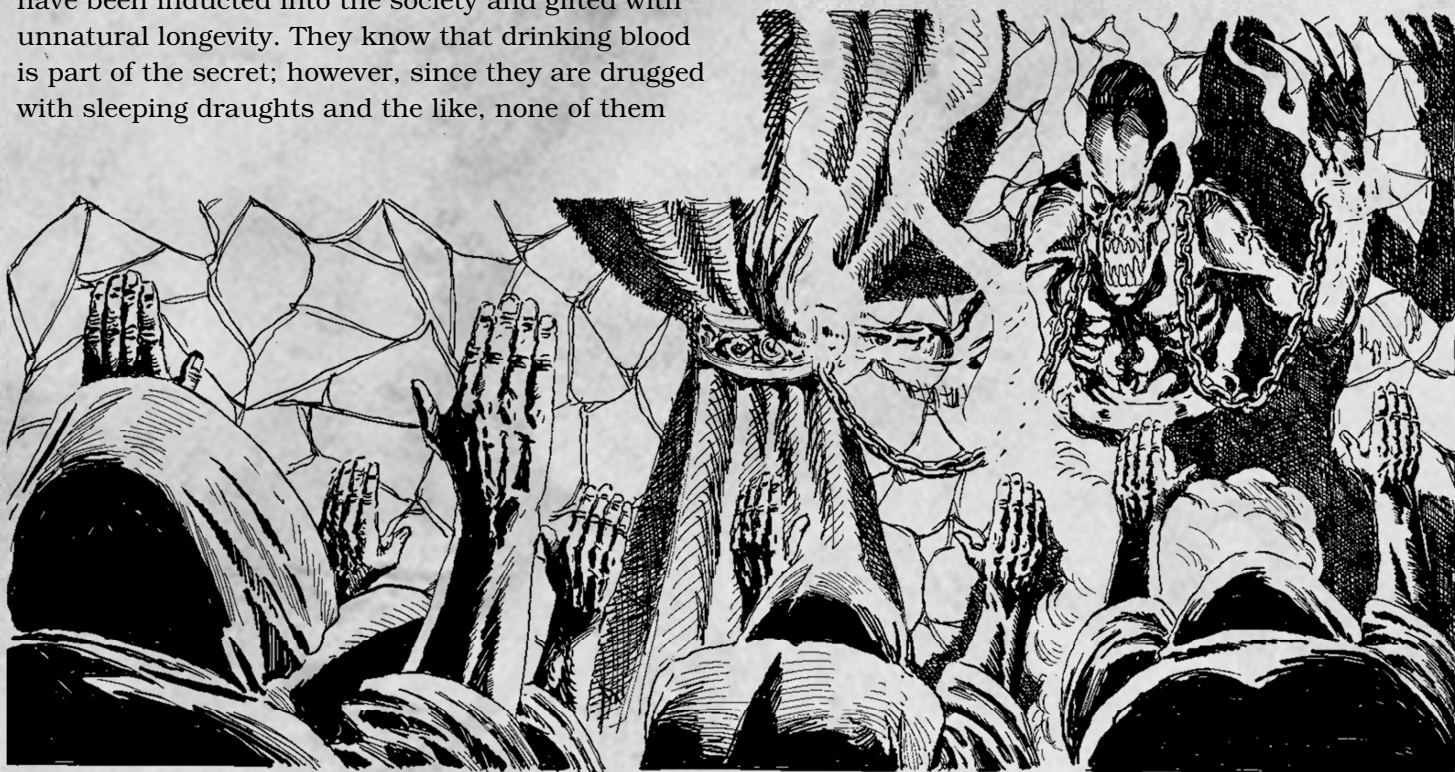
Disguising themselves as normal men, the Kargat vampires offered the secret of immortality to a select few. They chose their victims well. Only those whose lust for power was great enough to keep them from asking too many questions were invited. They performed a ritual using their own vampiric blood, drinking from the chosen mortal lightly, then allowing that mortal to drink a drop of their own blood in turn. This ritual empowers the new agent with both slowed aging and increased physical prowess, but it also allows the vampire to charm that agent permanently.

These mortals comprise the second circle of the Kargatane. Second circle members believe that they have been inducted into the society and gifted with unnatural longevity. They know that drinking blood is part of the secret; however, since they are drugged with sleeping draughts and the like, none of them

remembers their masters drinking directly from their veins.

Although the second circle is loyal to the vampire master, they are not enslaved. They can, and do, have independent goals of their own. The second circle began to secretly recruit other members, normal humans not privy to the kiss of the Kargat. While the vampires controlled the second circle, the outer rim of members was beyond their control. Now the Kargatane seek immortality. The second circle knows that their masters, whom they call the ring of immortals, have the secret of eternal life. They do not know that their masters are undead monsters that feed from the living. They seek to steal the formula for eternal life from their masters. The outer rim knows only that if they are loyal and follow orders, someday they may be invited to sip from the cup of immortality. They know that the second circle is not immortal but possesses unusual longevity.

For a time, the lich Azalin appeared to have been destroyed, and many thought the Kargatane were gone as well. In truth, the organization became more powerful than ever, spreading far beyond any one domain and acting in a more covert manner. Serving the inscrutable vampiress Lady Kazandra, Azalin's most loyal servant, they are now driven by their endless desire for immortality and a fascination with blood. Although the Kargatane are not what the vampires intended to create, the society still serves its original purpose. Therefore Kazandra and her allies continue to let it exist and even support it on occasions.



Kazandra's goals—which may still be those of Azalin or could be Kazandra's own quest to become a Darklord of her own Domain of Dread—are the overriding goals of the Kargatane as well. Certain rebel leaders of the Kargat, such as the vampiress Tavelia, who manipulated the Kargatane for her own schemes until she was thwarted, have directed its members over the years for other goals as well, though recently it has been united under Kazandra's rule. As with so much about this secret society, the truth is unknown.

Although the Kargat were all undead, and Kazandra is a powerful vampiress, all of its lesser members are mortals. Through the rituals of membership, each new recruit shares his blood with Kazandra and, thus, with one look into the pale blue eyes of the beautiful vampiress, becomes her obedient slave. To mark themselves as pilgrims on the road to immortality, each mortal of the Kargatane carries a small ampoule of what appears to be blood on a slender chain around his neck. In truth, this ampoule holds a deadly poison that can be used to escape capture or interrogation.

No one who seeks to join the Kargatane is accepted into their ranks. Indeed, such petitioners are routinely killed, after being tortured for the names of those who led them to the order. New members come into the Kargatane only when that vile order decides to recruit them. They prefer humans and half-elves because of their versatility in infiltrating most communities. Grave robbing, espionage, theft, and murder are but a few of the activities asked of these recruits. None have been given the dark gift of vampirism in decades, as Kazandra will not permit even the possibility of a rival.

Some members of the outer rim have contact with members of the second circle. Many know only a few other members of the outer rim. Those fortunate enough to know someone in the second circle may meet with him irregularly. These are usually group gatherings during the day, where the second circle member whispers of the secrets of eternal life that can be gained, if the initiate is patient and loyal. They usually meet in mausoleums or the dungeons of ruined chapels. Although they do not know about the vampiric nature of their masters, they instinctively seek out places that would appeal to undead. Wherever they meet, it is in secret. In these gatherings, there is always the communal sharing of blood. It is usually taken from a sheep, pig, or other animal. A cup of the red fluid of life is passed around and each member takes only a small sip

The members of the Kargatane have two objectives. The first is their desire to attain immortality. Because none of the members know that Kazandra is a vampire, they remain unaware that she could easily grant their wish. While escaping death is their hope, their reality is merely servitude. The second goal of the group, although they do not realize it, is to obey the will of Kazandra. Whatever scheme the vampiress might have, the Kargatane are pawns in its execution. Agents are allotted no independence, no freedom, and no personal will. Kazandra regards members as tools, to be used until they die or otherwise lose their utility.

The Kargatane are scattered across Darkon and into Lamordia, Falkovnia, Tepest, and Dementlieu. All told, there are fewer than 50 members of the second circle. Most of them don't know each other. There are about 400 members of the outer rim. Kazandra directs the actions of the Kargatane from her estate on the coast of the Sea of Sorrows north of Martira Bay. Many of the missions she assigns involve accumulating power in that region. Whenever she needs to meet with one or more members of the order in person, she sends out a telepathic message, summoning them to the ancestral crypt on that grand estate.

Playing a Kargarane Member

Characters who have been brought into the Kargatane via the blood ritual all have the abilities described in the Blood Bound feat introduced in this document. If your campaign does not use the optional Feat rules, a DM can use the capabilities in the Blood Bound feat as a suggestion for how to handle the abilities of a Kargatane member. Otherwise, player characters can acquire this feat normally as part of character creation or level advancement.

THE KEEPERS OF THE FEATHER

As described in *Curse of Strahd*, the Keepers of the Feather (also called the Keepers of the Black Feather, but only in private by the highest-ranking members, lest they give away a secret of their order) are based in Barovia. They seek a means by which the evil vampire lord Strahd can be confronted and destroyed. It is their belief that the means by which they will accomplish this end is the fabled *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* (see *Curse of Strahd*). This goal is known to all members of the society, from the lowliest agents to the highest of the rulership. Thus, a great deal of the organization's time is spent searching for the symbol and trying to learn its lore.

Secondary goals exist, however, that allow the membership to feel that they have made progress in

their efforts even though the prime object of their quest eludes them. The most important of these is the study of Strahd himself. Much time is spent in research and speculation about the nature of his powers, the roots of his past, and his plans for the future. From time to time, the organization even takes a chance and thwarts some undertaking of the great vampire. The latter, however, they attempt only when they are certain that their direct efforts will go unnoticed by Strahd. Thus such endeavors almost always take the form of aid to others outside the group who seek to confront the Lord of Barovia. Many of the spirits who make the midnight march from the graveyard of the village of Barovia to Castle Ravenloft each night are the ghosts of adventures the Keepers of the Feather did their best to help.

The group's third priority, of course, is secrecy. Given Strahd's near-absolute power in Barovia, the only thing keeping the Keepers alive is that the vampire lord has no idea their society even exists.

While it is true that all of this group's members understand the goals of the organization very well, there is a secret that is kept from them. What is not known to the lay brothers of this order is the nature of the society's leadership.

The rank and file are normal humans from many walks of life who, as one might expect, desire nothing more than to be free of the dread that hangs over their lives in the shadow of Castle Ravenloft. If they are exceptional in any way, it is only in their willingness to stand up for themselves and risk a horrible death (or worse). As of this writing, there are 125 members in this level of the society.

Each of the common members of the order is grouped into "talons" of five confederates each. These are normal folk who follow the directions of a *talon chief*. Unlike his followers, however, the leader of each talon is anything but normal. Rather, he is a lycanthrope; to be specific, an infected wereraven (see **Curse of Strahd**). Although he was once human like those who follow him, the talon chief was singled out by the ultimate masters of the fellowship and given the opportunity to advance within the Keepers. In exchange for vows of obedience and service, the individual is infected with lycanthropy and becomes one of the organization's chosen few. Although he is in charge of the affairs of those below him, the talon chief is not the ultimate power in this organization.

Above the talon chiefs are the five *holders of the feather*. These individuals, like the chiefs, are far from human. Indeed, they are also wereravens. Unlike those below them, however, they are not

infected; they were born what they are, natural members of that ancient and mysterious race. These are the source of the organization's power, for their desire to do good and bring about the downfall of the despot Strahd is vital to the continuation of the order. Still, there is a level of power beyond even that of the inner circle.

Pyoor Twohundredsummers, the oldest known member of the mysterious ravenkin (a new race described in the Races chapter) is the true leader of the Keepers. Pyoor has been searching for the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* for almost a century and a half. The five holders of the feather recognize Pyoor as their absolute master and do all they can to carry out his orders. Outside of the five holders, no member of the organization even suspects that the ruling force of the Keepers of the Feather is neither human nor wereraven.

The members of this order practice a complex recognition system that has three levels to it. They believe, and rightly so, that only by maintaining the utmost limits of secrecy can they survive. If Strahd were ever to learn that the Keepers of the Feather existed, he would certainly hunt them down and destroy them.

The first form of identification is visual. Each Keeper of the Feather wears one or more raven feathers at all times. These vary from actual plumage to signet rings, engraved amulets, or even tattoos.

However, because an outsider might also wear such decorations, a verbal code is also used. This second step in the identification process takes the form of a casual question that includes the word "nest" in it. The response must include the word "feather" or the person is clearly a fraud. Once this secondary identification has been made, a person can be fairly confident that he is in the company of a fellow member of the secret society.

Nevertheless, just for the sake of security, a third check must be made. Like the second step, this one is verbal. Unlike the previous level, however, it requires that the person being examined take the initiative. If someone believes that he is being checked for authenticity by a fellow member of the order, he must say something in the language of ravens. Upon hearing this, the person making the inquiry responds in kind and the process of recognition is complete.

In addition to the traditional "membership" of the order, many members of the order can call upon normal ravens to do their bidding. The extent of this ability depends upon the nature of the individual.



Ordinary talon members have no ability to command ravens, but they have a limited command of the ravens' language. Thus, they can communicate with ravens fairly well. It is important to note, however, that the language of these birds is very simple and generally enables them to express only the most elementary of concepts, like "danger coming" or "food ahead."

Like many secret societies, this group has a special headquarters. Known as The Nest, its location is a secret held only by Pyoor and the five members of his inner circle, the holders of the feather. From time to time, others may be brought here, but only in times of absolute need and then only after they have been blindfolded and otherwise rendered unable to retrace their steps later. Some talon chiefs have guessed that the Nest is a series of secret chambers located beneath one of three locations in Barovia: the Wizard of Wines winery and vineyard between Yester Hill and Lake Baratok, the Blood of

the Vine Tavern in the village of Barovia, or the Blue Water Inn in Vallaki.

The Nest consists of several rooms and meeting chambers hewn from the earth and stone beneath the building above, including Pyoor's personal dwelling, and is a vast chamber with a great, domed roof. This is the Temple of Ravenkind, where religious ceremonies are held by Pyoor and his inner circle. In the center, a wide ring of standing stones reaches up from the floor, towering over fifteen feet. The stones are covered with runes and are a vital part of the religious services. Their importance has been lost to all those of ravenkind that do not partake in the quest for ultimate good. A vast iron brazier stands at the center of the stones. It is kept filled with hot coals at all times, filling the room with an oppressive heat and an eerie red glow.

Besides secret passages from the building above, the only way in or out of the Nest is a narrow tunnel, roughly cut from the earth and very claustrophobic to move through. It runs for nearly a mile to surface

in the center of a hollow tree. The tree remains alive and lush, due to the skills of Pyoor and his kind as foresters. This secret entrance serves as an alternative means of access for people seeking to enter or leave the society's hidden sanctum.

Though the secret society's purpose is the destruction of Barovia's darklord, its origins are complicated, beginning before Strahd fell into the curse of undeath. Many legends of the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* persist, all disagreeing about its age and origins. But each attests to the legacy of holiness, devotion, hope, and heroism it represents. At some point, the symbol was hidden away, in the hopes that forces of evil such as Strahd would never find it

After Barovia was claimed by the Mists, a prophecy circulated, foretelling that the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* could be Strahd's destruction. The prophecy inspired a quest to recover the lost relic. Sadly, those who hid the relic did so exceedingly well that the symbol eluded them. Eventually, all but one of their number lost hope and abandoned the quest. While they remained a bastion of good in the evil lands of Ravenloft, their ultimate purpose was forgotten.

One among them, a creature neither human nor raven but with traits of both, vowed that he would not forsake their destiny so quickly. His name was Pyoor Fiftysummers, and he gathered his most trusted friends about him and explained what was to be done. They agreed to aid him and the Keepers of the Feather was formed.

Over the decades since that time, the organization has grown slowly to its present size. From the Nest, Pyoor commands his minions in the search for the ruby and platinum talisman that, he believes, will be the crowning triumph of his two-century-long quest.

Pyoor Fiftysummers

Pyoor is the oldest member of the fabled race known as the *ravenkin*. His age shows on him, for he moves slowly, he has lost the sheen to his black feathers, and he sees the world far less clearly than he used to. Still, the mind behind his weak eyes is as keen as ever, and this shows in their flash and alertness.

Pyoor is fond of jewelry and ornaments that sparkle or shine. He always has one or more of these items worked into his plumage at all time. He does not wear the black feather of the Keepers, for even those who know that the group exists do not know of his ties to it.

The ravenkin came into Barovia just over two centuries ago. Pyoor was the first of their kind to be hatched in this dire land. When he learned of the creation of the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind, he became enthralled with it. He feels that his fate is inexorably bound to this object, for he

was truly the first of his kind to come into being amid the mists of evil.

When Pyoor was just over a century old, the majority of his kin abandoned their search for the holy symbol. They decided that it had been destroyed or taken out of the Land of Mists and that they would never come to claim it for their own. Without it, they felt, the ravenkin were doomed to remain an impotent force for good in the Domains of Dread. They accepted this fate, and set about providing what minor light they could in a land dominated by shadows.

Pyoor refused to accept this. He vowed to search until he found the holy symbol and then use it to destroy Strahd Von Zarovich and remove the lingering curse of Barovia. When his own people called him mad and turned away from him, he left them and sought out the company of others. Like himself, they sought justice and liberation for Barovia.

Pyoor has borne up well under the oppressive weight of the years. He has spent decades searching for a magical talisman that many say was destroyed long ago. He is a determined and stubborn creature.

At times, his obsession with success borders on madness. He has sworn not to die until the holy symbol is his. In Ravenloft, such oaths are not to be uttered lightly.

Pyoor refrains from combat whenever he can. His age makes him ill suited for such exertion, but he is a powerful spellcaster, and unexpectedly quick. He pecked out the eyes of many of Strahd's agents in his time, and the fight has never left him completely.

The Secret Faith of Andral

The god to whom Pyoor leads services is Andral, a deity widely worshipped in ancient Barovia, but now seen only as a saint by the Barovian commoners, who have nearly all become worshippers of the Morninglord. Ancient ruins provide evidence for Andral's worship in Borca, but like in Barovia, his worship has fallen away. The ranking members of the Keepers of Feather all worship Andral in secret, as do most wereraven members of the group as a whole. Andral grants his clerics either the Light domain or the Hunting domain (introduced in this document). The *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* and the *Icon of Ravenloft* (both detailed in ***Curse of Strahd***) were both originally holy relics of Andral's faith. Pyoor is Andral's cleric, and has trained and initiated the only other remaining cleric of the faith, the ravenkin priestess Keeva Sixtywinters.

Pyoor's Destiny

Pyoor finally dies of extreme old age in 755 BC. In campaigns set after this event, he has been succeeded as leader of the Keepers of the Feather by Keeva Sixtywinters, who also succeeds him in the office of Andral's highest cleric. Of course, she is not only the High Priestess of Andral, but also the only remaining cleric of the faith at all after Pyoor's death. Unless adventurers find the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* and bring it to Pyoor (likely after receiving his help), he dies without having ever seen it.

THE SYNDICATE OF ENLIGHTENED CITIZENS

Based in Ludendorf, the largest settlement in Lamordia, the Syndicate of Enlightened Citizens is a social club, consisting of mostly landowning aristocrats, all human, which claims to extol the virtue of science. Most Lamordians, who do not believe in the existence of magic, would consider this propagation of reason a laudable goal. Lamordians barely even believe in the gods, being either atheists who don't see gods as necessary, or deists who believe that any deities who created the universe do not intervene in the affairs of mortals. Given that they see the Syndicate as promoting reason, and that their other main purpose seems merely to be aristocratic backslapping, your average Lamordian finds the organization laudable.

However, some who watch from afar say that the Syndicate conceals a conspiracy, and that among its goals are the elimination of "superstition"—including religion and the belief in sorcery of any kind—from all of the Core. They say the Syndicate's leaders are manipulators extraordinaire, and that their subtle nudges influence people and policy everywhere. These vigilant observers are correct.

The Syndicate does indeed harbor a conspiracy, built on a steely foundation of reason and duty. The Syndicate does not deny the existence of magic, monsters, miracles, and the like, as their fellow citizens do. In fact, it believes wholeheartedly in the supernatural, but it also holds that it is a force of chaos and destruction that must be eradicated. The organization's members have appointed themselves to protect humanity against supernatural forces that control it or do it harm.

The Syndicate has grand designs for all of the Domains of Dread, designs that include neither undead horrors nor benign spellcasters, neither rampaging lycanthropes nor unsavory nonhumans. It uses its influence to shift policy in universities throughout the Core, diverting funding from arcane studies. It secretly encourages pogroms against spellcasters and nonhumans in other domains and sabotages organized religions to discredit them in the eyes of the masses. The Syndicate's most sinister tactic is its sponsorship of monster hunters, whom it manipulates or actively recruits to destroy the specific creatures the Syndicate has targeted for immediate destruction. The organization maintains contacts and allies everywhere, but its vision is long-term, and it is not above putting its puppets at

cross-purposes. Anchorites, mercenary avengers, Nova Vaasan nobles, Tepestani clerics of Belenus, and racist Falkovnian military officers have all served the Syndicate at one time or another.

Though the Syndicate currently numbers less than thirty members from among the Lamordian elite and handful of members in other places, its power has grown by leaps and bounds in the past decade and a half. The current Grand High Cynosure, Gerhard Reichenbach, a lawful but ruthless metaphysician, is a wealthy moneylender and fishing magnate and the most powerful man in Ludendorf. Gerhard has recently organized the construction of the Syndicate's luxurious new club in central Ludendorf, and he sent invitations to like-minded aristocrats beyond Lamordia's borders, in places like Port-a-Lucine and Martira Ba. By 760 BC, a fair number of these elites have accepted the Syndicate's hospitality in Ludendorf, and a handful were approached with an offer of membership. All but one chose to join. The one aristocrat (secretly the father of a caliban) who politely declined was murdered by brigands on the way back, thanks to Reichenbach's secret manipulations, thus keeping the organization's secrets secure. With the addition of members from outside Lamordia, the Syndicate's reach into other domains is longer than ever.

The Sophisticated Village of Ludendorf

Ludendorf overlooks the Sea of Sorrows from windborn cliffs at the mouth of the Musarde River. Recently fortified against piracy, it does prosperous business in shipping, fishing, whaling, and shipbuilding. Numerous other trades are practiced here, with the most prestigious workshops producing engineering and scientific instrumentation, alchemical substances, and printed books. The harbor lies outside the old village walls, which effectively seal the town off from the countryside. For a village of modest size (population 930, almost all human), Ludendorf exudes. The village lighthouse stands proudly at the precipice of the sea cliffs, and the town hall features an enormous clock that displays time, celestial motions, and tides. There are no clerics providing magical healing in Ludendorf. In fact, the entire area inside the city walls is one large dead magic zone (essentially a giant *antimagic field*). However, the chirurgeon, Johanna Zecher (a 9th-level human metaphysician of the mentalist archetype with the Psychometabolism magisterium) keeps her business out by the harbor, and is capable of casting *aid*, *detect poison and disease*, *greater restoration*, *heroism*, and *lesser restoration* for the equivalent prices a cleric would charge. She is also the only seller of potions of healing in town. Inside the walls, nonmagical items requiring advanced alchemical or technical knowledge to make (alchemist's fire, spyglasses, etc.) can be purchased, and are 5% cheaper here than the normal price.

Chapter 6: Spells

SPELL LISTS

The new spells introduced in this document can be cast by many of the existing classes, as shown in the following spell lists. After each spell, its school of magic is listed in parentheses, as is whether it can be cast as a ritual.

BARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

mindspeak (divination)*
reaver's touch (necromancy)*
warning roar (evocation)*

1ST LEVEL

alienated mind (enchantment)*
create poison (transmutation, ritual)*
dread mercy (enchantment)*
frightful strike (enchantment)*
psychic shield (abjuration)*

3RD LEVEL

control thoughts (enchantment)*

4TH LEVEL

pain (enchantment)*
premonitory vision (divination, ritual)*
prescient sense (divination)*

CLERIC SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

blood curse (necromancy)*
challenger's mark (enchantment)*
reaver's touch (necromancy)*

1ST LEVEL

dead man's tell (divination, ritual)*
frightful strike (enchantment)*

2ND LEVEL

bastion of clarity (abjuration)*

DRUID SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

catfeet (abjuration)*
far hearing (divination)*
mindspeak (divination)*
punishing strike (necromancy)*
quickling step (transmutation)*
reaver's touch (necromancy)*
uncanny balance (transmutation)*
warning roar (evocation)*

1ST LEVEL

create poison (transmutation, ritual)*
dead man's tell (divination, ritual)*
fiery wrath (conjuration)*
frightful strike (enchantment)*

4TH LEVEL

premonitory vision (divination, ritual)*
prescient sense (divination)*

6TH LEVEL

pain (enchantment)*
premonitory vision (divination, ritual)*
prescient sense (divination)*
unleash instincts (transmutation)*

PALADIN SPELLS

1ST LEVEL

dread mercy (enchantment)*

2ND LEVEL

bastion of clarity (abjuration)*

RANGER SPELLS

1ST LEVEL

create poison (transmutation, ritual)*



dread mercy (enchantment)*

4TH LEVEL

premonitory vision (divination, ritual)*

prescient sense (divination)*

SORCERER SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

far hearing (divination)*

fist of rage (enchantment)*

mindspeak (divination)*

punishing strike (necromancy)*

reaver's touch (necromancy)*

steal speed (necromancy)*

1ST LEVEL

fiery wrath (conjunction)*

frightful strike (enchantment)*

psychic shield (abjuration)*

2ND LEVEL

bastion of clarity (abjuration)*

3RD LEVEL

invasive id (enchantment)*

4TH LEVEL

pain (enchantment)*

premonitory vision (divination, ritual)*

prescient sense (divination)*

WARLOCK SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

blood curse (necromancy)*

challenger's mark (enchantment)*

punishing strike (necromancy)*

quickling step (transmutation)*

reaver's touch (necromancy)*

warning roar (evocation)*

1ST LEVEL

alienated mind (enchantment)*

create poison (transmutation, ritual)*

dead man's tell (divination, ritual)*

frightful strike (enchantment)*

4TH LEVEL

pain (enchantment)*

WIZARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

blood curse (necromancy)*

challenger's mark (enchantment)*

punishing strike (necromancy)*

quickling step (transmutation)*

reaver's touch (necromancy)*

shifting shadow (conjunction)*

uncanny balance (transmutation)*

1ST LEVEL

create poison (transmutation, ritual)*

dead man's tell (divination, ritual)*

fiery wrath (conjunction)*

frightful strike (enchantment)*

3RD LEVEL

control thoughts (enchantment)*

magnetism (transmutation)*

4TH LEVEL

pain (enchantment)*

prescient sense (divination)*

METAPHYSICIAN SPELLS

CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

adept skill (abjuration)*

booming blade (evocation)**

blade ward (abjuration)

catfeet (abjuration)*

challenger's mark (enchantment)*

control flames (transmutation)**

create item (conjunction)*

far hearing (divination)*

fist of rage (enchantment)*

friends (enchantment)

gust (transmutation)**

internal compass (divination)*

mage hand (conjunction)

mindspeak (divination)*

minor illusion (illusion)

minor telekinetic weapon (conjunction)*

mold earth (transmutation)**

quickling step (transmutation)*

project object (conjunction)*

psychic shock (illusion)*

resistance (abjuration)

remote viewing (divination)*

shape water (transmutation)**

shifting shadow (conjunction)*

steal speed (necromancy)*

thaumaturgy (transmutation)

thought blast (enchantment)*

thought projection (enchantment)*

thunderclap (evocation)**

true strike (divination)

uncanny balance (transmutation)*

wall run (transmutation)*

warning roar (evocation)*

1ST LEVEL

absorb elements (abjuration)**

alienated mind (enchantment)*

animal friendship (enchantment)

beast bond (divination)**

catapult (transmutation)**

charm person (enchantment)

command (enchantment)

comprehend languages (divination, ritual)

dread mercy (enchantment)*

detect poison and disease (divination, ritual)

earth tremor (evocation)**

ego lash (enchantment)*

expeditious retreat (transmutation)

false life (necromancy)

feather fall (transmutation)

fiery wrath (conjunction)*

frightful strike (enchantment)*

jump (transmutation)

longstrider (transmutation)

predictive focus (divination)*

psychic shield (abjuration)*

silent image (illusion)

soul homunculus (conjunction, ritual)*

speed of thought (transmutation)*

telekinetic slam (evocation)*

telepathic link (divination, ritual)*

2ND LEVEL

aid (abjuration)
alter self (transmutation)
animal messenger (enchantment, ritual)
augury (divination, ritual)
bastion of clarity (abjuration)*
beast sense (divination, ritual)
blindness/deafness (necromancy)
blur (illusion)
calm emotions (enchantment)
crown of madness (enchantment)
darkvision (transmutation)
detect thoughts (divination)
enhance ability (transmutation)
enthrall (enchantment)
heat metal (transmutation)
heroism (enchantment)
hold person (enchantment)
invisibility (illusion)
lesser restoration (abjuration)
levitate (transmutation)
locate animals or plants (divination, ritual)
major telekinetic weapon (conjunction)*
mirror image (illusion)
phantasmal force (illusion)
protection from poison (abjuration)
pyrotechnics (transmutation)**
rope trick (transmutation)
shatter (evocation)
silence (illusion, ritual)
spider climb (transmutation)
suggestion (enchantment)

3RD LEVEL

clairvoyance (divination)
control thoughts (enchantment)*
erupting earth (transmutation)**
fear (illusion)
feign death (necromancy, ritual)
fly (transmutation)
haste (transmutation)
intellect redoubt (abjuration)*
invasive id (enchantment)*
magnetism (transmutation)*
major image (illusion)
protection from energy (abjuration)
read object (divination, ritual)*
sending (evocation)
slow (transmutation)
sustaining meditation (transmutation)*
tongues (divination)
water breathing (transmutation, ritual)
water walk (transmutation, ritual)

4TH LEVEL

arcane eye (divination)
compulsion (enchantment)
confusion (enchantment)
control water (transmutation)
dominate beast (enchantment)
freedom of movement (abjuration)
greater invisibility (illusion)
hallucinatory terrain (illusion)
locate creature (divination)
pain (enchantment)*

phantasmal killer (illusion)
premonitory vision (divination, ritual)*
prescient sense (divination)*
staggering smite (evocation)

5TH LEVEL

antilife shell (abjuration)
dominate person (enchantment)
dream (illusion)
geas (enchantment)
hold monster (enchantment)
legend lore (divination)
mislead (illusion)
modify memory (enchantment)
Rary's telepathic bond (divination, ritual)
scrying (divination)
seeming (illusion)
telekinesis (transmutation)
wall of force (evocation)

6TH LEVEL

eyebite (necromancy)
find the path (divination)
globe of invulnerability (abjuration)
investiture of fire (transmutation)**
investiture of stone (transmutation)**
magic jar (necromancy)
mass suggestion (enchantment)
move earth (transmutation)
primordial ward (abjuration)**
true seeing (divination)
unleash instincts (transmutation)*
wind walk (transmutation)

7TH LEVEL

etherealness (transmutation)
forcecage (evocation)
mirage arcane (illusion)
Mordenkainen's sword (evocation)
plane shift (conjunction)
project image (illusion)
regenerate (transmutation)
reverse gravity (transmutation)
sequester (transmutation)

8TH LEVEL

antipathy/sympathy (enchantment)
control weather (transmutation)
earthquake (evocation)
feeblemind (enchantment)
glibness (transmutation)
mind blank (abjuration)
power word stun (enchantment)
telepathy (evocation)

9TH LEVEL

astral projection (necromancy)
foresight (divination)
power word kill (enchantment)
storm of vengeance (conjunction)
time stop (transmutation)
weird (illusion)

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

All new spells referenced in this document are listed alphabetically in this section.

ADEPT SKILL

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Once before this spell ends, you can roll a die and add it to one ability check of your choice. You must roll this die before making the ability check.

If you do not already add your proficiency bonus to this ability check, the die rolled is a d4. If you are adding your proficiency bonus to the ability check, or if you are rolling an initiative check, you roll a different die depending on your level, as follows:

Level	Adept Skill Die Rolled
1st-4th	d4
5th-8th	d6
9th-12th	d8
13th-16th	d10
17th-20th	d12

The spell ends when the die is used.

ALIENATED MIND

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 300 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You garble your own thought processes into maddening chaos, then force those thoughts onto everyone around you. Each living creature (not a construct or undead) within a 15-foot sphere originating from you must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d10 psychic damage, and until the end of your next turn it forgets any languages that it knows and is incapable of meaningful communication. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage but suffers no other effects.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 1st.

BASTION OF CLARITY

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you roll an Intelligence or Charisma save

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You erect a psychic shield to protect your mind from assault, and you ward your allies as well. Choose a number of creatures within range of this spell. For the duration of the spell, you and the creatures you choose have advantage on Intelligence and Charisma saves (including against the triggering effect).

BLOOD CURSE

Necromancy cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You gamble some of your own life force on a curse that bedevils your enemy but may empower you. You may not cast this spell if you currently have less than 5 hit points. Choose a target within range that can see or hear you. The target makes a Wisdom save. If it fails, the target takes 1d4 psychic damage. You also take the same amount of psychic damage, which cannot be reduced or redirected in any way. Before the beginning of your next turn, if the target is hit with an attack, it takes an additional 1d4 necrotic damage, and the spell ends. When this happens, you also gain temporary hit points equal to your spellcasting ability modifier plus the amount of necrotic damage the creature took. The necrotic damage increases by an extra 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4).

CATFEET

Abjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you would take damage from falling

Range: Self

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

You gain resistance to damage from falling. If you fall less than 30 feet, you land on your feet instead of falling prone unless you take damage from the fall equal to more than half your maximum Hit Points.

CHALLENGER'S MARK

Enchantment cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 5 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

As part of the action used to cast this spell, you must make a melee weapon attack against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, the target suffers the attack's normal

effects, and you exchange a moment of silent, instinctive communication that expresses your personal challenge. Before the beginning of your next turn, if the target willingly moves more than 30 feet away from you or attacks a creature besides you, it immediately takes 1d8 psychic damage, and the spell ends. This spell's damage increases when you reach higher levels. At 5th level, the melee attack deals an extra 1d8 psychic damage to the target, and the damage the target suffers for moving more than 30 feet away from you increases to 2d8. Both damage rolls increase by 1d8 at 11th level and 17th level.

CONTROL THOUGHTS

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S, M (a metal ring)

Duration: 1 round

You project your thoughts into another creature's mind so completely that it takes on your intentions instead of its own for a few seconds. As an action, you target a creature within range that you can see or which has communicated with you since the beginning of your last turn. The target must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target is charmed until the end of its next turn, during which you choose its movement and action. On a successful save, the target is unaffected, and you can't use this ability on that creature again until you finish a long rest.

CREATE ITEM

Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 50 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

From thought, you create matter, equipping yourself with the simple implement you need. You summon one piece of adventuring gear worth 2 gp or less which you can hold in one hand, and which must weigh less than 10 lbs. It cannot be a weapon or a piece of armor, and you cannot use it as an improvised weapon, or to attack or hinder another creature in any way. If the item is more than 10 feet away from you during your turn, the spell ends if you are not touching it again by the end of the following turn. This object may simulate the effects of a tool or tool set which requires proficiency, but it can only be used to make one ability check, for a task that takes 1 round or less, after which time the spell ends. Anyone who holds the item or examines

it closely can tell it is not real. When the spell ends, the item disappears.

CREATE POISON

1st level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (one vessel on your person)

Components: V, S, M (a small bottle or other container that can hold a draught of water)

Duration: Instantaneous

You use some combination of scavenged substances, focused meditation, and magic to transform the water in a container you have on your person into a one dose of improvised poison. This dose can be applied to one weapon, up to three pieces of ammunition, or up to three separate portions of food or drink. Once applied, the poison retains potency until someone must roll a saving throw against it, or for 1 minute, after which point it dries or dissolves. If a creature is struck with the poisoned weapon or ammunition, or if it ingests the poisoned food or drink, it must make a Constitution save or be poisoned for 1 minute and take 1d8 poison damage, or 2d8 if the poison is ingested). Creatures that succeed on their save take half damage, but suffer no other effects.

A poison you create can only be used by you, and has no value if you try to sell it. If you cast this spell again, any doses of poison you have previously created with this spell instantly become water again. Otherwise, poison doses created with this spell retain their potency until the next time you finish a long rest, at which point they return to being water.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you create one additional dose of poison for every two levels above 1st. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the poison gains an extra effect: if a creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, its Constitution score is reduced by 1d4.

DEAD MAN'S TELL

1st-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch (one dead body part)

Components: V, M (one part of a criminal's corpse, which must be flexible in some way)

Duration: Until dispelled

You imbue a body part taken from a criminal's corpse—such as a hand, finger or head—with divination powers that cause it to react. Choose one of the categories of things it can detect and react to below. When something that falls within the chosen category or selected subcategories comes within 30

feet of the body part that has become the *dead man's tell* item, it activates. You can choose one of the following categories of things to activate the *dead man's tell* item:

Alignment. Choose one of the following alignments: good, evil, lawful, or chaotic. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of a creature that has such an alignment.

Consecration/Desecration. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of a place or object that has been magically consecrated or desecrated.

Creature. Select one or more types of creatures from the following list: aberrations, beasts, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, giants, monstrosities, oozes, plants, or undead. You can also choose one or more races of humanoids (such as humans or goblins). You can choose as many or as few of these types as you like. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of one of the chosen creature types.

Disease. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of an object or creature that carries a disease with which it can infect other creatures.

Magic. Choose magic items, spellcasting, scrying attempts, or general magical effects. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of one of the chosen effects.

Poison. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of poison or poisonous creatures, Secret Door. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of a secret door.

Trap. The *dead man's tell* item activates when it is within 30 feet of a hidden trap or disguised pit or snare.

The first time the *dead man's tell* item detects one or more of the chosen category or subcategories of subjects within 30 feet, it activates. When activated, the item violently spasms for one round; a hand clenches, a finger jerks, jaws chatter and the like. The *dead man's tell* item does not indicate the power or location of the subject it has detected, merely its presence within 30 feet at the time of its activation. After being activated, the spell ends, and the body part rapidly decays and dessicates (meaning the same body part cannot be used for this spell again once it has been activated).

Subjects are not detected by the *dead man's tell* item if they are separated from it by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt, or if they are protected by an effect that prevents divination (such as a *nondetection* spell).

The same spellcaster cannot have multiple *dead man's tell* items affected with this spell at once. When you cast the *dead man's tell* spell again, any previous castings of this spell end immediately.

DREAD MERCY

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you reduce a creature within 60 feet to 0 hit points with a weapon attack

Range: 60 feet

Components: V

Duration: 10 minutes

You offer an opponent mercy in exchange for their cooperation. Choose one creature within range that you have just reduced to 0 hit points. You instead reduce that creature to 1 hit point and immediately command their surrender. It must immediately make a Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the creature is frightened of you for the spell's duration, and suffers only the normal effects of being frightened. On a failure, the creature is still frightened, but rather than fleeing, the frightened creature stays where it is and does not move unless you tell it to. For the duration of the spell, the creature that failed its save will not attack you, and it fearfully obeys any instructions it can hear and understand that will not directly harm it (for example, it will not knowingly drink poison or walk off a cliff). It will not deliberately say anything to you that it believes to be a lie, though it can simply remain silent if you do not ask any direct questions. If you ask it a direct question that can be answered in one or two sentences, it will not give you an answer that it considers false, though it may leave things out, especially if you ask a question that takes more than one or two sentences to answer. It may avoid answering questions to which it would normally respond with a lie by giving short or evasive answers, as long as what it does say remains within the boundaries of what it believes to be the truth. Whenever you or one of your allies attempt to harm the creature, or if you give it instructions that would harm it, or whenever you force it to make a saving throw against another effect, it repeats its Wisdom saving throw against this spell, ending the effects of the initial failed save on a success. You always know if a creature has succeeded or failed on a saving throw against this spell. When the spell's effect ends, the creature is unaware it was ever affected by this spell, knowing you could have killed it and believing its fear of you was merely natural.



At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 3rd level or higher spell slot, the duration is increased to 1 hour. If you use a 5th level or higher spell slot, the duration is increased to 8 hours.

EGO LASH

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You lash out with the power of your mind against a creature within range. Make a melee spell attack against the target. If the attack hits, the creature takes 3d8 psychic damage, and it must make an Intelligence saving throw. If it fails, it cannot take reactions until the end of your next turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

FAR HEARING

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 50 feet

Components: S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round

For a moment, you hear even distant whispers. Choose one point within range that you can see.

Until the effect ends, you hear as if you were at that point instead of where you actually are.

FIERY WRATH

1st-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: S, M (a candlewick)

Duration: Instantaneous

You create fire with only the concentrated power of your inner rage. Choose any flammable object within range. If it is not on someone's person, it suddenly bursts into flames. Each creature within 5 feet of the point where the fire exploded must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 2d6 fire damage on a failed save, or 1 point of fire damage on a successful one. You then choose one creature within the affected area and make a ranged spell attack against the creature. On a hit, that creature takes 1d6 psychic damage and must choose to either immediately fall prone or take an additional 1d6 fire damage at the beginning of their next turn. If a creature has the flammable object on their person, you must make the ranged spell attack first, and must choose to make the attack against that creature. If you hit, it suffers the same effects from your ranged spell attack described above, and the object bursts into flames. Each creature within 5 feet of the ignited object must then make the Dexterity saving throw as normal.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the fire damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

FIST OF RAGE

Enchantment cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You focus your thoughts into a burst of aggressive emotion that you unleash as a blow of telekinetic force. Make a ranged spell attack against a target you can see within range. If the attack hits, the creature takes 1d6 psychic damage, and if the creature is Large or smaller, you push the creature up to 5 feet away from you.

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

FORTIFYING CRY

Enchantment cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You assume an empowering stance and give a loud shout, rousing your own fighting spirit and defying fear. (In Rokushima Taiyoo, such a battle cry is called a *kiai*.) Roll 1d6 when you cast this spell. You gain temporary points equal to the number rolled, and you add that same number as a bonus on the next saving throw against exhaustion or becoming frightened you make before the end of your next turn.

If you wish, when you cast this cantrip, you may also choose a creature within 5 feet of you and force it to roll a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, it takes 1d4 psychic damage. The amount of psychic damage you inflict with this spell increases by 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4).

FRIGHTFUL STRIKE

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 5 feet

Components: V, M (a weapon with at least one drop of blood on it)

Duration: 1 round

You bark or whisper a terrifying threat to the creature your weapon strikes. As part of the action of casting this spell, you must make a melee attack against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, in addition to the attack's normal effect, the creature struck takes an additional amount of psychic damage equal to 1d4 plus your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) and must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it is frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage is increased by 1d4 for each slot level above 1st.

GREATER ACUPUNCTURE

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Components: S, M (acupuncturist's needles)

Duration: Instantaneous

By carefully placing needles into precise centers of *ki* in a creature's body, you purge of it of negative energies. You can cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it, and it regains a number of hit points equal to 2d10 + your

spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 3rd level or higher spell slot, for every slot level above 2nd you can choose to do one of the following: Increase the healing by an additional 1d10; Cure the target of one additional disease; Neutralize one additional poison affecting the target.

GREATER WATER TO POISON

5th level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a serpent's tooth)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You transform any large quantity of water within a 10 foot cube centered on a point you choose into a deadly poison. This spell only affects bodies of water of at least 10 gallons or more within the affected area, not separate smaller quantities of water. It can also be liquid that is mostly water (such as blood, sewage, or wine), but a living creature's vital fluids cannot be affected. Any creature with its head one of its breathing passages (such as a humanoid's nose or mouth) currently submerged into water you have transformed with this spell must make a Constitution saving throw at the beginning of any turn in which they are so submerged. On a failure, the creature is poisoned for the duration, and they take 4d8 poison damage. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, its Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. On a success, the creature can choose to spit the water out and take no damage, or continue to swallow it and take half damage. If the creature failed its save, at the start of each of the creature's turns before the spell ends, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 3d10 poison damage. On a successful save, the spell ends.

Creatures who do not need to save against the spell but who are within 5 feet of the transformed water can use an action to apply poison to one weapon, piece of ammunition, or portions of food or drink. Once applied, the poison retains potency for the duration of the spell or until someone must save against it. If a creature is struck with the poisoned weapon or ammunition, or if it ingests the poisoned food or drink, it must make a Constitution save or be poisoned for the duration and take 1d8 poison damage, or 2d8 if the poison is ingested. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, its Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. Creatures

that succeed on their save take half damage, but suffer no other effects.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, you can affect one additional creature who is drinking at the same time, and the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 5th.

INTELLECT REDOUBT

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You use the energies of your own disciplined mind to protect against psychic attack. Choose a number of creatures within range of this spell. You and the creatures you choose gain the following benefits for the duration of the spell:

- You have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saves
- You gain resistance to psychic damage

INTERNAL COMPASS

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

With a moment's concentration, you sense which way is true north. Until this cantrip ends, you always know which way is north and cannot become lost except by magical means. If you make a Wisdom or Intelligence check to navigate natural terrain, you may choose to roll a d6 and add the number rolled to your result. If you do so, the spell ends immediately.

INVASIVE ID

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30 foot cone)

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You project the power of your own darkest thoughts against enemies in your path. Each creature of your choice within a 30 foot cone must make an Intelligence saving throw. A creature takes 4d8 psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures who fail the saving throw cannot take reactions until the end of your next turn.

LESSER ACUPUNCTURE

Necromancy cantrip

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Components: S, M (acupuncturist's needles)

Duration: Instantaneous

Inserting needles into precise centers of ki in the body, you energize a creature's natural healing abilities. The creature may spend 1 Hit Die, and it can roll 1d4 and add the result to any Constitution saving throws it makes before the end of its next turn. Once a creature benefits from this cantrip, it cannot be cast on them again until they finish a short or long rest. As you gain levels, the number of Hit Dice the affected creature can spend increases. When you reach 5th level, the creature can spend up to 2 Hit Dice, when you are 11th level they may spend up to 3, and when you are 17th level they may spend up to 4. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

LESSER WATER TO POISON

4th level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when a creature within 30 feet drinks water

Range: 30 feet

Components: S, M (a vessel of water or a beverage which is partially water, with which you make a toasting gesture to the target as you both drink)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Waiting for just the right moment, you transform the water someone is drinking into deadly poison. The quantity of water does not matter, just that the target drinks more than a sip. It can also be a beverage that is partially water (such as wine, beer, or juice). The creature who drinks makes a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is poisoned for the duration, and they take 4d8 poison damage. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, its Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. On a success, the creature can choose to spit the water out and take no damage, or continue to swallow it and take half damage. If the creature failed its save, at the start of each of the creature's turns before the spell ends, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 4d8 poison damage. On a successful save, the spell ends.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can affect one additional creature who is drinking at the same time, and the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 4th.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 3rd.

MAGNETISM

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 50 feet

Components: S, M (a lodestone)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell allows you to draw iron or steel objects to yourself by projecting a magnetic ray at any object within range. Choose one object within range that is nonmagical and made of ferrous metal. This object must weigh less than 40 lbs. Each round the spell lasts, you can target one object you can see within range of the spell with this effect as an action.

If the object isn't being worn or carried, it immediately flies into your space, where you either catch it with your hand (requiring no action) or let it fall at your feet.

If the object is being held or carried by a creature, that creature must roll a Strength saving throw. If it fails, the creature drops the object, and the object flies to your space, where you either catch it with your hand or let it fall at your feet, as above. If the object is being worn by the creature (like a helm or a chain shirt), the creature makes the same Strength saving throw, but has advantage on the roll.

If the item is secured in some way (such as being chained to a wall or tied down with rope), you make an ability check to break the restraint, as if you were making a Strength check to break or burst whatever is securing it with your own hands. Instead of making a Strength check, you make a check with your spellcasting ability score (adding your proficiency bonus). If the check succeeds, you free the item and it flies to your square as described above.

You can also attempt to move a metal creature that weighs less than your limit for this spell (such as some kind of tiny construct). The creature makes a Strength saving throw with advantage against this effect. If it fails, you can move it to you just as you would move an object with this spell.

Until this spell ends, your ability to carry, lift, push, or drag any objects you have moved to your space with this spell is calculated as if you had a Strength score of 20 (giving you a carrying capacity of 300 lbs. and allowing you to push, lift, or drag up to 600 lbs. if you are Small or Medium sized).

If you move during the spell's duration, you can choose for any object that you moved to your space

with this spell which you are not carrying, lifting, pushing, dragging, or wearing to either move with you as you go (levitating just above the level of your feet) or remain in the square you moved it to.

Once you have moved an object to your space with this spell, you have advantage on saving throws and opposed rolls against effects that would cause you to drop it, and creatures seeking to move the item from your space have disadvantage on rolls to do so.

When the spell ends, if you are holding, wearing, or carrying an object that is too heavy for you, it falls softly to the ground, landing harmlessly at your feet.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the weight limit of objects you can move with this spell increases by 10 lbs. for every spell level above 3rd. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th or 6th level, you can choose up to two objects within range each time you use your action for this spell, instead of just one. If the spell slot is 7th level or higher, you can choose up to three objects instead.

MAJOR TELEKINETIC WEAPON

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You summon a simple or martial weapon weighing no more than 20 lbs that normally costs no more than 75 gp. It appears in your free hand, ready to be wielded, and lasts for the duration. It is a magical weapon made of your psychic energies. If you let go of the weapon, it disappears, but you can evoke the weapon again as a bonus action.

You can use your spellcasting ability instead of Strength or Dexterity for the attack and damage rolls of melee attacks using this weapon, and any damage the weapon inflicts is psychic damage instead of the normal damage type for that weapon. When the weapon hits a living creature (not an undead or construct), it inflicts an additional 1d6 psychic damage.

If the weapon normally has the ammunition property, this version does not have it, but you must go through the physical motions of loading it normally as part of the spell. Doing so creates temporary magical ammunition that you use normally as part of the attack, but that ammunition ceases to exist after the attack hits or misses and any damage is inflicted.

Though it is no more delicate than a common version of that weapon, it manifests as a semi-

transparent solid the same color as your eyes. This weapon has the simplest possible geometric shape it can have while still functioning as the chosen type of weapon. At the end of the spell's duration, it dissipates harmlessly.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, it gains a magical +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. When you use a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the bonus increases to +2.

MINDSPEAK

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You send a telepathic message to one creature within range. The target (and only the target) receives the message as your voice whispering in their mind. They can send a telepathic message back in reply. This ability to communicate lasts until the start of your next turn. You can't communicate with an unwilling creature.

Creatures with Intelligence scores of 2 or less aren't affected by this spell. You don't need to share a language with a creature for it to understand your telepathic utterances, but the creature must understand at least one language in order to communicate this way. If you cannot see or hear the target, you must be familiar with the target and know its approximate location with range. If the creature is not within range, the spell fails.

MINOR TELEKINETIC WEAPON

Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You summon a simple or martial melee weapon weighing no more than 10 lbs that normally costs no more than 25 gp. It appears in your free hand, ready to be wielded, and lasts for the duration. It is not a magic weapon, but merely a concentrated extension of your own personal energies. If you let go of the weapon, it disappears and this spell ends.

You can use your spellcasting ability instead of Strength for the attack rolls of melee attacks using this weapon, but unlike a normal weapon, you don't add your ability modifier to the damage of attacks with this weapon. However, when you inflict damage with an attack using this weapon, if that damage is inflicted on a living creature (not an undead or

construct), it inflicts additional psychic damage equal to your spellcasting ability modifier.

Though it is no more delicate than a common version of that weapon, it manifests as a semi-transparent solid the same color as your eyes. This weapon has the simplest possible geometric shape it can have while still functioning as the chosen type of weapon. At the end of the spell's duration, it dissipates harmlessly.

PAIN

4th level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S, M (a live leech)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell strikes creatures with wracking pains and agony. Roll 12d8; the total is how many hit points of creatures this spell can affect. Creatures within 20 feet of a point you choose within range are affected in ascending order of their current hit points (ignoring unconscious creatures and constructs, who are not affected by this spell). Subtract each creature's hit points from the total before moving on to the creature with the next lowest hit points. A creature's hit points must be equal to or less than the remaining total for that creature to be affected. Starting with the creature that has the lowest current hit points, each creature affected by this spell has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the spell ends. They can attempt to resist, but only at the risk of making their agony even worse. Each creature affected can choose whether or not to make a Constitution saving throw to try resisting this effect at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. However, if the creature fails, it takes 3d6 psychic damage. A creature that fails this saving throw four rounds in a row is incapacitated with pain, in addition to the spell's other effects.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, roll an additional 2d8 for each slot level above 4th.

PREDICTIVE FOCUS

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You devote all your focus to understanding one particular opponent, tracking their surface thoughts and body language to predict what they will do next. Until the spell ends, you deal an extra 1d6 psychic

damage to the target whenever you hit it with an attack, and the target has disadvantage on opposed Charisma and Dexterity checks against you. If the target drops to 0 hit points before this spell ends, you can use a bonus action on a subsequent turn of yours to move your focus a new creature. If you roll a Constitution saving throw to maintain your concentration on this spell due to taking damage that included psychic damage, you have disadvantage on that saving throw.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd or 4th level, you can maintain your concentration on the spell for up to 8 hours. When you use a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can maintain your concentration on the spell for up to 24 hours.

PREMONITORY VISION

4th-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you finish a short rest or a long rest

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You perceive a series of images which show you future events. You ask a single question concerning a specific goal, event, or activity to occur within 7 days. The DM offers a truthful reply. The reply might be short phrase, an explanation of your own emotional reaction, or a description of a single image you saw.

The spell doesn't take into account any possible circumstances that might change the outcome, such as the casting of additional spells or the loss or gain of a companion.

After you cast this spell, unless you treat yourself with a special calming tincture that uses 25 gp worth of ingredients, for 10 minutes you have disadvantage on Wisdom, Dexterity, and Intelligence checks, and on Constitution saves to maintain concentration.

If you cast the spell two or more times before finishing your next long rest, you receive increasingly confusing visions that muddle your mind. For each casting after the first, the duration of the negative effects for not imbibing a calming tincture increases by an additional (cumulative) 10 minutes, and there is a cumulative 25 percent chance that the information you perceive is random and possibly unrelated to the question asked. The DM makes this roll in secret.



PUNISHING STRIKE

Necromancy cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 5 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

As part of the action used to cast this spell, you must make an unarmed strike or melee weapon attack against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit, the target suffers the attack's normal effects, and also a black web of necrotic energy radiates across its skin from where it was struck until the start of your next turn. If the target willingly takes a reaction before then, it immediately takes 1d8 necrotic damage, and the spell ends. This spell's damage increases when you reach higher levels. At 5th level, the melee attack deals an extra 1d8 necrotic damage to the target, and the damage the target suffers for taking a reaction or opportunity attack increases to 2d8. Both damage rolls increase by 1d8 at 11th level and 17th level.

QUICKLING STEP

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: 1 round

You gain the speed of a magical creature. For the rest of the turn, your walking speed is increased by 10 feet, and you have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks.

READ OBJECT

3rd-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch (1 object)

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You can concentrate on an object you are touching, reading psychic impressions left on it by recent events. At the end of the time you spend casting this spell, you learn of any events within the past 24 hours that occurred within 30 feet of the object. You see the events from the object's point of view, seeing and hearing and smelling those events as if you had been where it was at that time.

You also see a mental image of the last creature that handled the object, also from the object's perspective, no matter how long ago the object was last held. The only information you receive about the creature is their appearance at that time (including a sense of its size), whether it was alone (although you can't see any other creatures that might have been with it), and a one or two-word description from the DM describing that creature's emotional state the last time it touched the object (such as "Enraged", "Extremely Agitated", "Relaxed", "Satisfied", "Utterly Emotionless", etc.). If the creature was not capable of emotion, or if it's mental state was too alien for you to understand, the DM will tell you that instead.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, if the object has been handled by multiple creatures within the last week, you get the same information about each creature who handled it during that time that you would normally receive about the last creature who handled it.

PRESCIENT SENSE

4th-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You extend your senses to perceive the near future. For the duration of the spell, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on all Wisdom checks and initiative checks.
- Once per round, when you hit a creature that has not yet acted in this combat with an attack roll, that attack deals an extra 1d8 damage.
- If you are surprised, you can end this spell immediately to no longer be surprised.
- If you are attacked, you can use your reaction to end this spell immediately and give yourself a +5 to AC, including against the triggering attack, until the beginning of your next turn.
- If you roll a Dexterity save, you can use your reaction to end this spell immediately and give yourself advantage on that Dexterity save and all other Dexterity saves until the beginning of your next turn.

PROJECT OBJECT

Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 50 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Your force of will teleports an object a short distance away. You teleport an object you are holding to an unoccupied space within range. Alternatively, you can teleport the object to a willing creature within range. You can either cause the object to land at that creature's feet when it appears, or you can give the creature the option of grasping it with a free hand, requiring them to make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (DC 11). If they succeed, they are instantly holding the object; if they fail, it falls at their feet. This cantrip can only teleport objects that weigh 25 lbs. or less, and cannot affect objects you are not already holding.

PSYCHIC SHIELD

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you roll an Intelligence or Charisma save or when you would take psychic damage

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You quickly fortify your mind against a sudden psychic attack. You gain 4 temporary hit points, and until the start of your next turn, you gain the following benefits, including against the triggering effect:

- You have advantage on Intelligence and Charisma saves
- You gain resistance to psychic damage.

PSYCHIC SHOCK

Illusion cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You invade another creature's mind, and for one split second you cause them to perceive some image, noise, or memory that would cause them stress.

Choose a target you can see or hear within range.

The creature makes an Intelligence saving throw. If it fails, the creature takes 1d6 psychic damage, and it has disadvantage on the next Wisdom check it makes before the end of your next turn. If the creature has not yet acted this combat, it suffers an additional effect: it makes its next attack roll at disadvantage. If the creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it does not realize a cantrip caused this effect, and believes the flash of emotional pain it experienced came from its own mind.

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

REAVER'S TOUCH

Necromancy cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

The touch of your hand drains a target's life energy, allowing you to sacrifice animals and other creatures to make their vitality your own. Make a melee spell attack against the target. You have advantage on the attack if your target is a beast. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 necrotic damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage inflicted (rounded up). The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

REMOTE VIEWING

Divination cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round

An image forms in your mind, revealing what you would see if you were standing some distance away. Choose one point within range that you can see.

Until the effect ends, you perceive visually from that point instead of where you actually are. You determine line of sight from that point as well.

SHADOW MISSILE

1st level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 50 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

When you cast this spell, a wickedly bladed dart or throwing star made of black metal appears in your hand, and you hurl it instantly. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. You have advantage on this attack if you are in area that is lightly or heavily obscured. The creature is considered to have half cover against this attack if it is standing in direct sunlight (half cover grants +2 AC). On a hit, the target takes 1d10 piercing damage. Hit or miss, the projectile breaks and explodes in a shower of shrapnel. The target and each creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take one level of exhaustion and 1d8 necrotic damage. When a creature that already has one or more levels of exhaustion gains a new level of exhaustion from this spell, it becomes immune to gaining further levels of exhaustion from this spell for 24 hours.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 2nd level or higher spell slot, the necrotic damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

SHIFTING SHADOW

Conjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

Too quickly for mortal eyes to perceive, you move no further than the reach of your shadow. Your movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks for the rest of the turn, and you instantly move to an empty space within 5 feet.

SOUL HOMUNCULUS

1st-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (10 gp worth of mandragora root and other herbal supplies, which become the homunculus and are consumed, and a glass bottle with a tiny laboratory inside that costs 25 gp)

Duration: Instantaneous

You remove a portion of your soul to create an alchemical homunculus (see Appendix A) that resembles you. This is a complicated process, as it first requires the creation of special clear glass bottle, wide-mouthed and slightly larger than a wine bottle, that contains a miniature alchemical laboratory. It costs 25 gp to obtain this, whether you create the bottle laboratory yourself or have it made. When you cast this spell, you mix an alchemical paste and use it to treat a fresh mandragora root, which then magically shrinks down to be inserted into the bottle. Over the course of the hour casting time, the treated root is inserted, and then transforms into a small version of an infant of your race. It then matures at an unnerving rate over, reaching the same age as you before the end of the ritual, its development ending when it becomes a smaller yet otherwise identical copy of you. During that same hour, the magic of this spell adjusts the laboratory in the bottle to suit the needs of its inhabitant, including scribing basic references into the blank books within it and manifesting appropriate attire for the homunculus—generally the garb of a sage, student, or research scholar, but with extra protective layers for experimentation. The magic also strengthens the bottle, transforming it from glass into unbreakable crystal. Once this spell is cast, the bottle cannot be broken or destroyed while you are alive.

Upon creation, the homunculus is ready to work. While your soul homunculus is within 120 feet of you, you can communicate with it telepathically. It can always use the Help action for Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) checks you make, whether it is in its bottle or not, as long as it is within 120 feet of you.

The soul homunculus can leave the bottle, growing to its normal size (approximately one-tenth of your own height) and appearing in an unoccupied space adjacent to the bottle, or in a space occupied by you (if you are within 120 feet). The statistics of a soul homunculus appear in Appendix A of this document. As a bonus action, you can summon your soul homunculus from out of its bottle, or you can send it back. It can also use a bonus action on its own to enter or leave the bottle, but will not do so against your will.

Your soul homunculus acts independently of you, but it always obeys your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. A soul homunculus can't attack unless you use your action telling it to do so, but it can take other actions as normal. When the soul homunculus

drops to 0 hit points, it falls unconscious, but regains hit points at the beginning of its turn as long as you are alive. While you are alive, it is not destroyed unless it takes damage equal to twice its maximum hit points in a single turn. If it is destroyed, the bottle laboratory remains intact, and you can create a new soul homunculus by casting this spell again. If you do so, you can re-use the same bottle laboratory if you still possess it, but must purchase any other components again. You can't have more than one soul homunculus at a time. If you cast this spell while you already have a soul homunculus, you simply recreate a new version of the same one.

Finally, when you cast a spell with a range of touch, your soul homunculus can deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. Your soul homunculus must be within 120 feet of you, and it must use its reaction to deliver the spell when you cast it. If the spell requires an attack roll, you use your attack modifier for the roll.

SPEED OF THOUGHT

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 minute

You marshal psychic energies to move with speed and acrobatic grace. When you cast this spell, you gain two *speed points*. As a bonus action on your turn, you can expend a speed point, granting you the following benefits until the end of that turn:

- Your speed increases by 10 feet.
- You have resistance to falling damage.
- Difficult terrain does not reduce your speed.
- You have a climb speed equal to your walking speed.
- Opportunity attacks against you are made at disadvantage.
- You add 10 feet to your long jump distance and 3 feet to your high jump distance.
- You have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics) checks.
- You can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free.
- You do not sink when moving over soft or brittle terrain, such as dust, silt, mud, snow, or thin ice. This effect does not allow you to move over actual liquid.
- If you move at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hit it with a melee weapon attack on the same turn, that attack inflicts an additional 1d4 damage.

At the end of your turn, the benefits fade entirely until you spend another speed point. If these

benefits end while you are still on a vertical surface, or anywhere else where you would normally be falling or sinking, you immediately fall or begin to sink unless you have some other means of remaining there.

This spell ends when its duration expires, when you cast this spell again, or when you have spent all your speed points. When the spell ends, any unspent speed points are lost.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell with a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage you inflict with melee weapon attacks against opponents you moved 20 feet straight towards on that same turn increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 1st. In addition, if you cast this spell with a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you gain one additional speed point for each two slot levels above 1st (giving you a total of three speed points with a 3rd level spell slot, four speed points with a 5th level slot, five with a 7th level slot, and six with a 9th level slot).

STEAL SPEED

Necromancy cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You slow an opponent while making yourself faster. Make a melee spell attack against the target. On a hit, it takes 1d4 psychic damage, and its speed is reduced by 10 feet until the start of your next turn. Until the start of your next turn, you add a number of feet to your own speed equal to the number of feet by which you reduced the target's speed.

This spell's damage increases by 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4). In addition, the speed you steal increases by 5 feet as well when you reach 5th level (15 feet), 11th level (20 feet), and 17th level (25 feet).

SUSTAINING MEDITATION

3rd-level abjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 24 hours

You enter a heightened state of consciousness in which you have complete awareness and control of your body's natural processes. Until this spell ends, you are able to heal yourself for a limited number of hit points. You gain a pool of 20 hit points worth of self-healing. As a bonus action on your turn, you can draw self-healing from the pool to restore a number of hit points to yourself, up to the maximum

amount remaining in your pool. Once all the self-healing of the pool is expended, it does not replenish unless you cast the spell again. When this spell ends, any unused healing in the pool is lost.

Alternatively, if you have at least 5 hit points remaining in your self-healing pool, you can use a bonus action to neutralize one poison affecting you, or to cure yourself of one disease or one of the following conditions: the condition can be blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned. When you do this, the spell ends immediately.

In addition, for the duration of this spell, you don't need to eat or sleep (though you still need to finish a long rest to prepare spells or regain any abilities that require a long rest) and whenever you hold your breath, you can do so for five times as long as normal. If you have at least 1 hit point remaining in your self-healing pool, you have advantage on saving throws against poison and resistance to poison damage.

This spell ends when you finish a long rest, or when you cast it again.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the pool of self-healing it confers is increased by 5 hit points for each slot level above 3rd.

TELEKINETIC SLAM

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 Feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You surprise an enemy with an unstoppable telekinetic impact. Choose one creature within range. It takes psychic damage equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier and is moved up to 10 feet in a direction you choose (including up in the air, which may cause it to fall). You can only move it in a straight line through space unimpeded by creatures, objects, or obstacles.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the psychic damage increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 1st. If the spell slot is of 5th level or higher, you may target one additional creature within range for each slot level above 4th.

TELEPATHIC LINK

1st-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You establish a telepathic link with one willing humanoid you touch. Until the spell ends, the link is active while you and the humanoid are within line of sight of each other. Creatures with Intelligence scores of 2 or less aren't affected by this spell. You don't need to share a language with a creature for it to understand your telepathic utterances, and the creature understands you even if it lacks a language. The creature can respond to you telepathically as well, but it must understand at least one language in order to communicate this way.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the duration is 10 minutes for each slot level above 2nd. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, while you are linked, if either you or the creature you are linked to is surprised, and the other creature including in that same link is not, neither one of you is surprised.

THOUGHT BLAST

Enchantment cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (5-foot radius)

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You unleash the psychic power of your mind in a wave that shocks nearby creatures' minds. Each living creature (not a construct or undead) other than you within 5 feet of you must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 1d6 psychic damage and has disadvantage on the next Intelligence or Charisma check it makes before the until the end of its next turn.

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

THOUGHT PROJECTION

Enchantment cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You broadcast a mental image or telepathic message to nearby allies. Choose any number of non-hostile creatures within range. These targets (and only the targets) mentally receive the image or message you chose to convey. If it is a message, it must be 10 words or fewer. Creatures with Intelligence scores of 2 or creatures unwilling to have you communicate with them aren't affected by this spell. You don't

need to share a language with a creature for it to understand what you convey, but if you send a message rather than an image, a creature must understand at least one language in order to comprehend the message.

UNCANNY BALANCE

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V

Duration: 1 round

You sense how to shift your weight from step to step, staying atop a tricky surface. For the rest of the turn, you have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics) checks, and you do not sink when moving over soft or brittle terrain, such as dust, silt, mud, snow, or thin ice (though you cannot walk on actual liquid with this effect). While this spell is active, difficult terrain of those types does not require extra movement.

If you are already sinking into soft terrain when you cast this spell, the spell instantly moves you up to 5 feet to the surface. When this spell ends, if you are standing in a place where you would normally fall or sink, you do so unless you have some other means of remaining there.

UNLEASH INSTINCTS

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a piece of animal skin large enough to be worn over both shoulders)

Duration: Concentration, up to 8 hours

Until this spell ends, you unlock the primal nature of your body and mind, and you gain the following benefits:

- You can substitute your spellcasting ability score for your Strength score for purposes of unarmed strikes (including both attack and damage rolls), ability checks, and determining your jump distance or carrying capacity (including maximum load and maximum lift).
- You add your spellcasting ability modifier to Dexterity checks and Wisdom checks.
- When you make an unarmed strike, the damage you inflict is psychic damage, and you can roll a d8 in place of the normal damage.
- Your speed increases by 10 feet.
- You can use your bonus action to make an unarmed strike or take the Dash action.
- You gain darkvision up to a distance of 30 feet.
- You can track other creatures while traveling at a fast pace, and you can move stealthily while traveling at a normal pace.

If you end your turn wearing heavy armor, you must roll a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to your own spellcasting DC. If you fail, you lose concentration and the spell ends.

If you roll initiative before this spell ends, if the remaining amount of time you can maintain your concentration on this spell is greater than 1 minute, that duration is reduced, and you can only maintain your concentration on the spell for up to 1 minute after making the initiative roll.

In addition, when you make a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throw, if the number rolled on the die is 16 or lower, you can use your reaction to treat the number rolled on the d20 as a 17. If you do so, you gain advantage on all Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throws until the beginning of your next turn, at which time the spell ends.

WALL RUN

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

For a brief moment, you treat the law of gravity as a suggestion rather than a rule. For the rest of the turn, you have a climb speed equal to your walking speed and advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics) checks, and you can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces while leaving your hands free. This does not allow you to move upside down along ceilings. If you are on a vertical surface when you no longer have a climbing speed, you immediately fall unless you have some other means of remaining there.

WARNING ROAR

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

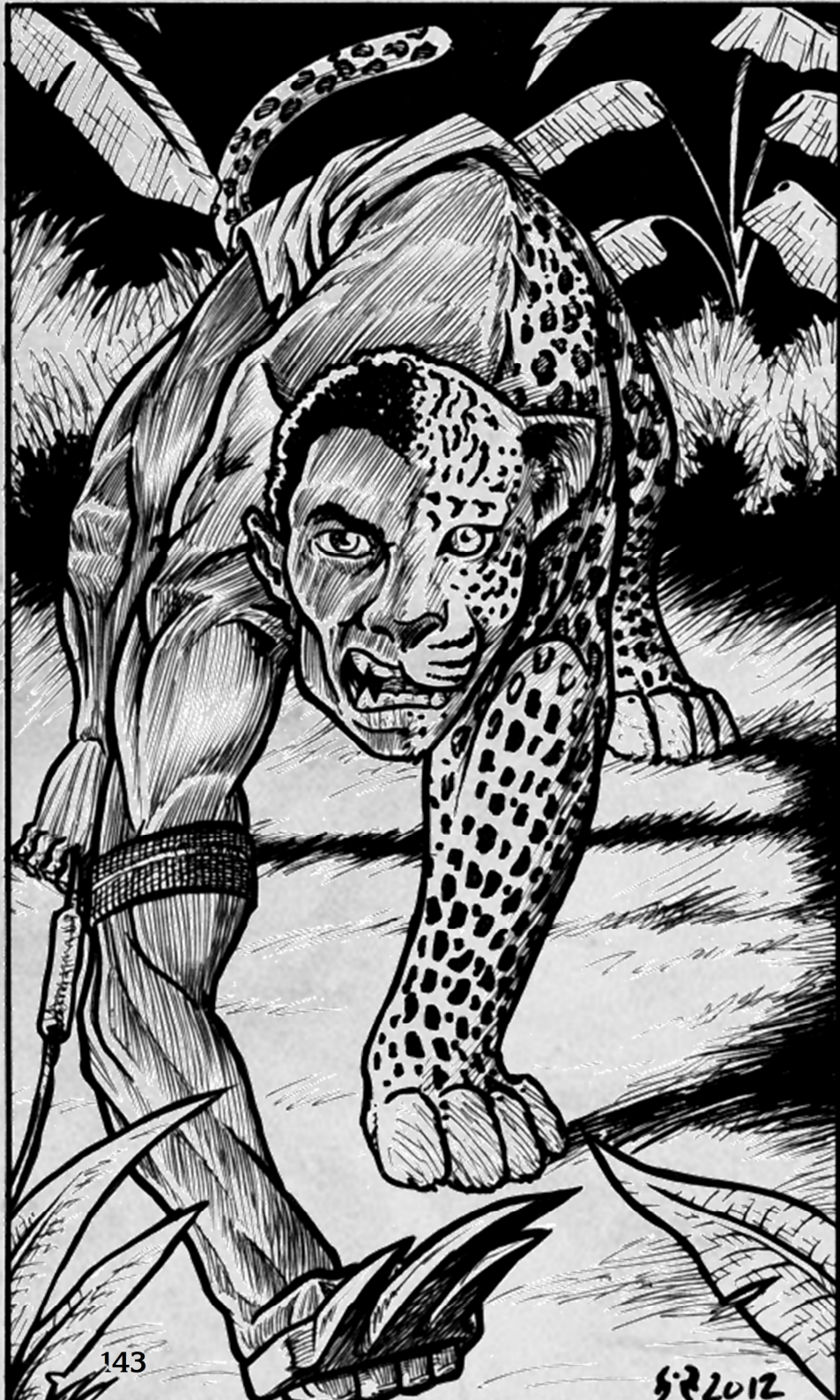
Range: 30 feet

Components: V

Duration: 1 round

Menacing psychic energies transform your voice into a louder version of the natural threat of a predatory beast (such as the growl of a hunting dog, the rattle of a rattlesnake, or the roar of a lion) that is audible out to 60 feet. Choose one creature within this spell's range, which

must make an Intelligence saving throw. If the target fails, it takes 1d6 thunder damage, and until the start of your next turn it has disadvantage on the next saving throw it makes against being frightened. If that target willingly moves closer to you or attacks you before the start of your next turn, it immediately takes 1d8 psychic damage, and the spell ends. This thunder damage from this spell increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).



Chapter 7: Optional Feats

Blood Bound

Prerequisites: Proficient with the Deception and Stealth skills

You have partaken of a mysterious secret that grants you long life, and which may one day grant you immortality. You do not know the true nature of the ritual that gave you your gifts, only that it involved drinking blood. In exchange for this unmatched generosity, you serve the master who granted it to you with unswerving loyalty. You know that they still have much to teach, including the secret of immortality, but you cannot perform this ritual on your own. Because you do not know the final stages, you would perform it incorrectly and curse yourself, becoming a vampire or worse rather than attaining true immortality.

This feat confers the following traits. Traits marked with an asterisk "*" are lost whenever the character goes longer than one year without renewing the ritual with their immortal master, but are regained instantly when the ritual is performed again:

- Increase your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You add your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1) to all Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and your carrying capacity (including maximum load and maximum lift) is increased by half.*
- You have advantage on all saving throws against effects that would age you.*
- Your aging is slowed, and you only age only three months for every year that passes.*
- You gain the following Bond: *"I know vampires exist, but my master could not be one. My master is a true immortal, not undead, and will share their secret with me if I earn it, so only they deserve my undying trust and loyalty."*
- If you drink any amount of vampire blood within 6 months of either performing your ritual of longevity with your master or having previously drunk any vampire blood, you must roll a DC 21 Charisma saving throw. If you fail, you are afflicted with short-term madness. If you fail by 10 or more, you are still afflicted with short-term madness, and are also

afflicted by indefinite madness as soon as the short-term madness ends.

Dusk Elf Stealth

Prerequisites: Elf (dusk elf), Stealth skill proficiency

You are a dusk elf, and the boon of the goddess who protected your people at the beginning of time helps hide you from enemies. Shadows gather around you so that when you move, you blend into them, making it hard for your enemies to track your movements. When you strike, you do so with speed and accuracy, darting in, then melding into the gloom. This feat confers the following benefits:

- When you take damage that reduces you to half your maximum hit points or fewer, you can use your reaction to become invisible until the end of your next turn. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.
- When you begin your turn invisible or in a space that is lightly or heavily obscured, you can take the Dash or Hide action as a bonus action during that turn.
- As a bonus action, you can grant an ally within 30 feet advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) check on their next turn, as if you had taken the Help action.
- When you take the Dash action on your turn, you gain resistance to damage from opportunity attacks until the end of your turn.

Dusksinger

Prerequisites: Elf (dusk elf variant); Intelligence 13 or higher; must know at least two eldritch invocations

You are a dusk elf trained in a particular variant of the arcane swordfighting art known as bladesong, a unique school of this technique practiced by the warlocks of your people. This feat confers the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in either the Performance or Stealth skill.
- When you choose a new eldritch invocation (or exchange one you already have for a new one), you can choose to learn the Bladesong feature of the Bladesinger Arcane Tradition (described in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*) as an eldritch invocation. The effects of this eldritch invocation are identical to the Bladesong, including all bonuses gained based on your Intelligence modifier.
- If you are 15th level or higher in your warlock class, you do not need to have the Pact of the Blade class feature to learn the Lifedrinker eldritch invocation, and you can apply its effects to any one-handed melee weapon, as long as you aren't wearing medium or heavy armor or using a shield.
- When you make a successful Constitution saving throw to maintain your concentration on a spell, you can use your reaction to expend a spell slot to turn invisible until the end of your next turn or until you

attack or cast a spell. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Eldritch Acrobat

You possess preternatural powers of movement, granting you the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You learn the following cantrips: *catfeet**, *quicking step**, *uncanny balance**, and *wall run**.
- Your walking speed increases by 5 feet.

Favored Anchorite

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature, worshipper of Ezra

You are an anchorite, an ordained priest of the goddess Ezra. Your goddess is said to dwell in the Mists themselves, and you have found true favor with her, allowing you to call on the Mists of Ravenloft for aid. You learn the *shield of Ezra** spell (a new spell described in the Religion in the Domains of Dread section of Chapter 1). Once per day, you can cast *shield of Ezra** as a 1st-level spell without spending a spell slot. Once you cast the spell in this way, you must finish a long rest before doing so again.

In addition, if you are a cleric, you add *shield of Ezra** to your list of domain spells, meaning you always have it prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. If you are a paladin of 3rd level or higher, you add *shield of Ezra** to your list of oath spells, meaning you always have it prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. Finally, when you cast *shield of Ezra**, you can use your Channel Divinity to change the casting time to 1 reaction instead of 1 action for that casting. When you use your Channel Divinity in this way, if you wish, you may also choose to create a 10-foot radius, 20-foot high cylinder of mist, centered on a point within 5 feet of you. This cylinder spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. The mist lasts until your *shield of Ezra** spell ends, then disperses into nothingness.

Focused Psychic Talent

You have the innate psychic ability to cast certain related spells. Choose one of the magisteria listed under the Mentalist archetype for the Metaphysician class. You learn the cantrip provided by that magisterium, and also learn the two 1st-level spells provided by that magisterium, as listed on the first row of that magisterium's table of Spells Learned (under "Metaphysician Level 2nd"). You also gain a limited number of *psi points*, which you can use to

cast the spells learned from this feat. When you first learn this feat, you gain a pool of psi points based on your level. Whenever you finish a long rest, any unspent psi points are lost, and you gain a fresh pool of psi points based on your level, as follows:

Level	Psi Point Pool
1st-4th	2
5th-6th	4
7th-8th	5
9th-10th	7
11th or higher	8

You can spend psi points to cast the spells gained from this feat. To cast a 1st level spell costs 2 psi points. You can also spend a psi point to cast the cantrip you learned from this feat. If that cantrip has a casting time of 1 action, whenever you cast it, you can spend 1 psi point to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for that casting. Once you cast the cantrip as a bonus action in this way, you cannot do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

As you go up in levels, you learn more spells. When you reach 7th level, you also learn the two 2nd-level spells provided by the magisterium you chose, as listed on the second row of that magisterium's table of Spells Learned (under "Metaphysician Level 3rd"). To cast a 2nd-level spell costs 3 psi points.

If you wish, you can also spend 3 psi points when casting a 1st-level spell to cast it using a 2nd-level spell slot. You do not learn any spells of a level above 2nd from this feat.

You cast these spells innately, and do not require verbal or somatic components. You can also use any kind of spellcasting focus described under the magisterium you chose for this feat as a spellcasting focus for your spells.

Living Poltergeist

You have an instinctive ability to affect objects around you with your thoughts and emotions, granting you the following benefits:

- You learn the *mage hand* and *thunderclap*** cantrips. When you cast *mage hand*, the spectral hand is made of invisible psychic force and cannot be seen.
- You learn certain spells and gain the ability to innately cast them. You can cast each spell at its lowest level without using a spell slot. Once you cast a spell in this way, you must finish a long rest before you can cast it again. The first spell you learn and cast in this way is *catapult***. At 5th level, you also learn and cast the *knock* and *levitate* spells with this feat. At 13th level, you also learn and cast the *magnetism** and *telekinesis* spells with this feat.
- If you are 9th level or higher, you may choose to calculate your carrying capacity (including maximum

load and maximum lift) as if your Strength score were equal to your Intelligence score plus 2.

- Your spellcasting ability for all spells and cantrips gained from this feat is Intelligence. You cast these spells and cantrips innately without verbal or somatic components, though you must still expend any material components.

Mind Reader

You have a natural ability to touch others' minds, granting you the following benefits:

- You learn the *mindspeak** and *thought blast** cantrips.
- You learn certain spells and gain the ability to innately cast them. You can cast each spell at its lowest level without using a spell slot. Once you cast a spell in this way, you must finish a long rest before you can cast it again. The first spell you learn and cast in this way is *telepathic link**. At 5th level, you also learn and cast the *detect thoughts* spell with this feat. At 9th level, you also learn and cast the *sending* spell.
- If you are 3rd level or higher, you can telepathically speak to any creature you can see within 30 feet of you. You must share a language with the creature for it to understand your telepathic utterances. You can speak telepathically in this way to one creature at a time.
- You add your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1) to all Wisdom (Insight) checks.
- Your spellcasting ability for all spells and cantrips gained from this feat is Intelligence. You cast these spells and cantrips innately without verbal or somatic components, though you must still expend any material components.

Shadow Sentinel

Prerequisites: Proficient with Stealth skill, proficient with at least one martial weapon, Dexterity 17 or higher, must have either the

Uncanny Dodge class feature or the ability to attack more than once when you take the Attack action on your turn without using a bonus action

You defend a persecuted culture in which stealth is not merely part of your arsenal, but the backbone of your martial traditions. Whether you are a gloaming guardian of the dusk elves, a Vistani whose defensive precision protects your kin from outsiders prejudiced by false



stereotypes, a crag dwarf or deep gnome in a besieged settlement, or a ruthless halfling nomad of the desert wastes, you train at moving unseen not for cowardly purposes, but as an honored champion of your people. This feat confers the following benefits:

- You learn the *minor illusion* and *prestidigitation* cantrips if you don't already know them.
- You gain darkvision within 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 60 feet.
- When you take the Dodge action on your turn, an indistinct shadow obscures you. Within the space in which you end that turn, bright light becomes dim light, and dim light becomes darkness until the end of your next turn. Anything within darkness created by this effect is heavily obscured.
- If you hit more than once with a weapon attack against the same target during your turn, on the second hit, you can choose for the area around the target struck to darken, as if with twilight. Within a 5 feet sphere centered on the target, bright light becomes dim light, and dim light becomes darkness until the end of your next turn. The target must make a Wisdom save (DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier) or have its speed reduced by half until the end of its next turn. Anything within darkness created by this effect is heavily obscured.

Vistani Magic

Prerequisite: Human (Vistani)

You have inherited the supernatural bond with the dark nature of the Domains of Dread that allows some of your Vistani kin to curse their enemies and use a more powerful version of the Evil Eye. You gain the Curse and Evil Eye abilities described for Vistani on page 28 of *Curse of Strahd*, with the following limitation: Until you reach 3rd level, casting *hold person* with the Evil Eye ability causes you to take 1d6 psychic damage. When you reach 3rd level, this effect no longer applies.

Wild Psychic Talent

You have natural psychic spellcasting abilities. You learn two cantrips of your choice from the Metaphysician Spell List. In addition, choose one 1st-level spell from the Metaphysician Spell List. You learn that spell, and gain the ability to cast it once at its lowest level without using a spell slot. Once you cast it in this way, you must finish a long rest before you can cast it again. Your spellcasting ability for these spells is Intelligence.

You cast these spells innately, and do not require verbal or somatic components. You can also use the crystal type of arcane focus as a spellcasting focus for your spells.

Appendix A: New Monster

SOUL HOMUNCULUS

Soul homunculi are small constructs the size of a squirrel, that function something like a wizard's familiar, but which resemble their creator rather than looking like an animal. They appear as diminutive humanoids dressed like scholars, but wearing thick clothing to protect them from accidents, and they share their creator's basic physical appearance. They do not have an independent existence, but live as extensions of the soul of their creator. They are created by casting the *soul homunculus* spell.

Your Flesh and Blood Duplicate. The soul homunculus not only resembles its creator physically, but knows everything its creator knows, including all the languages the creator can speak and read. It thinks of itself as a sage, and is driven to solve mysteries with alchemy or scholarship, preferably within the safe confines of its laboratory (see below). It has no larger goals beyond obeying its master's will and discerning arcane secrets. Though it has no physical needs while its master is alive, it also likes to indulge in good food, beverages, and the like, though it enjoys them as luxuries rather than pursuing them actively. Generally, it likes the same cuisine and drinks as its creator, and it sleeps, breathes, and speaks much as its creator does, but it doesn't actually require food, water, air, or sleep. In many ways, it is a very sophisticated flesh golem, but made of alchemical ingredients rather than corpses and enlivened by a spark of its master's essence.

Researching Constructs. Soul homunculi live in special bottles that contain tiny alchemical laboratories and libraries. The bottle is customarily carried or kept by the construct's creator. The tiny demiplane within the bottle has its own gravity, remains a comfortable temperature, and maintains a pocket of breathable air. The interior of the bottle is generally unaffected by the world outside of it, and can only be entered by a soul homunculus, which changes size to fit inside of it. The wax stopper at the mouth of the bottle opens and closes like a door when the homunculus passes through it, but a magical field around the bottle allows nothing else to enter or leave.

SOUL HOMUNCULUS

Tiny construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor, padded)

Hit Points 7 (2d4+2)

Speed 20ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances necrotic, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned, unconscious

Skills Arcana+4, Medicine +4, Perception+3, Stealth+3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Primordial, all languages known by its creator, telepathy 120 ft. (creator only)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Bottle Laboratory. The bottle which the soul homunculus calls home cannot be broken or destroyed while the creator of the construct is alive.

Grow/Shrink. When entering or leaving the bottle laboratory it calls home, the soul homunculus changes size. When entering the bottle, it shrinks down to one half of its normal height. When leaving the bottle, it resumes its normal size and appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to the bottle, or in a space occupied by its master (if the master is within 120 feet).

Sustaining Bond. As long as its creator is alive, the soul homunculus does not need to eat, sleep, breathe, or drink (though it likes to do all of those things as often as its creator does) and it regains 1 hit point at the start of its turn. If it takes fire damage, it doesn't regain the hit point at the start of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The soul homunculus's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *vicious mockery*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only)

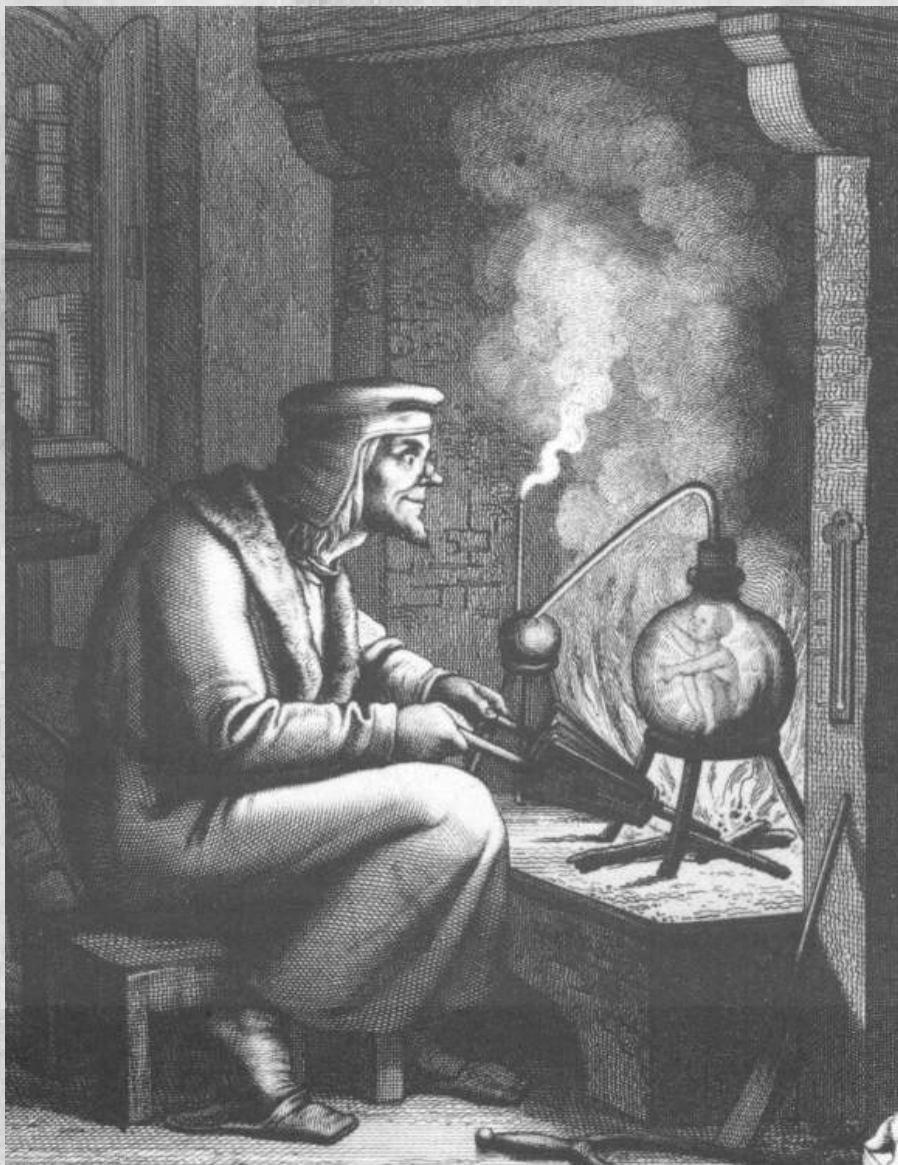
Actions

Syringe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage and 1 poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is instead poisoned for 2 (1d4) minutes and unconscious while poisoned in this way.

Acid Vial. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 acid damage.

Enter/Exit Bottle Laboratory. As a bonus action, the soul homunculus enters or leaves the bottle laboratory.

Assist Research. As long as it is within 120 feet of its creator, the soul homunculus can take the Help action to assist its creator with Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine) checks, even if it is not adjacent to its creator.



Appendix B: Domains Beyond the Core

THE INFORMATION BELOW IS A PREVIEW OF UPCOMING RAVENLOFT ARCHETYPES CONTENT DETAILING DOMAINS OF DREAD OUTSIDE THE CORE, TO BE RELEASED DEPENDENT ON DEMAND, AS MEASURED BY SALES MILESTONES FOR THIS DM'S GUILD PRODUCT. AS THOSE MILESTONES ARE MET, THIS PRODUCT WILL GROW—WITH PREVIOUS PURCHASERS LIKE YOU PAYING NO ADDITIONAL PRICE FOR THE NEW CONTENT—AND NEW PRODUCTS BEING DEVELOPED BASED ON FEEDBACK. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE ON THESE SUBJECTS AND OTHER NEW CONTENT THAT EXPANDS ON THE PREVIOUS SECTIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT, PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT RAVENLOFT ARCHETYPES II: THE CORE DOMAINS ADVENTURER'S GUIDE.

THE ISLANDS OF TERROR

Islands of Terror are domains surrounded by the Mists; they do not share stable borders with any neighboring domains. They are among the most secluded of all the Domains of Dread, though solitary wanderers always seem to find their way to such remote places.

Many Islands of Terror are known to exist, and many others no doubt remain unknown, hidden by the Mists, their subjects isolated to live in fear of their own unique darklords. Descriptions of known Islands of Terror include:

The unearthly wasteland known as **Bluetspur**, where the surface is razed by scorching storms and the underground is ruled by alien intelligences who enslave humanoids for their eldritch experiments and conspire against the stars.

G'Henna is an arid land consumed by religious zealotry. Torn from the Core during the Grand Conjunction, its starving populace spirals into despair as it slowly succumbs to a creeping fear that its bestial god will never appear to relieve its suffering.

The small domain of **I'Cath** consists only of the shadowy woods surrounding a haunted castle, its four attending shrines and groves, and a single tower. Its only inhabitants are the foul sorceress Tsien Chiang and her cursed daughters.

Kalidnay is a city-state surrounded by barren desert—once part of the apocalyptic world of Athas—where the sorcerer-king Kalid-ma rules oppressed subjects from a ziggurat palace, aided by the Templars, an aristocratic secret police granted spellcasting powers by his very existence.

The anarchic and overcrowded metropolis of **Nosos** squats amid deforested wasteland, covered in garbage, poison, and the smoke of a thousand chimneys. While the affluent elite debauch themselves in endless masquerade balls, the pale and plague-ridden commoners scrounge greedily among smog-spewing refineries and burning coal mines.

The small city of **Odiare** was taken from the mysterious plane called Gothic Earth. Here, growing children struggle to support themselves without the aid of adults, offering prayers against the day when the terrifying construct that massacred their parents returns.

Rokushima Taiyoo is a beautiful archipelago where ancient codes of honor, delicate philosophies, and exotic art are being crushed by a relentless civil war between samurai lords.

In the hot and humid river delta of **Souragne**, residents of Port d'Elhour and Marais d'Tarascon offer praise to the spirits of the swampland. They pray that when they die, the Lord of the Dead will not come to force their bodies to toil in the fields until the flesh drops from their bones

Vorostokov is a vast and primitive realm of endless winter stolen from the continent of Cerilia in the world of Aebrynis, where the desperate inhabitants of a dozen villages struggle to survive despite scant food stores, the spirits of those who have frozen to death in the woods, and packs of ravenous wolves. They subsist on the bounty of the *boyarsky* hunters who roam the icy planes and frozen coniferous forests, ruling with an iron fist.

"THE CLUSTERS"

"Cluster" is an inelegant term created by scholars of the Fraternity of Shadows to describe places where Islands of Terror combine into one connected territory. Four clusters are known to exist:

The Amber Wastes comprise a desert landmass of ruins, cities, springs, and nomads which includes three domains, **Pharazia**, **Har'Akir**, and **Sebua**, each ruled by its own terrifying immortal.

The Shadowlands include the dark medieval realms of **Nidala** and **Avonleigh**, and a single accursed house, **Shadowborn Manor**, that is a domain all its own.

The Verduous Lands are a moonless realm combining the seaweed-filled seascape of **Saragoss**, a primal domain ruled by talking animals known as **the Wildlands**, and **Sri Raji**, a land ruled by a dark maharaja and terrorized by human sacrificing cultists of Kali.

Zherisia consists of two domains: above ground, the lonely city of **Paridon**, and below, in its sewers, the horrors of **Timor**.

POINTS OF DARKNESS: NEWLY UNCOVERED DOMAINS

Recently, a group of adventurers brought by the Mists from an outlander realm known as the Nentir Vale have found their way to Darkon, seeking lore of the new world in which they find themselves. One of their number has joined the Fraternity of Shadows, and impressed them by bringing much new knowledge—including legends of regions of their homeworld that, judging by a number of well-documented details, seem to have been annexed by the Mists as their own Domains of Dread.

Darani was one of the oldest cities in a human empire called Nerath, ruled by an evil emperor known as Magroth the Mad, until he was killed by the hero Krondor... then Krondor was murdered in turn by his own brother Kalaban. The Mists claimed



the city and returned it to the rulership of the undead Magroth the Mad.

In a place called the Nentir Vale, **Death of Innocence** was the last temple of Nerull, the deity of the dead, until a rival goddess, the Raven Queen, sealed it away from the outside world.

Histaven (also called the Withered Lands) is ruled over by the self-deluded tyrant Count Artius and plagued by the constant assaults of a wretched avenger known as the Rag Man.

During the war between two empires (a tiefling empire called Bael Turath and the draconic Arkhosia), the silver dragons Arantor and Imrissa attacked a tiefling outpost called **Monadhan**, only to discover they were wiping out a camp of refugees. When the two dragons fell into fighting, Arantor killed Imrissa, only to find himself claimed by the Mists as Monadhan's undead darklord.

Another Nerathi city, **Graefmotte** fell in the last battle before the empire's fall, and became a Domain of Dread after its lord killed his own son rather than see him destroyed with the city.

Sunderheart, the pleasure garden of the empire of Bael Turath, and ancestral home of the tiefling noble houses Dreygu, Zannifer, and Khanebor, was once called the City of Carousing, but now this ruin is known as the City of Curses.

ISLAND OF TERROR:

BLUETSPUR

This sunless, storm-wracked, seemingly uninhabited wasteland is so unearthly as to be unlike any other Domain of Dread. The edges of the domain are flat and featureless plains of dust strewn with jagged cobbles and boulders, and the interior is a great mountainous expanse of razor sharp rock and jagged, twisting peaks. Stone arches bridge the summits, and corkscrewing spires break through the rocky surface like screws driven violently up through the barren landscape. Massive spurs of rock jut from other features at impossible angles, their unsettling spurs, arches, and

twists seeming to defy gravity and suggesting the handiwork of a mad god. A vast, rocky wasteland stretches out as far as the eye can see, nearly devoid of life. The mountains are immense, with the peaks soaring up to culminate in the dizzying summits of Mount Grysl and Mount Makab, both reaching heights of nearly 10,000 feet.

Though various streams drain from the mountains, vegetation is almost nonexistent due to the absence of sunlight. A few species of phosphorescent fungi and sticky slime molds cling to crevices the undersides of rocks at lower elevations, but the land is otherwise barren and stony. There are no animals or plants to be seen. Everything is as still as a tomb, not so much as a breeze stirring the cool air. A starless sky of perfect blackness yawns above, and the horizon glows with an eerie red color. The harsh

odor of charred stone hangs in the air, undercut by a whiff of vinegar. Anyone who dares sleep in this land, on the surface or below, endure horrid nightmares. The dreamer imagines dark foul creatures slinking out from the rock and devouring all that is good. Like many dreams, this one reveals much that is true.

There are no seasons in Bluetspur, no weather, and no true day and night. During the lighter hours, there is no sun in the sky, but the entire horizon in all directions glows with the russet mantle of dusk. Then the ruddy glow fades to pitch black, and "night" falls, the cycle of light and dark waxing and waning in perfect, twelve-hour cycles. When the domain is shrouded in darkness, the thunderstorms begin. Vermilion strokes of lightning crack in the distance, but always grow closer. Sometimes there is rain as well, but more often not, and either way the skies remain completely black—presumably with indistinguishable clouds. Within minutes of nightfall, the lightning strikes become fatally frequent, touching down at least once every minute. Stooping low to the ground, travelers find they can just make out a relentless drone emanating from deep within the earth. This horrendous sound, muted as it is, causes their temples to throb with agony. Those who remain under the open skies when the night falls cannot hope to survive the lightning.

Yet the fate that awaits those who venture underground may be even worse.

No travelers willingly seek out such a hostile, barren land as Bluetspur. Most folk who find themselves here would rather blindly brave the Mists than tarry in a place so forsaken. Visitors who have survived this domain have confirmed that the residents who dominate this land do not live aboveground, but in the endless labyrinth of caverns beneath the mountains, and they are from human. They are mind flayers, and there is no law in this cursed land but theirs.

The mind flayers—at least the living ones (see below)—seldom venture to the surface. Their only purpose seems to be to round up intruders and take them beneath the earth to become slaves, adding them to an already well-populated pool of thralls.

Obviously, no creatures live above the ground in this domain. The only inhabitants of Bluetspur are the illithids, their brutally dominated slaves, and a separate group of other mind flayers who are... different. Changed. They are rabidly insane, and some say they are undead.

ISLAND OF TERROR:

ROKUSHIMA TAIYOO

Also known as the Six Islands of the Sun, Rokushima Taiyoo (rokoo-SHEE-ma ta-EE-oo) is a lush archipelago that rises impossibly from the surrounding Poison Sea. The domain's sobriquet might seem to be a misnomer, as there are only four isles. The Rokuma, however, assert that the two vanished islands sank into the ocean when their shujin, or local lords, were killed. The remaining isles surround the glassy surface of the Great Mirror Lake, which is fed by clear mountain springs. The waters of the lake rush between the islands, cascading down jagged slopes of coral and into the venomous depths of the Poison Sea. The roiling Nightmare Mists shroud the lake's western outlet to the sea, and ships voyaging into the dread vapors never emerge.

The snowcapped peak of Mount Frost soars high above the surrounding islands, its slopes purportedly riddled with corrupted shrines and caches of plundered treasure, but also haunted by strange and terrible creatures. The island landscape is rugged and picturesque, blanketed by damp evergreen forests, arching wood bridges, and misty waterfalls.

The weather in the domain is fierce and merciless, varying wildly. Summers are oppressive and muggy,

autumns beset by rampaging typhoons. Winters are brutally cold, burying the domain under endless snow. Springtime is short but comparatively pleasant, a time when the islands are covered in pale flower blossoms.

Structures in Rokushima Taiyoo are elegant and possess a distinct aesthetic style. Wood is used almost exclusively in construction, fitted together without nails. Decorative gables, eaves, and screens are commonplace. The walls and sliding doors are often made of thin paper on a wooden frame, allowing for easy repairs following the domain's vicious storms and earthquakes. The shujin, however, dwell in enormous stone castles with multiple tiers climbing up to touch the sun. Serene shrines both magnificent and humble dot the islands; located on sites of natural beauty and power, they are identifiable by the sacred torii gates.

Anything from these islands may be referred to as Rokushiman—from their exquisitely wrought trade goods to the language the locals speak—but the people call themselves the Rokuma. The Rokuma are slight in stature but blessed with trim builds and physical grace. Their skin tone varies from creamy white to golden brown, usually with a sallow tinge. Eye color tends to be dark, ranging from hazel to midnight black. Rokuma hair is straight, sleek, and jet-black. Men and women both grow their hair long, arranging it in elaborate fashion with wooden pins,

though commoner men sometimes prefer a shorter style. Men are clean shaven, regarding facial hair as barbarous. Women and men alike wear widesleeved robes belted at the waist with a sash over a long shirt or shift. Men also don loose trousers or wrapped leggings. Soft slippers or wooden sandals are the customary footwear. Male commoners are fond of wide straw hats to keep off the sun and snow. Black and soft pastels are favored colors in clothing.

The Rokuma are reserved and enigmatic folk, ascribing great value to social decorum and aesthetics. They prize



beauty and harmony, whether in the natural world or in their relationships. They are reverent toward the *kami*, the spirits that are believed to dwell in all things, and worship at breathtaking natural shrines. The elderly are given great respect, and proper etiquette is imperative even among the poorest commoners.

The Rokuma have a deep respect for the warrior's skill with sword and bow. They see beauty in all of life's pursuits and feel secure in their place in the natural order. The constant warring between the island shujin, however, has created an atmosphere of terror in the domain's villages. The bloody conflict has cast a fearful shadow over the Rokuma, who endure harassment and brutality from the prideful samurai of their masters.

Rokushima Taiyoo enjoyed a period of stability under the warlord who ruled until his death, but has been consumed by internal warfare ever since. It is an isolated domain embroiled in its own exhausting conflicts and unaware of the wider world beyond its shores. Recent contact with Dementlieuse and Darkonian sailors has not encouraged the Rokuma, who have found these outsiders brutish and disrespectful. Nonetheless, the presence of such travelers may prove to be a wild card in the struggle between the shujin. The shujin have taken notice of these foreign strangers and are even now scheming of ways to take advantage of their boorish naivete and intriguing weapons.

Each of Rokushima Taiyoo's four islands is ruled by a shujin, a feudal warlord with numerous lesser noble warriors under his vassalage. The domain's shujin are all brothers, endlessly bickering over the birthright each feels was denied him by a deceased father. Although each shujin is ostensibly responsible for overseeing his island realm, the brothers are completely obsessed with breaking one another's power. Their slow, smoldering war wreaks havoc on the lives of their subjects. Their samurai clash openly in the streets, heedless of the commoners who are caught in the conflict. Ninja clans slink through the shadows, carrying out sabotage and assassinations. Periodically, the struggle explodes into outright warfare as the forces of each brother slaughter one another in gruesome battles. In most villages, there is no longer any civic order at all.

In short, the greed and pride of the shujin is literally tearing the Six Islands of the Sun apart. The Rokuma try to carry on with their lives, hoping that adherence to tradition will carry them through the dark times. Many folk, however, have turned to

shrewd brigands called *yakuza* to protect them from their own noble rulers.

The roots of this conflict were planted in the life of the domain's previous ruler, Haki Shinpi, the man who united Rokushima Taiyoo under his own rule. Shinpi lived his life according to the dictates of the chivalrous code known as *bushido*, yet often twisted its principles in order to divide his enemies against themselves and crush them with despair. His greatest sense of honor lay in the solidarity of his own clan while others fell apart due to his subtle treachery.

He began as a minor noble, but used deception to pit the feudal lords and their samurai against each other, creating bloody battles where his rivals massacred entire families—and Shinpi was able to pick up the pieces. He rose in power, becoming the military overlord, or shogun, while the ancestral emperor of the archipelago became a figurehead for Shinpi's total rule. When that emperor moved against him in secret, Shinpi crushed those nobles who might interfere with the shogunate's authority while others who might interfere were at each other's throats. After the emperor's death in battle, Shinpi used an obscure genealogical pretext to become emperor himself. He conquered the lands of any noble who objected, and eventually ruled the entire island chain as his own fiefdom, with every noble sworn to his service.

As he aged, Shinpi began to think about his legacy. He instituted civic reforms and infrastructure projects. He also drafted laws largely forbidding trade with nations outside the islands, so as to preserve the beautiful culture and traditions that he truly loved against foreign influences.

Shortly before he died, Shinpi called his six sons to him and divided his lands and treasures between them. Each one was given one of the six islands of the archipelago to rule, each fiefdom chosen to suit that son's strengths and help him overcome his weaknesses. Shinpi's hope was that his sons and their descendants would preserve the empire he had unified for generations. With his final bequests proclaimed, surrounded by his children, Shinpi closed his eyes and let out a last hiss of breath.

His body was not even cold when his sons began to bicker over their father's estate and their allotted inheritances. It was a portent of the rancorous conflict that was to come. Each son saw himself as the true heir to his father, turning against his brothers as their father had turned his rivals against one another. That night, a wall of impossibly thick

fog rolled in from the sea, and the new domain of Rokushima surfaced in the Mists.

Within a fortnight on Shinpi's death, a ninja assassin had walked out of the shadows to slay his youngest son. Before the next full moon, the eldest son had fallen as well. When each died, a cataclysm earthquake followed within the hour, contorting the land so fiercely that the entire island ruled by the slain son sank in the ocean called the Poison Sea. These same seismic movements caused the other islands to shift, so that afterwards, all four remaining islands yet formed a closed circle around the Great Mirror Lake.

Today, in fortresses on each of their respective islands, each of the four remaining heirs lives in fearful paranoia of his siblings. From time to time, the conflict between the four surviving princes breaks into a full-blown clash of armies, but most often it involves attempts to undermine or assassinate each other covertly. They hire cunning warlocks and ninja monks and seductive bards to kill each other with poison or deceive each other with misinformation. Even when there are no large-scale battles, no one in the islands can long escape the brothers' war.

The ongoing horrors of the conflict make Rokushima Taiyop well-suited for the Domains of Dread, and the Dark Powers show no signs of letting it go. It is impossible to say what would happen if peace were ever restored.

New Fighting Style for Fighters, Rangers, and Paladins

In Rokushima Taiyoo, dominated by rival factions maintaining a constant state of military preparation, new martial styles emerge, gain popularity, and then become institutions or fall into obscurity at the same dizzying rate that new trends in noble fashions come and go and in domains like Dementlieu and Borca. In addition to the fighting styles already available in this document and the normal D&D rules, fighters, ranger, and paladins trained by the samurai swordmasters of Rokushima Taiyoo have access to the following additional fighting style. No matter how many times class features allow you to choose, you can never select a particular fighting style more than once.

• DAISHO

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for your attack and damage rolls with a longsword, as long as you are only wielding it with one hand. Also, when you wield a longsword in one hand and a light weapon in the other, you can still use two-weapon fighting (even though a longsword is not light). Finally, creatures you hit with both a longsword attack and a light weapon attack in the same round make opportunity attacks at disadvantage until the beginning of your next turn.

NEW ROKUSHIMAN MARTIAL ARCHETYPE:

SHUGYOSHA

As a shugyōsha, you wander from place to place, seeking to perfect your skills with the traditional weapons of a samurai warrior, especially the paired katana and wakizashi (longsword and scimitar), as well as the daikyu (longbow), and naginata (glaive). Once, you trained for a long career of military service as one of the samurai, but that is not the life you live today. Instead, you ended up out on the road. In the Core, you might be called a “knight errant”; here, you are a former samurai, a *rōnin*, which means “one who rides the waves.”

Yet your training continues. Life as an adventurer is part of your path to perfect mastery of your chosen arms. You wander the land in a constant quest to grow and hone your martial skills, unprotected by any family, feudal household, or school. In your travels, you also challenge local champions, test yourself against the leading students of fighting academies, study new and different martial arts styles, perform bodyguard and mercenary work, seek possible service with a worthy new lord, and learn complex arts such as calligraphy in pursuit of discipline and self-control. If you find that you attract students, and do not dismiss them, you may eventually found a school of your own, as the most respected shugyōsha do if they somehow live to middle age.

The tradition of the shugyōsha in Rokushima Taiyoo began with the killings of shujin lords, which decreased the number of claimants to the shogun's throne from six to four and inaugurated the current period of war and chaos. Since then, as the historians put it, “the roads have been choked with ronin.” The many warriors sworn to these lords who were outside of their feudal lands when the shujin fell became some of the first shugyōsha, but the many battles, assassinations, and political intrigues since have created many more. In either case, the path of the shugyōsha—known as *musha shugyō*, or “training in warriorship”—was inspired by wandering monks, who hone their own martial arts in similar ascetic wanderings in pursuit of enlightenment.

FALLEN SAMURAI

Beginning at 3rd level when you take this archetype, you gain the Daisho fighting style (as described below). If you already have this Fighting Style, you choose a new one, which can only be selected from those described below. You can never gain the same Fighting Style more than once.

- **ARCHERY**

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

- **DAISHO**

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for your attack and damage rolls with a longsword, as long as you are only wielding it with one hand. Also, when you wield a longsword in one hand and a light weapon in the other, you can still use two-weapon fighting (even though a longsword is not light). Finally, creatures you hit with both a longsword attack and a light weapon attack in the same round make opportunity attacks at disadvantage until the beginning of your next turn.

- **GREAT WEAPON FIGHTING**

When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

- **TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING**

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

KI WARRIOR

Starting at 3rd level, your intense training with the weapons of the samurai is a spiritual discipline comparable to the fighting arts of a monk, giving you insight into ki, the mysterious elemental energy that suffuses living things. Though you cannot truly master ki the way a monk can, you can use it for a limited number of effects, which is represented by gaining a limited number of ki points.

You gain a number of ki points equal to your proficiency bonus.

Spent ki points are regained whenever you finish a short or long rest. You can

spend ki points to use the following abilities:

- You can spend 1 ki point to take the dash action as a bonus action. When you spend 1 ki point for this, you also double your jumping distance and add your Wisdom modifier to your AC until the end of your turn.
- When you make a weapon attack roll against a creature, you can expend 1 ki point to add your Wisdom

modifier to the attack roll. If you succeed, you inflict an extra 1d6 psychic damage. If the weapon is a longsword, longbow, light melee weapon, or a melee weapon you are wielding with two hands, you regain the ki point you spent on this ability if the attack roll exceeds the target's AC by 5 or more.

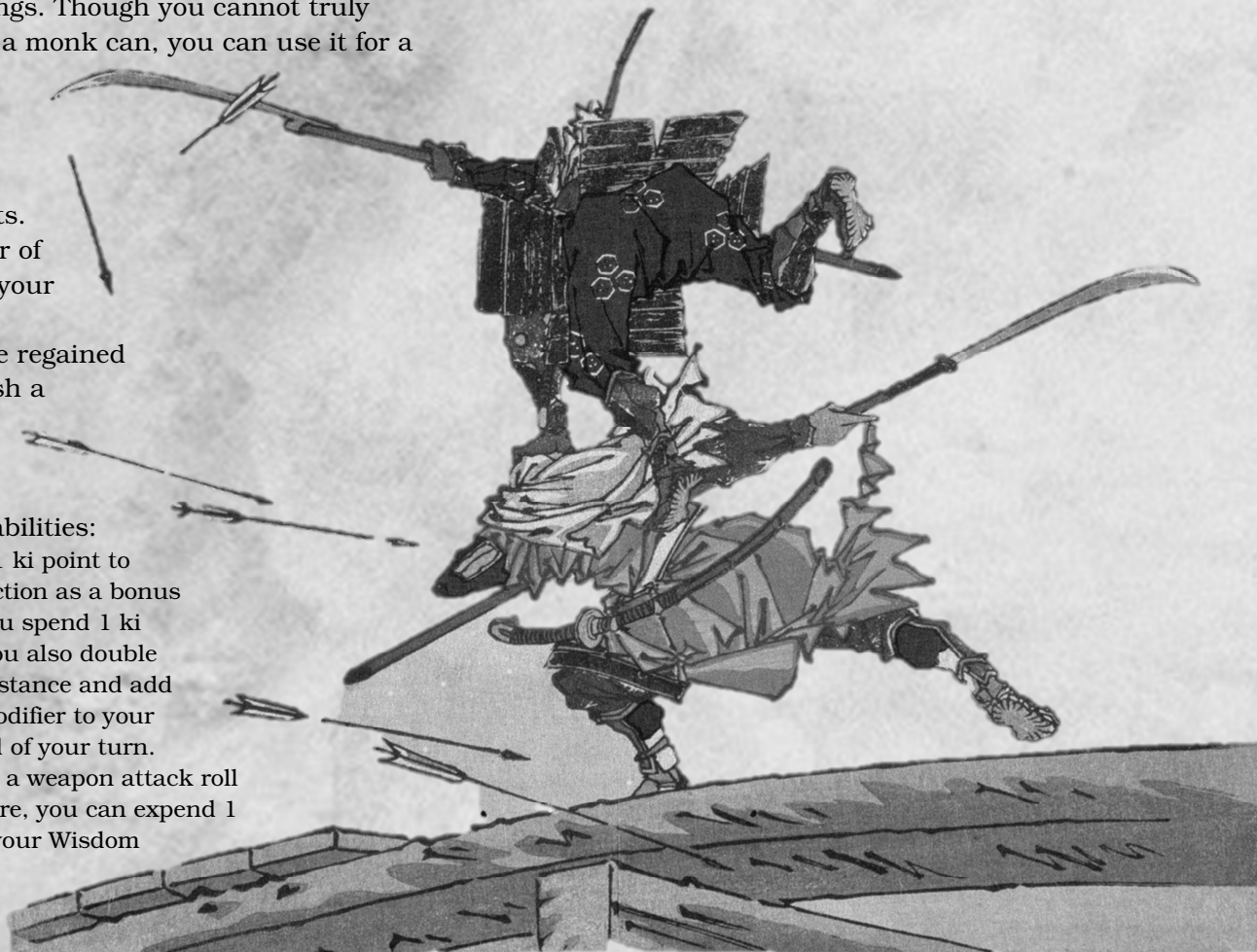
- When a creature hits you or a creature within 5 feet of you with a weapon attack, you can expend 1 ki point as a reaction to reduce the damage inflicted. Roll 1d6, add your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice) to the number rolled, then reduce the damage by the total. When you use this ability on another creature rather than yourself, if the damage is reduced to zero, you regain your ki point as if it had never been spent.

STUDENT OF BUSHIDO

At 3rd level, you learn the *challenger's mark**, *fortifying cry**, *true strike*, and *resistance* cantrips and you gain proficiency with calligrapher's supplies as well as one of the following skills of your choice: Athletics, Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Intimidate, Insight, Performance, or Persuasion.

ACCUSTOMED WANDERER

At 7th level, when you enter any settlement with a population of 100 or more you don't remember visiting before, you are adept at gathering significant information about your new environs. You can spend 1 hour engaged in a seemingly innocuous activity that allows you to circulate through the settlement. Depending on your current fortunes,



interests, or proclivities, this can range from begging in the streets to riotous carousing. At the end of 1 hour, you gain knowledge of up to three facts of your choice about any of the following subjects as they relate to the settlement::

- major criminal organizations and cult activities
- significant underground tunnels or architecture
- popular religious groups and places of worship
- powerful figures in government and commerce
- individuals who inspire great awe or fear (such as archmages or legendary warriors)
- basic demographics of the population (percentage of humans and other races, etc.)
- rumors of monsters dwelling in the settlement or nearby (including below it)
- any large wilderness areas inside or close to the settlement
- other settlements or cultures nearby

For example, if you entered a new city and used this ability, you could determine its most powerful thieves' guild, the locations of temples that can provide magical healing, and which graveyards people say are haunted by undead. When you return to a settlement you've already visited on a previous day, you can use this feature again, and it only takes 30 minutes due to your existing familiarity.

WAVE-RIDING SWORDSMAN STANCE

At 7th level, you can spend 1 ki point as a bonus action to enter a special martial arts stance which lasts for 1 minute. While you are in this stance, you gain the following benefits:

- Your walking speed increases by 10 feet.
- Your weapon attacks inflict an extra 1d4 damage, and count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.
- Your weapon attacks with longbows, longswords, glaives, and light melee weapons score a critical hit on a die roll of 19 or 20.
- Whenever you score a critical hit with any weapon attack, you gain 3 ki points. You retain any unspent ki points gained in this way after your Wave-Riding Swordsman Stance ends, but any unspent ki points gained from scoring critical hits while in this stance are lost the next time you finish a short or long rest.

Once you enter this stance twice, you cannot enter it again until you finish a short or long rest.

SAMURAI FIGHTING STYLE

Beginning at 10th level, you gain a third fighting style, chosen from the following options only. You can never gain the same Fighting Style more than once.

- **ARCHERY**

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

- **DAISHO**

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for your attack and damage rolls with a longsword, as long as you are only wielding it with one hand. Also, when you wield a longsword in one hand and a light weapon in the other, you can still use two-weapon fighting (even though a longsword is not light). Finally, creatures you hit with both a longsword attack and a light weapon attack in the same round make opportunity attacks at disadvantage until the beginning of your next turn.

- **DEFENSE**

While you are wearing armor you gain a +1 bonus to AC.

- **DUELING**

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

- **GREAT WEAPON FIGHTING**

When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

- **MOBILITY**

When you are not using a shield or wearing any kind of heavy armor, you receive a +1 bonus to AC, and you gain a swimming speed and climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

- **MOUNTED**

When mounted, if you inflict damage with a successful weapon attack on an unmounted creature smaller than your mount, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against you or your mount for the rest of your turn, and you can re-roll any weapon damage die that rolls a 1. You must use the new roll.

- **PROTECTION**

When a creature you can see attacks a target other than you that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. You must be wielding a shield.

- **TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING**

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

PERFECTED STRIKE

At 15th level, when you miss with a weapon attack roll using a longsword, shortsword, longbow, or glaive, you can choose to roll it again. You must use the second roll. Once you do so, you cannot use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest. If you choose to spend 1 ki point, you can make the second roll at advantage.

NEW ROKUSHIMAN ROGUE ARCHETYPE:

SHINOBI

Many legends speak of the ninja, a warrior-spy capable of impossible feats of stealth and infiltration, but the nature and abilities of these powerful assassins are shrouded in mystery. It is difficult to separate truth from myth; some say they wield shadow magic, or that they are masters of the mysterious power of ki. Others claim descriptions of the ninja are only propaganda, stories told by those who claim to have cadres of ninja spies at their command. The multi-talented rogues who call themselves *shinobi* are happy to know that many of their own exploits—performed without any mystical abilities at all, but only discipline, patience, training, and absolute stealth—have been attributed to the mystical ninja clans of legend are dismissed as myth. Anonymity, after all, is a part of their power. The shinobi are spies, assassins, scouts, agitators, and arsonists who have arisen amid the endless, Byzantine civil war in the island empire of Rokushima Taiyoo. With the shogun dead, and his sons fighting for power, the shinobi use secrecy and stealth to act as the secret weapons of embattled provinces. They first emerged from the lower classes, training in the isolation of inaccessible mountain villages. The nobles and samurai they served found their “irregular” warfare techniques dishonorable and beneath members of higher social classes, so shinobi became indispensable.

Over time, local populations and family groups evolved into secretive clans, sworn to protect the identities of their members and never reveal their true occupations. Some shinobi clans are sworn to serve a particular noble house or daimyo, but others hire their services out, though most maintain absolute loyalty to an employer for at least the duration of their contract. Despite the opinions of the samurai class and their own inclination towards dark deeds, shinobi have a code of honor all their own. Any shinobi risks offending their clan leaders if they break their code of secrecy, loyalty, and unwavering commitment to their mission. Such transgressions carry a sentence of death.

SHINOBI TECHNIQUES

At 3rd level, when you choose this archetype, you have completed your training in a number of secret espionage and martial arts techniques. You learn a number of distinct *shinobi techniques* (which are described under “Shinobi Techniques” at the end of



this archetype description), all fueled by special dice called *discipline dice*, described below.

Shinobi Techniques. You learn three shinobi techniques, one of which must require a **shuriken pack** (described in the New Rokushman Equipment rules section), with the other two being any you choose. Many shinobi techniques enhance an attack in some way, but you can only use one shinobi technique per attack. You learn two additional shinobi techniques of your choice at 7th level, 10th level, and 15th level. Whenever you learn new shinobi techniques, you can also replace one shinobi technique you already know with a different one.

Discipline Dice. You have two *discipline dice*, which are d8s. A discipline die is expended when you use it. You regain all of your expended discipline dice when you finish a long or short rest. Your discipline dice become more potent as you gain levels: When you reach 11th level, they become d10s instead of d8s. When you reach 19th level, they become d12s.

Saving Throws. Some of your maneuvers require your target to make a saving throw to resist the maneuver’s effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Maneuver save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity or Wisdom modifier (your choice)

Spell Attack. Some of your shinobi techniques may allow you to cast the equivalent of a spell, which may require you to make a spell attack. Your attack bonus with such a spell attack equals your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity or Wisdom modifier (your choice).

SWIFT STRIKING SHADOW

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, whenever you aren’t wearing armor or wielding a shield, you gain the following benefits:

- Your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier;
- You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes;

- You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks while you are climbing or swimming;
- Your speed increases by 5 feet.

The bonus to your speed increases as you gain rogue levels, increasing to +10ft. at 9th level and +15 ft. at 15th level. At 11th level, you also gain the ability to move along vertical surfaces and across liquids on your turn without falling during the move.

Shinobi vs. Ninja

There are a lot of versions of the D&D ninja out there, but probably the best one is simply a monk who follows the monastic tradition of the Way of Shadow. So why include this class archetype for rogues?

The simple answer is that the pop culture notion of the ninja is so huge that it contains multitudes, from the various recent portrayals of the historical figure Hattori Hanzo (the best perhaps being in the Japanese *Shadow Warriors*, where he was portrayed by the immortal Sonny Chiba, who thematically reprised the role in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* films) to anime like *Ninja Scroll* and *Naruto* and video games like *Tenchu Stealth Assassin*, and even westernized portrayals like Snake Eyes and Storm Shadow from *G.I. Joe* or the bizarre "Caucasian master of ninjutsu" genre of 80's and 90's American film. There is a pretty big split between ninjas shown with full magical or mystical powers and less fantastic portrayals that basically show them as the historical Japanese equivalent of modern special forces. Most D&D versions of this archetypal idea, including the original *Oriental Adventures*, have focused on the magic-using ninja, as is appropriate for a fantasy game.

However, the shinobi is an alternative that aims for a slightly more historical yet still fantastical take, focusing on the humble origins of these legendary warriors, while still including the best-loved pop culture elements (such as their legendary mastery of shuriken, which in some versions they practically fire like automatic weapons, represented here by powers that make a hail of throwing stars the equivalent of spells like *magic missile*).

It is the perspective of this document that most campaigns that include any version of this character type will have room for both takes on the concept. There is plenty of room for these two approaches in the same game, and neither displaces the other. In fact, a party including both a Shinobi rogue and a Way of the Shadow monk would give D&D adventures a great thematic tone, and multiclass combo of the two can be a very effective character in its own right. A fun campaign idea could be a whole party who serve a ninja/shinobi clan, with a Shinobi rogue, a Way of the Shadow monk, and other thematic classes, such as a Trickery domain cleric, a Shugyosha fighter, a stealth-focused ranger, and/or an Illusionist wizard. In conclusion, feel free to use your favorite D&D version of the ninja, monk or otherwise, right alongside this rogue archetype, and see what interesting synergies and tensions emerge in play. (*In the real world, "shinobi" and "ninja" are just two ways of saying the exact same original Japanese word.*)

SHURIKENJUTSU

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency with shuriken (a new weapon introduced in this document), and can use shuriken packs with proficiency as well. A shuriken pack is a large quantity of throwing stars which you use as ammunition for your attacks. Certain shinobi techniques require a shuriken pack.

ADVANCED SHINOBI TECHNIQUE

At 9th level, when you spend a discipline die for any technique that does not require a shuriken pack, you can choose to automatically regain that discipline die as if it had never been spent. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again. At 15th level, you can use this feature twice, regaining all expended uses when you finish a short or long rest.

UNARMORED DEFENSE

Starting at 13th level, when you aren't wearing armor or wielding a shield, your AC equals either 13 + your Dexterity modifier or 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Wisdom modifier, whichever is higher.

JŌNIN

At 13th level, you gain another discipline die. At 16th level, you gain one more.

ULTIMATE SCOUT

At 17th level, you gain the ranger's Natural Explorer class feature, with the following alteration: You choose one additional favored terrain type at 19th level. In addition, you can accurately recall anything you have seen or heard within the past 72 hours.

UNYIELDING DISCIPLINE

Beginning at 17th level, when you roll initiative and have no discipline dice remaining, you regain 1 discipline die.

Shinobi Techniques

The shinobi techniques are presented in alphabetical order. If a shinobi technique is marked with an asterisk ("*"), it requires a shuriken pack (as described under *Shurikenjutsu*, above).

Billowing Smoke Meditation. On your turn, if you are not wearing armor or wielding a shield, you can spend a discipline die to add +1 to your AC, gain a climbing and swimming speed equal to your base walking speed, and double your jump distance. These benefits last for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus plus the number rolled on your discipline die.

Docile Prisoner Method. You can spend a discipline die to utterly intimidate an enemy you could have killed. This works exactly as if you had cast the *dread mercy* spell (a new spell included in this document) using a 2nd level spell slot. The saving throw is made against your shinobi technique DC. However, this is not a magical effect, the

target subtracts your discipline die roll from its saving throw, and the duration is changed to a number of minutes equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1).

Ebon Wind Meditation. When you are standing absolutely still in an area that is either heavily obscured or in dim light, you can spend a discipline die as an action to gain advantage on all Dexterity checks and Charisma (Deception) checks. This benefit lasts for a number of rounds equal to the number rolled on your discipline die plus your proficiency bonus.

Empty Hand Strike. You can use the bonus action provided by your Cunning Action to expend a discipline die and make an unarmed attack. If an unarmed attack made with this ability hits, add the discipline die to your damage, and the target must make a Dexterity save against your shinobi technique saving throw DC or be knocked prone. When you reach 7th level, using this ability allows you to make two unarmed attacks as part of the same bonus action, instead of just one.

Falling Leaf Kata. When you would take falling damage, you can spend a discipline die as a reaction to reduce that damage. Roll your discipline die twice and add your rogue level, then reduce the falling damage you take by the total.

Harrying Steel. When you hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack, you can spend a discipline die to disrupt that opponent's reflexes in combat. You add the discipline die to the attack's damage roll, and the target cannot take reactions until the end of your next turn.

Improvised Poison. You can spend a discipline die to produce an improvised poison from scavenged substances around you. This works exactly as if you had cast the *create poison* spell (a new spell included in this document) using a 1st level spell slot. The saving throw is made against your shinobi technique DC. However, this is not a magical effect. Instead of inflicting the damage described in the spell, the poison inflicts damage equal to your rogue level plus the number rolled on your discipline die.

***Shuriken Salvo.** Using the unique abilities afforded by your Shurikenjutsu feature, you hurl so many throwing stars at once that they cannot be avoided. As an action, you can spend a discipline die to throw two salvos of shuriken. Each salvo automatically hits a creature of your choice that you can see within 50 ft., without an attack roll, as long as they are not behind full cover. A salvo deals piercing damage to its target equal to your discipline die roll (you only roll once, and apply the same result to all salvos). The salvos all strike simultaneously, and you can choose whether they all hit one target or different ones. The number of salvos you can throw at once with this ability increases as you go up in levels. When you reach 7th level, you can throw three salvos; at 11th level, you can throw four salvos; at 17th level, five salvos. This is not considered an attack, and you cannot apply sneak attack damage or poison to it.

Each time you use this ability, if your discipline die rolls a 1, your shuriken pack gains the deficient property until you obtain a new one. If you roll a 1 or a 2 on your discipline die with this ability when your shuriken pack is already deficient, the pack is expended and you can no

longer use this or any other abilities that require a shuriken pack until you obtain another one.

Iron Devotion Meditation. As an action, you can spend a discipline die and gain temporary hit points equal to your discipline die roll plus your rogue level.

***Poisonous Vapor Shuriken.** If you have an unexpended shuriken pack equipped, you can spend a discipline die to hurl a special shuriken designed to shatter on impact and release a cloud of poison. This works exactly as if you had cast the *shadow missile* spell (a new spell included in this document) using a 1st level spell slot. The saving throw is made against your shinobi technique DC. However, this is not a magical effect, and it does not inflict the necrotic damage described in the spell. Instead, replace the listed necrotic damage with poison damage equal to your rogue level plus the number rolled on your discipline die. As you gain levels, the poison damage from this shinobi technique increases. When you reach 7th level, you add an additional 1d6 poison damage; at 11th level, you add an additional 2d6; at 17th level, you add an additional 3d6. Each time you use this ability, if your discipline die rolls a 1, your shuriken pack gains the deficient property until you obtain a new one. If you roll a 1 or a 2 on your discipline die with this ability when your shuriken pack is already deficient, the pack is expended and you can no longer use this or any other abilities that require a shuriken pack until you obtain an unexpended one.

Smoke Pellet. As an action, you spend a discipline die to throw a special pellet you had hidden on your person and create a sphere of black smoke centered on yourself. The radius of this sphere is 5 times your rogue level in feet. It spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts for a number of rounds equal to your discipline die roll, or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it.

***Storm of Falling Stars.** Using the unique abilities afforded by your Shurikenjutsu feature, you can fill an area with a hurricane of throwing stars. As an action, you can spend a discipline die to throw a seemingly endless spray of shuriken over a 5 by 20 ft. line. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw against your shinobi technique DC. On a failed save, a creature is knocked prone, and it takes piercing damage equal to your discipline die roll plus your rogue level.

As you gain levels, the damage from this shinobi technique increases. When you reach 7th level, you add an additional 1d6 piercing damage; at 11th level, you add an additional 2d6; at 17th level, you add an additional 3d6. This is not considered an attack, and you cannot apply sneak attack damage or poison to it.

Each time you use this ability, if your discipline die rolls a 1, your shuriken pack gains the deficient property until you obtain a new one. If you roll a 1 or a 2 on your discipline die with this ability when your shuriken pack is already deficient, the pack is expended and you can no longer use this or any other abilities that require a shuriken pack until you obtain an unexpended one.

Shot from the Void. When you make a ranged weapon attack while hiding, you can expend one discipline die to

increase the attack's range and accuracy. You add the number rolled on the discipline die to your attack roll, and the attack's range is increased by a number of feet equal to 10 times your rogue level.

Too Loyal to Fail. When you fail a saving throw against an effect that would cause you to become charmed, exhausted, frightened, restrained, or unconscious, you can spend a discipline die as a reaction to re-roll that saving throw and add your discipline die roll as a bonus. You must use the results of this second roll.

***Unliving Target Method.** As an action, you can spend a discipline die to make a very precise shuriken attack against an object that is not being worn or carried. You make an attack roll to hit the object as if you were making a weapon attack with a simple ranged weapon, adding the number rolled on your discipline die to your attack roll. If you hit the object, you choose one of the following effects:

- If the object is light enough (weighing a number of pounds (lbs.) equal to or less than twice your rogue level), it flies in a straight line up to 30 feet in a direction you choose before falling to the ground, stopping early if it impacts against a solid surface. If the object would strike a creature, that creature must make a Dexterity saving throw against your technique DC. On a failed save, the object strikes the target and stops moving. In either case, both the object and the creature or solid surface it impacts against take bludgeoning damage equal to your discipline die roll plus your sneak attack damage. This counts as your use of your sneak attack damage for this round. If the object is not light enough (as described above), it merely takes damage equal to your discipline die roll plus your rogue level. If you are hidden when you make an attack with this ability, the attack does not reveal your position.
- You can choose to inflict piercing damage equal to your discipline die roll plus your sneak attack damage. This counts as your use of your sneak attack damage for this round. If the object is reduced to zero hit points, you can choose to try to inflict damage on those around it. If you choose this effect, either the object or the throwing stars that struck it (whichever makes more sense given the nature of the object) shatter explosively. All creatures within 5 feet of the object must make a Dexterity saving throw against your technique DC or take piercing damage equal to half the damage that was suffered by the object.

Each time you use this ability, if your discipline die rolls a 1, your shuriken pack gains the deficient property until you obtain a new one. If you roll a 1 or a 2 on your discipline die with this ability when your shuriken pack is already deficient, the pack is expended and you can no longer use this or any other abilities that require a shuriken pack until you obtain an unexpended one.

Vanishing Mist Meditation. When you are hit by an attack, you can spend a discipline die as a reaction and add it to your Armor Class against that attack. If the attack still hits, you take half damage from it.

NEW ROKUSHIMAN EQUIPMENT RULES

NEW WEAPON PROPERTIES

Some new weapons introduced in this section have new properties: ancestral, deficient, ensnaring, and guarded. The rules on these weapon properties are as follows:

Ancestral. An ancestral weapon is masterfully forged to create a preternaturally sharp edge, at the cost of being more delicate in some ways than a normal weapon of its kind. When you inflict damage with an ancestral weapon, you inflict extra damage equal to half your proficiency bonus with that weapon (rounded down), but if you roll a 1 on the die when you attack with it, the ancestral weapon gains the *deficient* property (described below) until it is repaired for one-fifth of its purchase price.

Deficient. Less of a quality than a condition, this indicates the weapon (or ammunition) is on the verge of no longer being usable, either because it is near the point of breaking (if it is a weapon) or because it is about to run out (if it is ammunition). If you roll a 1 or a 2 on an attack roll with this weapon or ammunition, it is no longer usable, and must be either replaced or repaired (for the same price as replacing it). Slashing or piercing martial weapons can be made with the ancestral quality, multiplying their normal purchase price by 10.

Ensnaring. You can voluntarily reduce this weapon's damage in an attempt to trip or disarm the opponent. A damage value in parentheses appears with the property—this is the reduced damage the weapon inflicts when you use this property. When you choose to use the weapon in this way, the creature that takes the reduced damage when you hit it must also roll a Dexterity saving throw if it is a Large or smaller creature (if the creature is larger than you, it can choose to roll a Strength save instead). If it fails, it falls prone or drops an object of your choice that it is holding. The DC for this saving throw is equal to 11 + your proficiency bonus. If you are not proficient with this weapon, you cannot use this property.

Guarded. This weapon is attached to you in some way or has a metal guard or basket over the handle, making it hard to disarm. When you fail a saving throw against an effect that would cause you to drop this weapon, you can use your reaction to make an attack roll with this weapon against the same saving throw DC. If you succeed, no actual attack takes

place, but you do not drop the weapon (though any other effects of having failed the initial saving throw happen normally).

WEAPON PROPERTIES

The DM may decide to allow these properties to apply to some existing weapons as well. If the DM chooses to do so, the weapons listed on the New Weapons Properties Table, below, replace their existing listings of properties with the new text in the table. Weapons not listed retain their existing properties.

NEW WEAPON PROPERTIES TABLE

Weapon	New Properties Listing
Flail	Ensnaring (1d4)
Lance	Guarded, special
Rapier	Finesse, guarded
Scimitar	Finesse, guarded, light
Sickle	Ensnaring (1), light
Trident	Ensnaring (1d4), thrown (range 20/60), versatile (1d8)
War pick	Ensnaring (1d4)
Whip	Finesse, ensnaring (1), reach

In addition, longswords and shortswords can be purchased with the guarded property as well, by adding an additional 15 gp to their purchase price. Morningstars can be purchased with the ensnaring (1d4) property by adding 5 gp to their purchase price.

Samurai Weapons

Many of the traditional weapons a samurai is expected to carry are best expressed as ancestral versions of weapons already appearing in the D&D rules. The following table shows which existing weapons have an ancestral version which is among the preferred weapons of a samurai.

ANCESTRAL WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon Name	Existing Weapon	Added Quality	Increased Purchase Price
Katana	Longsword	Ancestral	100 gp
Katate-uchi	Shortsword	Ancestral	75 gp
Nagamaki	Glaive	Ancestral	125 gp
No-dachi	Greatsword	Ancestral	175 gp
Wakizashi	Scimitar	Ancestral	90 gp

NEW WEAPONS

SIMPLE MELEE WEAPONS

Razor Claw

Four or five curved blades are attached to a glove, strap, or metal bar, allowing the wielder to place the blades securely atop or between their knuckles. Various versions of this weapon exist, often with nicknames like “tiger claws” or “bear claws.”

Damage: 1d4 slashing

Properties: Finesse, light, special

Cost: 3 gp

Weight: 1lb.

Special: A wielder armed with this weapon can choose to make an unarmed strike instead of a weapon attack; if they do so, the unarmed strike inflicts slashing damage instead of bludgeoning. If a creature would drop this weapon, they can use their reaction to not drop it.

MARTIAL RANGED WEAPONS

Shuriken

Also called throwing stars, these small flat pieces of metal have sharp edges and a variable number of symmetrical points.

Damage: 1d4 piercing

Properties: Finesse, light, thrown (20/60), special

Cost: 5 cp

Weight: ¼ lb.

Special: Normally, a single shuriken does not require ammunition, but if you have a shuriken pack (see Ammunition, below), you can throw as many shuriken as your abilities allow, or even multiple shuriken at once to inflict increased damage, as detailed under the shuriken pack description.

MARTIAL MELEE WEAPONS

Fighting Fan

Disguised as a mere courtier’s fan, this weapon has a metal frame and spines ending in razor-sharp points. In addition to the utility of its disguise, it can be distracting in close range conflict.

Damage: 1d4 slashing

Properties: Finesse, light, special

Cost: 30 gp

Weight: 1 lb.

Special: If a creature rolls to search you for hidden weapons and succeeds, it must make a second roll at disadvantage. If the creature fails, it does not identify this fan as being a weapon. When you have a fighting fan in one hand and a light or finesse weapon in the other, you can use your bonus action to distract your opponent with the fan, gaining advantage on the next attack you make with the other weapon.

Note: Any character proficient with the short sword is also proficient with this weapon.

Hook Sword

The blade of this short sword curves into a hook at the end, and a sharp metal crescent guards the wielder’s hand. These weapons are made in pairs, intended to be wielded together.

Damage: 1d6 slashing

Properties: Ensnaring (1d4), finesse, light, special

Cost: 25 gp

Weight: 3 lbs.

Special: When you have a hook sword in each hand, you can use your bonus action to attach them to each other by their hooks, effectively holding both swords in this same hand as one weapon. When you use the weapon in this way, it gains the reach and heavy properties, and loses the light property.

Kusari-Gama

This weapon is actually two weapons—the first a large sickle, the second a weighted metal ball or club—linked together by a long chain of approximately 10 feet.

Damage: 1d10 (special)

Properties: Ensnaring (1d6), finesse, heavy, reach, two-handed, special

Cost: 15 gp

Weight: 4 lbs.

Special: When the wielder inflicts damage with this weapon, they choose whether it is bludgeoning or slashing.

Nunchaku

This is a small flail made up of two wooden or metal clubs linked by a short length of chain or rope.

Damage: 1d6 bludgeoning

Properties: Finesse, light, special

Cost: 5 gp

Weight: 2 lbs.

Special: The nunchaku is a monk weapon (as defined in the monk's class features).

Note: Any character proficient with the short sword is also proficient with this weapon.

Sectioned Staff

This weapon is the length of a larger polearm, but it is a kind of flail weapon that consists of two or three shorter staffs linked to each other by a cord or metal rings. The staffs can be made of metal or wood. Some martial artists are skilled enough to wield a version of this weapon with even more sections, with some monks using as many as seven.

Damage: 1d10 bludgeoning

Cost: 15 gp

Weight: 5 lbs.

Properties: Finesse, reach, two-handed, ensnaring (1d6)

OTHER NEW EQUIPMENT

AMMUNITION

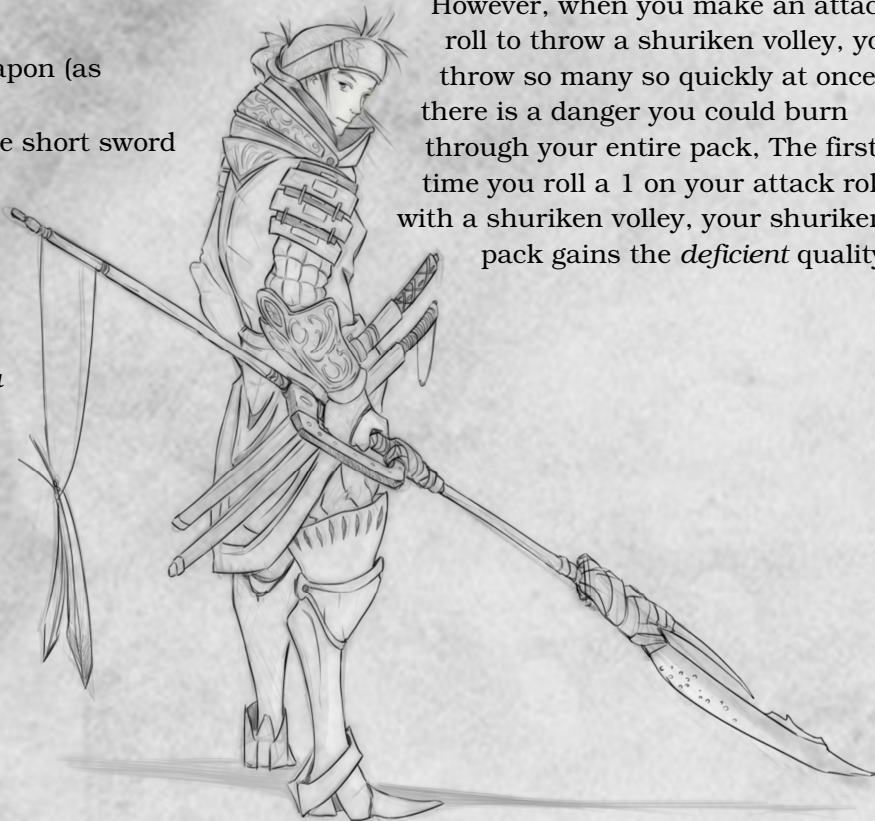
Shuriken Pack

Cost: 5 gp

Weight: 5 lbs.

This a pack filled with an indeterminate number of shuriken that acts as ammunition for throwing multiple shuriken at once. It can be purchased anywhere you can purchase arrows or darts. As long as you have a shuriken pack, you can throw shuriken as many times as you like, and you do not track your use of ammunition except as described here or in certain class features. It is assumed you quickly recover the majority of your thrown shuriken immediately after any battle. A medium creature can only carry one usable shuriken pack at a time. When you have a shuriken pack, you can always throw a single shuriken, using the information in the Shuriken weapon description, above. However, if you are proficient with shuriken, you can also use your pack to throw multiple shuriken at once, in what is called a *shuriken volley*. When you choose this option, the shuriken volley counts as a single weapon attack, and you inflict a total of 1d8 piercing damage (instead of the normal 1d4 for throwing a single shuriken). You must have a free hand and an equipped shuriken pack to make this attack. You can apply poison to this attack beforehand, the same way you apply it to a single weapon.

However, when you make an attack roll to throw a shuriken volley, you throw so many so quickly at once that there is a danger you could burn through your entire pack. The first time you roll a 1 on your attack roll with a shuriken volley, your shuriken pack gains the *deficient* quality.



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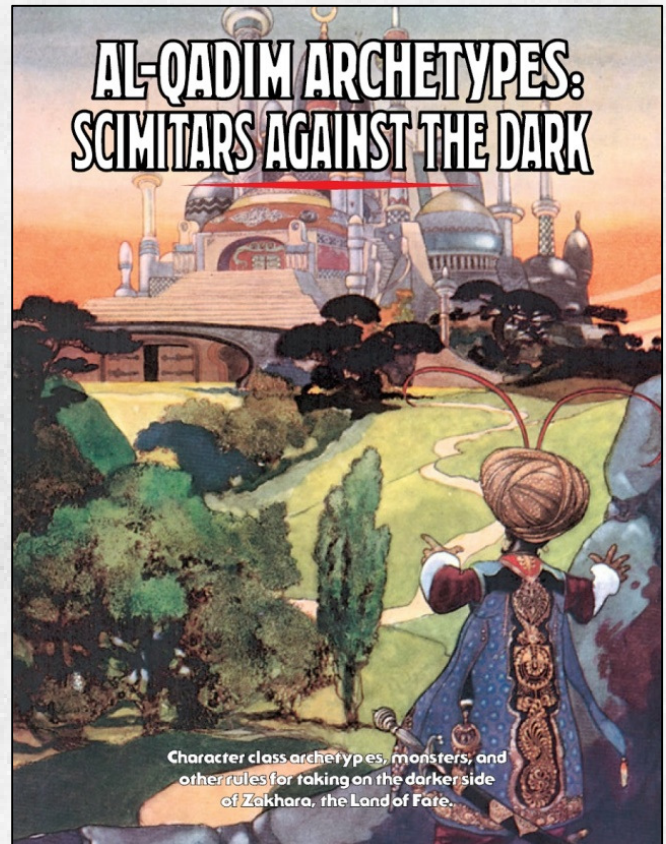
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