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DRAGON

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Character Themes

Heroes of Nature and Lore

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Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article discusses how to use character themes in both character creation and the makeup of a party, and it goes on to detail four character themes: the alchemist, the animal master, the order adept, and the wizard's apprentice.

Character Themes

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, you might be a human wizard who chooses the alchemist theme, but "human alchemist" might mean many different things. You might live in a village and sell useful items to the locals for use in their everyday needs. Perhaps you live in a town among other wizards and want to travel to see more of the world. Or perhaps you roam the forest or swamp, protecting its creatures from external threats with your items because you consider the natural balance of the area to be sacred. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

A theme can embrace characters of different classes. For example, many alchemist characters are wizards, but a rogue with a particular interest in providing his or her own means of disappearing quickly might pick up a few formulas and learn how

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to make them. A wizard's apprentice might work with the arcane arts, but he or she doesn't have to be a wizard—a druid with this theme might have started out learning from a wizard and instead decided to follow a different path. A few themes are narrow enough to be limited to certain classes or races—for example, a theme intended for characters who use the arcane power source, or a theme for dwarf characters—but most themes are open to any character.

Choosing a Theme

A character can have only one theme, which you can choose when you create your character. The theme you select grants the benefits described below. You don't have to select a character theme if you don't want to. Also, you can hold off on selecting a theme, but most themes represent your unique background or origin as an adventurer, and they work well for 1st-level adventurers.

Starting Feature: Each theme includes a feature that you gain when you select the theme during character creation.

Additional Features: Most themes offer additional features at levels 5 and 10. You gain an additional feature automatically when you reach the appropriate level—it doesn't replace any of your class features.

Optional Powers: Most of these themes include a number of powers that you add to the ones from which you can choose from your class when you reach the appropriate level. For example, if you're a 6th-level fighter, you can choose a 6th-level fighter utility power or a 6th-level utility power from your theme.

Using Themes to Create Characters

Themes offer a wide array of character creation tools. You might choose a class that is identified strongly with the theme already so that you can reinforce your character's role with the powers that are available. For example, the wizard's apprentice offers theme powers that work well for controller characters, so if you're playing a wizard, the wizard's apprentice theme lets you put a new spin on your role.

You can also use a theme to take your character in a new direction, adopting a story role your class otherwise wouldn't provide. For example, a fighter who chooses the animal master theme can gain some useful striker powers. This sort of combination is a natural tool for building the story of your character: Why would an animal master be a fighter? Is he or she a follower of a deity that defends nature and so he or she chooses to have an animal help achieve specific goals? A warrior who loves to distract his or her opponents in combat by using a creature? Taking a theme that isn't an obvious fit can offer all sorts of interesting story-building possibilities for your character.

Perhaps the best way to think of your character's theme is this: What were you immediately before you became an adventurer? How would you describe yourself to someone else in the game world? Even a class name isn't necessarily an obvious part of a character's identity; after all, if you see a highly skilled sword-wielder in leather armor, that person might be a fighter, a rogue, a ranger, or a paladin. A theme, on the other hand, can be something that is obvious to the character and to everyone else, too. If you create alchemical items, you're an alchemist. If you're supporting the goals of a specific order, you might be an order adept. In other words, your class is the set of talents you bring to your theme, and your theme is the story behind your class.

Themes in the Party

Think about how your character's theme might interact with the themes that the other players chose. Discuss this with them and the DM in the same way that you might talk about what class or role each person is playing in the party. The following ideas might help to create a story of how your characters come to know one another.

Similar Circles: Some themes can make characters into natural allies—or at least acquaintances—when the campaign starts. For example, the wizard's apprentice and order adept themes can both be used for members of an arcane guild, and such characters might well have known one another before they started adventuring.

Similar Causes: Many character themes can have similar goals—at least at first. The alchemist might decide with the animal master that they need to seek out a rare plant. Though characters with those themes might not know each other before they started adventuring, they often have a similar outlook.

Different Desires: Characters who choose themes with different goals can find common purpose despite their divergent outlooks. These characters can create a bond based on a bargain or an oath to aid one another in their separate quests.

All for One: If more than one player likes the same theme, having multiple characters choose it can be a great deal of fun. Such characters might be old friends, beloved family members, or rivals who have

been thrown together against their will or knowledge. The characters might have worked together as a team before meeting up at the start of the campaign.

If you choose this approach, feel free to adjust the details of a theme's backstory. For example, it likely makes sense for two characters of the order adept theme to come from different orders.

Changing Themes

Your character might discover a different calling at some point in his or her career and wish to change themes. For example, your character might begin a career as a wizard's apprentice, but after a few levels, your group succeeds in overthrowing the evil leader of a group of wizards and warlocks. After your group has dealt with the threat, your character is invited to join an arcane order. You could keep your wizard's apprentice theme, reflecting the start of your adventuring career, or you might choose to take order adept as your new theme as you start learning more about your chosen subject.

If you have no powers or feats that use your theme as a prerequisite, you can retrain your theme choice when you gain a level. If you have a feat or a power that requires your existing theme, you must first retrain those to choices that don't have your theme as a prerequisite. Then you can change your theme by retraining at the next opportunity.

Making Fun Choices

As you roleplay your character's theme, avoid making choices that you think might annoy other players or make them uncomfortable. For example, your character might be a wizard's apprentice who, because of a sheltered upbringing in a small village, believes tieflings to be a wholly evil race. However, if you use that mindset as an excuse to attack your friend's tiefling character, it's not likely to make for a good play session. If everyone else in the group seems okay with a tiefling in their midst, your character is probably perplexed by what it means. Even if your character encountered your friend's tiefling character alone, choosing to watch and follow that tiefling seems a wiser decision than attacking on sight. Then, after you and your friend's character get to know one another, it will make sense that they become allies (if not friends).

Regardless of what makes sense for roleplaying, sometimes it should take a back seat to what would be fun for everyone. When you're confronted with a situation in which you think your character should do something that you know the other characters will not like, think about how those characters' players might react. Sometimes the mischievous, improper, or stupid thing you think your character should do adds to the fun of everyone at the table. Sometimes such an action only makes you the center of attention at the expense of making the game less fun for everyone else. Make sure you know the difference.

Alchemist

Masters of a rare and ancient discipline, alchemists study the properties of mundane and magical elements. They are keen observers of the physical world, and many alchemists have extensive interests in fields of knowledge ranging from astronomy to zoology.

Although many wizards find the study of alchemy rewarding, not all alchemists are wizards. Alchemy does not require the casting of spells or the use of arcane power; the reagents provide all the magic that is necessary to create alchemical effects. Anybody who has a reliable formula, the necessary ingredients, and the specialized knowledge to follow exacting instructions precisely can create alchemical substances and devices. For example, fighters and paladins sometimes study alchemy for its usefulness in siegecraft and military engineering, and rogues find many uses for smoke bombs, lock-eating acids, and sleeping powders.

Experiment and experience are the alchemist's path to understanding, and the vast majority of alchemists maintain a large laboratory stocked with a huge variety of tools and reagents. Alchemical laboratories are expensive, so most alchemists seek out a wealthy sponsor, such as a royal patron, or a civic commission. In some lands, sponsorship of a famous alchemist is a point of great pride, and rival cities or courts seek to entice alchemists of renown to establish workshops in the realm. Alchemists who have no royal patrons support their studies and experiments by producing mixtures that are useful to other artisans, or substances that have military (or criminal) applications. Unsponsored alchemists have less time or fewer resources available for pure experimentation, but they're also not hampered by meddling or inconvenient requests from the lord or lady holding the purse strings.

Creating an Alchemist

Adventuring alchemists have little opportunity to establish large laboratories or conduct lengthy, involved experiments. However, they have a great advantage over alchemists who are settled in workshops: They frequently encounter rare and unusual materials that more sedentary alchemists have a hard time coming by, so they can create potent mixtures and substances with much smaller samples and simpler processes than alchemists who rely on more mundane materials. Armed with a "traveling workshop"—a large case filled with small samples of useful reagents, portable instruments, and working notes—an adventuring alchemist can prepare almost anything an ordinary alchemist might brew up in a full-sized workshop. Adventuring alchemists naturally keep their eyes open for interesting materials, and they constantly restock their cases with quick scrapings or samples from the things they see as they go about their explorations.

Alchemy Case

Price: 40 gp
Weight: 20 lb.
This sturdy leather valise includes well-packed glassware, a burner, a mortar and pestle, and dozens of jars of common alchemical reagents. You need an alchemy case, or access to an alchemical workshop, to use alchemist powers.

To make use of the optional powers of this theme, you must have an alchemy case.

Starting Feature

The Alchemist feat allows you to create alchemical items such as alchemist's fire, antivenom, smokesticks, and thunderstones (all detailed in *Adventurer's Vault*) if you know the necessary formula for the item in question. Having the alchemist theme enables you to create a single use of an alchemical item from materials you currently have on hand. Normally, creating an alchemical item requires costly material components, but you can produce a single item at a time at no cost.

Benefit: You gain the Alchemist feat as a bonus feat. You know the formula for a particular 1st-level alchemical item (such as alchemist's fire). You can use this formula without needing training in any skill associated with it.

At the end of a short rest, you can create one alchemical item of your level or lower at no cost. You must know the formula for the item you create. You can have only one such item prepared at a time.

Alchemist

Through study and experimentation, you have unlocked alchemical secrets and are now equipped to delve into more.

Benefit: You can make alchemical items of your level or lower. You must have the correct formula and training in an appropriate skill.

Special: If you receive the Ritual Caster feat as a class feature, you can take the Alchemist feat instead.

Alchemist's Fire Level 1+ Common

When shattered, this flask fills an area with alchemical flame.

Lvl 1	20 gp	Lvl 16	1,800 gp
Lvl 6	75 gp	Lvl 21	9,000 gp
Lvl 11	350 gp	Lvl 26	45,000 gp

Alchemical Item

Power (Consumable ✦ Fire): Standard Action. Make an attack: Area burst 1 within 10; +4 vs. Reflex; on a hit, deal 1d6 fire damage; on a miss, deal half damage.

Level 6: +9 vs. Reflex, 2d6 fire damage.
Level 11: +14 vs. Reflex, 3d6 fire damage.
Level 16: +19 vs. Reflex, 3d6 fire damage.
Level 21: +24 vs. Reflex, 4d6 fire damage.
Level 26: +29 vs. Reflex, 4d6 fire damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Puttering around the workshop and experimenting with interesting reagents has paid off with hard-won knowledge of another alchemical formula.

Benefit: You learn one alchemical formula of your level or lower.

Level 10 Feature

Through experience, you have perfected your alchemical formulas. You can create especially potent mixtures and items.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls with alchemical items you create. Also, you learn one new alchemical formula of your level or lower.

Optional Powers

As you adventure, your repertoire of recipes grows, and you learn better ways to use your formulas. Your travels through the world and your interactions with alchemists and hedge wizards give you access to new reagents, which prove handy when trying to survive encounters with deadly monsters.

Level 2 Utility Power

Aqua regia is the famous "royal water" of alchemy, a potent acid that can dissolve even gold and platinum. You can create a few ounces from your personal supplies to apply to a metal object such as a lock, a door hinge, or an iron bar.

Aqua Regia Alchemist Utility 2

You apply powerful acid to a metal object.

Encounter
Minor Action **Melee** 1
Requirement: You must have an alchemy case on your person.
Target: One metal object
Effect: The next creature that attempts a Thievery or Strength check to open, break, bend, or destroy the target before the end of your next turn gains a +5 power bonus to that check.

Level 6 Utility Power

You keep a simple incendiary preparation handy in case you need to slip away from trouble. With a quick flick of the wrist, you can create a thick cloud of smoke to cover your escape.

Alchemist's Escape Alchemist Utility 6

You cover your retreat with a cloud of thick red smoke.

Encounter ✦ Zone
Move Action **Close** burst 1
Requirement: You must have an alchemy case on your person.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that is heavily obscured. It lasts until the end of your next turn. In addition, you can move up to your speed, and this movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from creatures in the zone.

Level 10 Utility Power

So named because many alchemists believe that only goblins could have devised something so diabolical, goblin oil is a slick, colorless lubricant. A small flask tossed onto hard ground creates a patch of extremely slippery terrain, which is ideal for delaying charging foes.

Goblin Oil Alchemist Utility 10

A flask of alchemical oil makes a patch of floor almost impassable—and it burns nicely, too.

Daily ✦ Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Requirement: You must have an alchemy case on your person.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain until the end of the encounter. Any creature that enters the zone must succeed on an Acrobatics check against a DC equal to 10 + one-half your level or fall prone. Each creature that falls prone in the zone gains vulnerable 5 fire until the end of its next turn.

Animal Master

Gifted with an uncanny ability to befriend and train natural beasts, animal masters are often more at home with animals than with people. Anyone who lacks for humanoid companionship might adopt an animal as a friend and traveling companion, but animal masters aren't just collectors of pets—they're expert trainers and handlers who establish practical partnerships with their animal companions. Animals possess crucial senses and abilities that humans (and other civilized people) lack, and by working closely with a well-trained partner, animal masters gain the benefit of these senses and talents too.

Although some who work with animals train large, ferocious creatures as battle companions, most animal masters work with common animals that are easily domesticated. Their companions are friendly toward or tolerate humans, and they have much more ability to learn complicated tricks and behaviors than truly wild animals do. Heroes interested in keeping panthers, bears, wolves, or other large carnivores to tear their foes to pieces belong in the druid or ranger classes, where they can learn the appropriate powers and acquire dangerous wild beasts to aid them in battle.

Creating an Animal Master

Animal masters include members of most classes. Fighters, paladins, and other warriors find that the keen senses of loyal animals are very useful for avoiding ambushes and keeping watch over camp at night. Other adventurers keep animals for less noble purposes; some rogues train small, clever animals as effective burglars or thieves. However, rangers are the most common animal masters. These individuals are often loners, and they have a knack for befriending all sorts of nondangerous animals.

Starting Feature

The internal quality that makes you an animal master is your ability to develop and maintain a rapport with any animal you choose. It's the external manifestation of that ability that those around you see. You are the owner of a highly trained animal minion, a loyal companion and ally that uses its abilities to aid you.

Your animal minion is not an effective combatant by itself. However, you can direct it to leap into the fray briefly—the sudden stab of a beak toward a foe's face or sharp teeth nipping at an enemy's heels can be a helpful distraction when you're closely pressed, and as long as your animal friend doesn't linger after its surprise attack, it can retreat to safety without harm.

Benefit: Choose one of the five animals described below—cat, dog, hawk, monkey, or raven—to be your animal minion. This creature accompanies you for as long as it lives. The animal doesn't have a normal complement of actions, but it can take a move action when you take one. If it has a power, it can use it only on your turn. (With your DM's consent, you can substitute any similar creature for these choices; for example, an otter would be much like a cat with a skill bonus for swimming instead of climbing and jumping, and a badger is pretty close to a small dog in size and abilities.)

In addition, you gain the *distracting attack* power.

Distracting Attack	Animal Master Attack
At your command, your animal friend darts forward to bite, rake, or peck at your foe.	
Encounter ✦ **Martial**	
Minor Action **Close** burst 5	
Requirement: Your animal minion must be within 5 squares of you.	
Target: One enemy in the burst	
Effect: You gain combat advantage against the target until the end of your turn.	

Cat

Quiet and agile, cats are very good at getting into places without being noticed. Yours might be a house-cat or a small wildcat, bobcat, or lynx.

Cat	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Tiny natural beast	XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +6
AC 15, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11	**Perception** +1
Speed 7	Low-light vision
Traits	
Cat's Stealth	
While within 10 squares of the cat, the cat's master can move up to half his or her speed without incurring the -5 penalty to Stealth checks for moving more than 2 squares.	
Skills Athletics +2, Stealth +9	
Str 4 (-3) **Dex** 19 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 11 (+0) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Dog

Dogs come in a variety of breeds; yours is a mutt of about 25 to 50 pounds, or it might be a jackal, a fox, a coyote, or a wild dog. You can use your dog to follow tracks.

Dog	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Small natural beast	XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +4
AC 14, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** +7
Speed 7	
Traits	
On the Track	
While within 10 squares of the dog, the dog's master gains a +4 bonus to Perception checks made to find or follow tracks.	
Skills Perception +7	
Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Hawk

Fast, keen-eyed, and armed with sharp talons, a hawk makes an excellent scout.

Hawk	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Tiny natural beast	XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11	**Perception** +6
Speed 4, fly 7	Darkvision
Traits	
Hawk's Eye	
While within 10 squares of the hawk, the hawk's master gains a +4 bonus to Perception checks made to spot creatures.	
Skills Perception +6	
Str 4 (-3) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 11 (+0) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 9 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Monkey

This monkey is a small one of 10 pounds or less, such as a capuchin, a marmoset, or a grivet. Monkeys are excellent climbers and can manipulate objects easily.

Monkey	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Tiny natural beast	XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +5
AC 14, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11	**Perception** +0
Speed 6, climb 6	
Traits	
Nimble Fingers	
While within 10 squares of the monkey, the monkey's master can take a standard action to command it to make a Thievery check to pick a pocket as a free action, using the master's Thievery modifier with a +2 bonus.	
Skills Acrobatics +8	
Str 5 (-3) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+0)	
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 4 (-3) **Cha** 13 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Raven

Highly intelligent birds, ravens can speak in human-like voices (much as parrots do). They are also notorious thieves and have a knack for carrying off small, shiny objects.

Raven	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Tiny natural beast	XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +6
AC 15, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** +4
Speed 4, fly 8	
Traits	
Snatch and Scoot	
While within 10 squares of the raven, the raven's master can take a standard action to command it to make a Thievery check to perform sleight of hand as a free action, using the master's Thievery modifier with a +2 bonus.	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 3 (-4) **Dex** 19 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+2)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 10 (+0)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Animal Minions in Combat

Your animal minion normally stays out of the way in combat, waiting by the outskirts of the fighting. You can direct it to help you by using *distracting attack*. If you're not using your animal minion to harass a foe, you can assume that your pet is safely out of harm's way and won't attract any enemy attention. *Distracting attack* doesn't normally provoke a response against your animal, since it moves in and out of the thick of the fighting quickly.

At the DM's discretion, an animal minion can act independently; for example, if you are incapacitated, your minion might run off to bring help back to you.

Replacing Animal Minions

Until you reach 5th level, if your animal minion is killed, you can replace it after the end of your current adventure or one month, whichever comes first. (See the level 5 feature below.)

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

With a few scraps of food and an hour or two of careful effort, you can befriend a new animal in your vicinity. Most people would require weeks or months to teach the creature the tricks that you can get across in just a few hours.

Benefit: You can find and train a new animal minion at the end of any extended rest. If no suitable creatures are in your vicinity, you have to wait until you find a better spot. You can have only one animal minion at a time.

Level 10 Feature

You have a way with animals; you know when to stand your ground, when to take a knee or reach for some food, and when to back away and give a dangerous creature plenty of space.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff checks, Diplomacy checks, Insight checks, and Intimidate checks made against natural beasts.

Optional Powers

Your bond of friendship with your loyal pet provides you with a supernatural ability to communicate your wishes to it, and to understand what it tells you in return.

Level 2 Utility Power

When your animal minion wouldn't normally perform a specific action, you can cause it to do so. For example, you can direct a cat to drag a potion bottle over to a fallen ally and work the stopper out with its teeth, or instruct a dog to leap up, catch a lever in its jaws, and pull the lever down.

Timely Trick	Animal Master Utility 2
You direct your animal minion to perform a special task.	
At-Will ✦ **Primal**	
Standard Action	**Close** burst 10
Target: Your animal minion in the burst	
Effect: Your minion performs a move action and a standard action as you direct. It can accomplish any action it is physically capable of performing (with the DM's consent).	

Level 6 Utility Power

Melee combat might not be the best place for your animal minion, but sometimes your life could depend on its ability to buy you some time. Darting in from the outskirts of the battle, your brave little friend races to your side and stops an enemy from moving in to flank you.

Guard My Back — Animal Master Utility 6

Your animal leaps into battle to protect your back.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy enters a square adjacent to you where it flanks you, and your animal minion is adjacent to you.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses, and enemies do not gain combat advantage for flanking you.

Level 10 Utility Power

Giving your full concentration to your animal minion, you forge a temporary bond linking your spirits together. Where your pet roams, you roam as well, seeing through its eyes and subtly encouraging it to go where you want it to go.

Shared Sight — Animal Master Utility 10

You see through your animal minion's eyes.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Standard Action **Ranged** 1 mile
Effect: Your animal minion can take a move action and a standard action as you direct, and you share its senses until the end of your next turn. You do not need to have line of sight or line of effect to the animal to use or sustain this power.
Sustain Standard: You share your minion's senses until the end of your next turn, and it can take a move action and a standard action.

Order Adept

Great wizards are forged, not born. Natural talent and a quick mind are only the bare beginning of being able to wield the arcane arts. Achieving true mastery requires personal dedication and self-discipline, rigorous training, and access to libraries full of ancient grimoires and crumbling scrolls. In many places no special organizations or traditions exist to guide wizards and other arcane spellcasters along their way; magic-users come to their full powers and wield their spells as they see fit. But in other lands, magic is regarded as too important—or too dangerous—to be left in the hands of the self-taught dabblers. In these lands, magic is taught and practiced by members of special orders, guilds, societies, brotherhoods, and cabals who jealously guard access to their powers and seek to control their use.

Arcane orders arise for many reasons. Some exist for the purpose of preserving arcane traditions and instructing new spellcasters in arcane powers. Others organize the efforts of their members in the service of a worthy (or sometimes not so worthy) cause. For example, the Order of the Golden Flame is sworn to serve the crown of Cernall, and its members are granted extensive authority as royal officers. The Ruathar Eldoni is an order of eladrin wizards dedicated to the destruction of demons, its members traveling throughout the world and beyond it to deal with demonic incursions wherever they appear. The Emerald Orb is a meddlesome cabal whose members believe that wizards should rule over lesser mortals, and they work to gain influence over important rulers or to establish open magocracies. Some orders are large, formal hierarchies in which members are expected to obey the orders of their superiors, while

others are small fellowships in which no one member is considered superior to his or her fellows.

An arcane order might operate openly or exist as a hidden society. Members of openly active orders typically proclaim their allegiance with a highly recognizable garment or symbol; for example, wizards of the Golden Flame wear a richly embroidered yellow cloak, and members of the Ruathar Eldoni often wear a silver star-shaped brooch or clasp. Other orders favor such identifiers as tattoos, unique hairstyles or grooming, or implements of a particular design. Members of secret orders avoid any outwardly distinguishing signs, of course, but often have secret signs they can use to prove their identity to others of their group—for instance, a pendant worn under one's shirt, a ring that isn't very obvious to a casual viewer, or a brand hidden beneath robes.

Creating an Order Adept

Most order adepts are, of course, wizards or warlocks. Members of both classes rarely appear in the same order, but both have traditions of gathering in secret societies that share a common vision. In addition, many orders include individuals who supplement their studies in arcane magic with other talents. Clerics devoted to gods of magic or battle mages who find that the swords and armor of the fighter are the tools that suit them best can be members in good standing of an arcane order. Sometimes members of other classes begin their careers as aspiring wizards before abandoning their studies. For the rest of their lives they carry the memories (and perhaps disappointments) of their youthful studies, and still find uses for the little bit of arcane magic they did learn before they left or were dismissed.

Starting Feature

Each arcane brotherhood or wizardly order has its own signature battle tactic. In the case of your order, it's a spell that blisters an area with fiery pellets.

Benefit: You gain the *argent rain* power.

Argent Rain — Order Adept Attack

You bring forth a shower of blue-white molten metal droplets, searing your foes and threatening any creature that ventures into the area.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement, Zone
Standard Action — **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in the burst
Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + highest ability modifier fire damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the start of your next turn. Any creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes 5 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.
Level 11: 10 fire damage.
Level 21: 15 fire damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

No longer a novice, you are fully initiated into your order's membership. You learn the core arcane teachings of your order.

Initiated members are entitled to wear the distinctive emblems, clothing, or marks of the order; for example, robes of a particular color, a large and visible tattoo, or a unique hairstyle or beard. Your emblem or identifying mark, whatever it might be, is widely known in many lands. Allies and adversaries form first impressions of you based on their knowledge of the order you serve.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Arcana checks. If you have a spellbook, add one 2nd-level wizard utility power to it. If you don't have a spellbook, you can choose wizard utility powers of a particular level or lower when you gain or retrain utility powers of that level.

Level 10 Feature

You are elevated to your order's trusted inner circle of wise, experienced masters. As a master, you can speak for your order; your order backs you to the greatest extent possible. You are expected to be careful about taking stands or making promises that are difficult for your order to support, but your order trusts you to know when difficult tasks are necessary.

Many arcane orders are arranged as hierarchies, with adepts of greater seniority and status holding important offices in the organization. High-ranking masters often have the authority to assign missions to lesser members and review their activities. Holding an office gives you significant power to influence your order's actions, but requires your time and commitment. Many masters choose to avoid these responsibilities and prefer to busy themselves with their own affairs. Whether you agree to take a position in your order's leadership or remain a free agent is up to you.

In addition to improving your influence and responsibility within your organization, you develop greater mastery of the arcane arts as well. Your knowledge of and experience with wielding magic in battle provides you with a formidable edge in duels of magic; you can blunt enemy spells that attack your mind, avoiding or minimizing their effects.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Will. Your bonus to Arcana checks from this theme increases to +4.

Optional Powers

Arcane orders normally provide their young novices with exhaustive training in magical theory and rituals. You are familiar with a number of so-called metamagic spells—spells that modify how other spells work. With your metamagic spells, you can prolong the duration of a magical effect, strike a target at a great distances, or recall an expended spell to mind at a crucial moment.

Level 2 Utility Power

You weave a spell that helps you sustain multiple powers at once. Staying invisible a little longer or remaining aloft with magical flight might make the difference between life and death.

Extension Order Adept Utility 2

You extend the duration of a spell for just a few more seconds.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Free Action **Personal**
Effect: You sustain a power that normally requires a minor action to sustain.
Special: You can use this power as a minor action to sustain a power that normally requires a move action to sustain.

Level 6 Utility Power

You know a metamagic spell that greatly increases the range of certain spells. Any spellcaster knows that the best way to deal with a threat is from the greatest distance possible, and you are nothing if not practical in such matters.

Far Reaching Order Adept Utility 6

You extend the range of a spell beyond its normal limit.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You use a ranged or area arcane attack power.
Effect: You double the range of the triggering power. For example, a ranged 5 power becomes a ranged 10 power, and a power with a range of "area burst 2 within 10" becomes area burst 2 within 20. The area affected remains unchanged.

Level 10 Utility Power

This potent spell replenishes your ability to use a spell you have expended, giving you a second use of a spell you could otherwise cast only once per battle. With *mnemonic enhancer*, you need never fear finding yourself in the position of having just used the one spell that you now desperately need.

Mnemonic Enhancer Order Adept Utility 10

You recall to mind a spell you've already used in this battle.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**
Requirement: You must have expended all your arcane encounter attack powers.
Effect: You regain your lowest-level expended arcane encounter attack power.

Wizard's Apprentice

Apprentices exist in any trade, of course, but none are more famous—or infamous—than wizards' apprentices. Stories tell of foolish apprentices stealing peeks at books that should not be opened, fumbling love charms, or botching transmutations by treating dangerous magic as a clever toy. Other tales recall clever apprentices who come up with just the right spell to save a village while their masters are away, or boldly putting their lessons to good use as they set out in search of adventure. Whether they turn out to be rash or resourceful, wizards' apprentices begin their careers with a priceless advantage: the personal instruction and tutelage of an experienced master.

In exchange for the privilege of learning magic, wizards' apprentices normally spend years engaged in whatever drudgery and chores their masters deem fitting. A typical human wizard's apprentice begins his or her studies around the age of eleven or twelve and remains in the master's household for five or six years. Experienced spellcasters can take on apprentices for a variety of reasons: to share their appreciation of the art, to repay the work of their own masters by instructing a worthy student, or to tutor a young noble. Surprisingly, many of the most reclusive or suspicious—even evil—spellcasters take on apprentices; some regard it as their duty to pass along their learning, some hope to shape talented young mages into future allies (or minions), and others desire an audience to witness the brilliance of their schemes. Evil masters are often callous or exacting, but only the stupidest are actively sadistic toward their apprentices; after all, it's not wise to

share secrets of power with someone you've caused to hate you.

Adventuring wizards' apprentices are usually young adults whose training is more or less complete. They no longer live in their masters' households, and they aren't obligated to wash floors or scrub pots between lessons. Assuming such an individual parted from his or her master on good terms, the apprentice has at least one knowledgeable patron willing to offer advice and assistance in important matters. Many wizards' apprentices retain their loyalty to their masters throughout their lifetimes, even if they surpass their masters' achievements. Apprentices who were taught by particularly powerful or famous masters can serve as agents and allies of those mentors, and they see themselves as the appointed guardians of a long and honored tradition. Just as noble families have ancestral lines going back centuries, many famous spellcasters likewise come from lines of apprentice–master relationships tracing back to famous wizards or sorcerers of old.

Creating a Wizard's Apprentice

Most apprentices are arcane spellcasters—warlocks or wizards. Both classes boast long traditions of passing on knowledge to a single chosen student at a time to ensure that only those who prove themselves competent and responsible are taught the ways of magic. However, many would-be students of the arcane choose not to follow in their masters' footsteps. For example, a young ne'er-do-well might toil over lessons and chores in the home of the town's sorcerer, only to abandon his or her master and take up a career as a rogue who happens to know a fair bit of arcane magic from years of indentured servitude. Wealthy nobles often arrange tutors for their children, providing the basics of an arcane education even if the youngsters turn to other pursuits when they become adults. Almost anyone might have studied magic before he or she became an adventurer.

Starting Feature

You have mastered a useful attack spell that many wizards' apprentices learn early in their studies. In some wizards' towers, *color orb* is the preferred spell for a very rough game of apprentice tag.

Color Orb — Wizard's Apprentice Attack

You throw a brightly shining orb of swirling colors at your foe, momentarily dazing it.

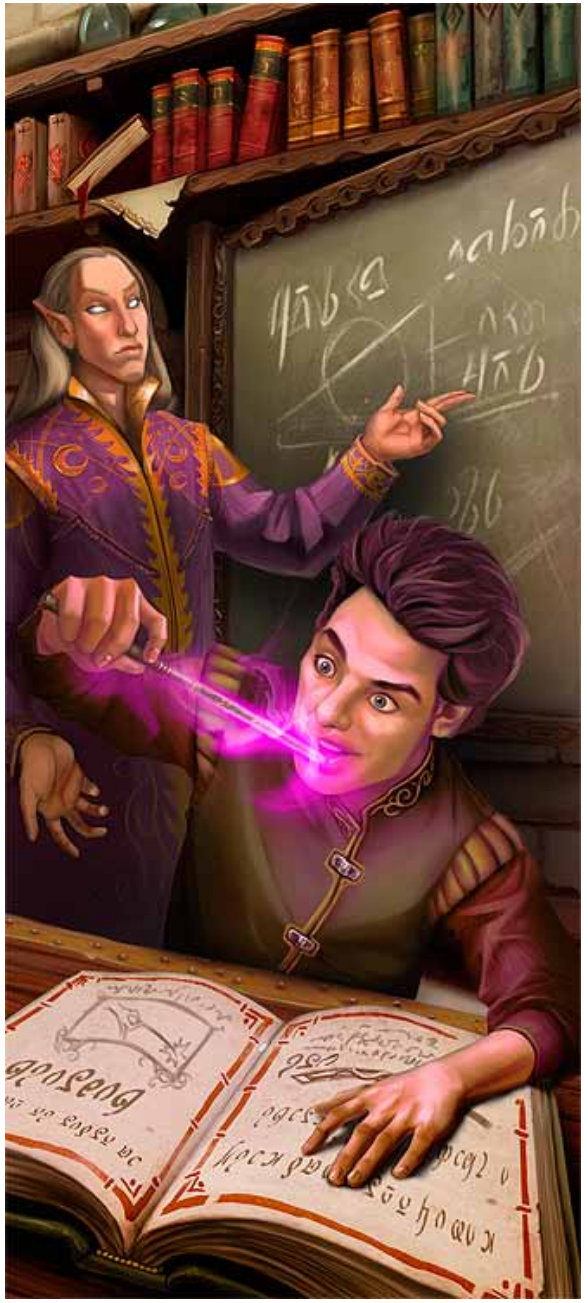
Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Level 11: 2d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage.
Level 21: 3d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Stories of your skill and successful adventures reach your master's ears or, if your master is no longer among the living, the ears of one of your master's friends or colleagues. In recognition of your accomplishments, your master (or your master's colleague) sends you a gift to help you along your way.

Benefit: You gain one level 6 or lower common magic implement, armor, or neck slot item of your choice.



Level 10 Feature

After lengthy adventures and much experience, you discover that you now understand arcane theories and cryptic notes you had copied down in the past. Concepts you couldn't grasp before are now clear; the meaning of riddles and problems that used to seem nonsensical are finally revealed.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Arcana checks, and you learn one new language (other than Supernal).

Optional Powers

The workbooks and notes you accumulated as a young apprentice hold the sketchy outlines of several potentially useful spells. Perhaps your master was experimenting with these spells during your time under his or her tutelage, or these might be inspirations of your own with which you began to tinker. Your master might not have thought much of spells that provided a wizard's apprentice with opportunities to shirk work or avoid punishment, but you set them aside for the day when you could choose your own studies.

Level 2 Utility Power

You know a very useful spell of minor invisibility. It doesn't last long, but it can give you the opportunity to duck around a corner or through a doorway before your foes realize where you've gone. It's also a fine way to steal up on an enemy and catch it off guard.

Disappear Wizard's Apprentice Utility 2

You fade from sight for a moment.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Illusion
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You become invisible until the end of this turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

With a whispered word and a single graceful leap, you can soar into the air. You can't stay airborne for long, but there's nothing handier for ascending to a rooftop or getting away from threatening enemies.

Winged Step Wizard's Apprentice Utility 6

You create semisolid wings around your ankles, which bear you up into the air for a single swift leap.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Move Action **Personal**

Effect: You fly up to 6 squares and land. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Level 10 Utility Power

You learn a spell of polymorphing (or shapechanging) into a small, harmless animal. You can't fight effectively in this form, but you find it extremely handy for getting into places your own two feet couldn't normally carry you, or spying on enemies who don't realize that you're not what you seem to be. And, as generations of wizards' apprentices can attest, it's fun to turn yourself into something else for a time.

Minor Polymorph Wizard's Apprentice Utility 10

You turn yourself into a small, harmless animal. This form is not terribly useful in a fight, but it might help you avoid one.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Polymorph
Standard Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of a Tiny natural beast until the end of your next turn. While in this form, you cannot attack, but you have the senses of your chosen form and gain its movement modes. If your chosen form has the aquatic keyword, you also gain it while in this form. You can return to your normal form as a minor action. If you are flying when you return to your normal form, you descend to the ground without taking falling damage. Observers can tell that you're a supernatural version of your animal form by making a successful Insight check against a DC equal to 15 + one-half your level.

Sustain Minor: Your animal form persists until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *Dark Sun*® *Campaign Guide*, and the *Gamma World*® *Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of Forgotten Realms® novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the Blades of the Moonsea series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the Dungeons & Dragons® game at Wizards of the Coast.

Nerathi Legends

The Seven Kings of Karkoth

By Richard Baker

Illustration by Adam Paquette ✦ Cartography by Adam Gillespie

"Undead? No, the Karkothi aren't undead, my friend. They just use the dead to do their bidding."

In the heart of northeastern Selduria lies the homeland of a proud, cruel, and warlike race: the humans of Karkoth. The Karkothi nobles combine martial skill with mastery of the dark arts, building armies from subjugated monsters and animating fallen warriors by the thousands to sate their hunger for conquest, wealth, and dominion. Karkothi legions menace the fair realms of Vailin, the valiant Seldurian tribes that remain loyal to the old ideal of Nerath, and the great island of Kelarnil from their foothold in the Dread Marches. The great wars threatening the realms of the known world today originated in the Karkothi drive for power and mastery. Time will tell whether the Karkothi succeed in seizing the world for their own, or if they drown in the fire and fury they have unleashed.

The Tale of Karkoth

The realm of Karkoth arose more than eight hundred years ago when the Kars, a barbaric human tribe from eastern Selduria, ventured west over the bitter heights of the Dragonspine Mountains and descended upon the kingdom of Surth. Laying waste to everything in their path, the Kars next marched against the decadent wizard-realm of Dol-Thamar along the southern shore of what is now called the Gulf of Kar, and toppled that decrepit realm. The Kar warchiefs then hurled their strength against the elven kingdom of Tarsembor, but here they were finally checked; despite their ferocity, the elves and their allies stood firm, and the Kars' invasion ground to a halt.

The Kars turned their attention to oppressing and settling the lands they had overrun, in particular the rich lands of Dol-Thamar. Each of the great Kar tribes settled in a different part of the region. Among the ruins of Dol-Thamar, the Kars discovered dark and powerful arcane secrets. Hungry for power and impatient to subjugate their fellows, the Kar chieftains plundered the Thamari vaults and interrogated the surviving Thamari wizards, learning how to summon powerful patrons and strike sinister pacts to achieve arcane might. The Kars now added the reckless pursuit of magical power to their already barbaric and warlike disposition. Thus the Karkothi Throneholds, a realm of warlocks and warriors, took shape.

The kings of Karkoth grew hungry for a wider dominion and new conquests. They settled the marches of the Broken Lands, conquered the divided citadels and towns of Blisterforge, established outposts in the vale of Slaughtergarde and the Icebound Wastes, and drowned the kingdom of Surth with terrible magic when it became a threat. Then, about three hundred years ago, the Karkothi Empire met its match in a new power from over the sea: the Empire of Nerath, then at its zenith. The Karkothi and Nerathi clashed in repeated wars over the next sixty years, until the power of Karkoth was broken and its conquests stripped away.

The Karkothi, humiliated and bitter, retreated to their throneholds, the former empire of Dol-Thamar. During the long generations of Nerath's dominance, the Karkothi domains feuded, schemed, and fought with each other, jockeying for mastery over their shrunken empire. In time Nerath's hold on northern Selduria began to weaken, and Karkothi ambitions stirred again. Renewed Karkothi agitation led to

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incursions of monsters and bitter rebellions throughout Selduria, further weakening the Nerathi empire. The fall of Nerath led to war, plague, and anarchy, but the Karkothi people weathered these troubles better than other tribes and soon reemerged as the major power in the east.

Karkoth had always been a disunified empire, but in the century since the fall of Nerath, a new power has arisen among this warlike people: the cult of the Chained God. Although no single king of Karkoth's tribes could ever force obedience from his peers, the priests of Tharizdun have brought the Karkothi together with a unifying purpose: First, reclaim the lands once held by ancient Karkoth; then sweep away the decrepit remnants of hated Nerath and Vailin.

The Seven Kings

Karkoth is not a monolithic empire. Instead, it is a fractious and quarrelsome union of the Karkothi people consisting of seven small kingdoms and a dozen or so lesser fiefs and domains. Each domain of Karkoth is ruled by a noble house commanding the loyalty of scores of thanes, or minor lords sworn to serve their king and battle his enemies.

By tradition, the kings of Karkoth are considered equals, and they frequently meet at the neutral city of Marhad in the Chamber of Thrones to take counsel. In practice, the kings are rivals and occasional enemies, rarely cooperating in any endeavor likely to result in one of them gaining an advantage at the expense of the others. Before the rise of the Chained God's cult, it was not unusual for two or three of the Karkothi kingdoms to be at war with each other at any given time. But now, under a unifying purpose, they are focused on external conquest.

Seven monarchs sit in the Chamber of Thrones. Each one is briefly described below.

King Grom of Dolthkarin: Grom is a fat and avaricious sea-reaver who, in his younger days, plundered a dozen lands. He is the patriarch of an exceptionally numerous and quarrelsome family, with no fewer than eleven sons and daughters scheming to replace him on his death. Dolthkarin, Karkoth's largest city, is a major seaport and trading hub, serving as the gateway to the Karkothi Throneholds when the country is not at war with itself.

King Dhurn of Gormad: Dhurn is a powerful warrior with a short, violent temper. A huge, balding male human with a bristling gray mustache and one eye replaced with a fiery stone of mysterious

power, he otherwise disdains magic, preferring to hack his enemies to pieces with "Blackrend," a massive greataxe. The city of Gormad lies on the northern marches, near the Gray Shields. Dhurn fights fiercely against drow raiders, and it is because of his energetic efforts that the road to Blisterforge remains open.

King Haldrist of Gray March: Young and impetuous, Haldrist has become the prime pupil of High Priestess Loranil, the head of the Temple of Dark Might and foremost priest of the Chained God. Haldrist is a broad-shouldered male human of thirty with a thin, sandy beard and eyes of startling bright blue—the eyes of madness, it is rumored. Rumors say that Loranil intends to elevate Haldrist to Overking, using the unseasoned ruler as her tool to govern Karkoth and its conquests with an iron fist. Haldrist's domain lies close to the eastern border in the upland plains of the Gray March, which are home to the horses used by Karkoth's cavalry.

King Brusev of the Groaning Tower: High on a forlorn cape overlooking the Gulf of Kar stands the Groaning Tower, a great fortress of dark magic. The fortress is the domain of King Brusev, an aged warlock renowned for his power and malice. If anyone could lay claim to the title of Overking, it would be Brusev; only the strength of the Temple of the Chained God (and the fact that several of the other kings would certainly ally against him) prevents Brusev from seizing total power.

King Sarkomov of Kharsk: Humorless and stern, Sarkomov is a first-rate strategist who, unlike the other Karkothi monarchs, harbors few personal ambitions. His city, Kharsk, is located where the Nhamur River meets Lake Surth. Great concentric walls ring vast barracks, armories, foundries, and

necromantic workshops. The lands around Kharsk are the breadbasket of the Karkothi Throneholds, and thousands of slaves work in the fields.

King Vasil of Surthgard: A master of necromantic curses and magical plagues, Vasil is renowned for his patience and cunning. He has ruled for at least fifty years, but he appears to be a man of forty, tall with lank hair and clad in scale mail of bronze. Surthgard lies on the marshy shores between Lake Surth and the Fen of Surth. It is sometimes called "the city of sinking mausoleums."

Queen Irina of Tyarmur: The single female among the seven monarchs, Queen Irina is a crafty nethermancer and the second most powerful practitioner of the dark arts behind Brusev. Karkothi rules of succession put male heirs ahead of older female siblings, so it is rare for more than one or two reigning queens to be part of the Chamber of Thrones at

any given time. Irina is considering an alliance by marriage to Haldrist, believing that with the support of the Temple she could finally unite Karkoth under a single throne and establish a dynastic empire. Her domain of Tyarmur lies in the high vales of the Mistcrowns, and guards the Pass of Tyarsk—the major route from the Throneholds to the broad plains of the Broken Lands.

The Land of Karkoth

The Karkothi Throneholds lie in a wide vale between the high crags of the Mistcrown Mountains to the west and the low, barren range of the Gray Shields to the east. The region's climate is cooled by its modest elevation and the Gulf of Kar. The land east of the Nhamur River, which links Lake Surth and the gulf, is high rolling plains and moorlands, broken by occasional wild forests in more remote spots. West of the Nhamur, the land is somewhat lower and more fertile with heavier forests, at least until one reaches the rugged foothills of the Mistcrowns.

Monstrous incursions into Karkoth are commonplace, because both the Fen of Surth and the wild peaks that rise above the Vault of the Drow are infested with dangerous creatures. In addition, patrols of undead guard the borders of each Karkothi kingdom, although some of the creatures have long been "abandoned" by their original creators, and now haunt the countryside. Karkothi commoners do not go out at night if they can help it, and they bar the doors and windows when the sun goes down.

The Throneholds are not densely populated; the Karkothi are not numerous. Their power lies in their talent for the dark arts, and their ability to subjugate the tribes, savages, and monsters in the surrounding lands. The higher, drier eastern portions of the country are used as pastureland for flocks of sheep and goats; towns are few and far between, and most people live in lonely but well-defended clanholds shared by large, extended families. The western lowlands are more settled, with small villages and towns scattered across the land, dominated by the gloomy castles and strongholds of Karkothi nobles.

Marhad, the High Thronehold

The kings spend most of their time in their own domains, surrounded by their loyal guards and servants. However, three times each year they assemble for the traditional Throne Council at the Chamber of Thrones in the neutral city of Marhad. Each Throne Council lasts from three to six weeks, although the kings sit in session together only a few times, with the work of making decisions and setting policies carried out by the kings' advisors and entourages away from the Chamber of Thrones. In addition to the three mandatory Throne Councils, special councils are frequently called, bringing the kings and their followers to Marhad several more times each year.

Because it is the High Thronehold, Marhad is the place where outsiders are most likely to find officials or merchants who can arrange meetings with the leaders of Karkoth, trade in the rumors and secrets of the realm, or seek audience in the Chamber of Thrones.

MARHAD AT A GLANCE

The High Thronehold of Karkoth is not a big city. Since no one king controls it, Marhad is little more than a neutral meeting-place and a center of trade. The High Thronehold houses the Chamber of Thrones, where the kings of Karkoth meet, and the Temple of Dark Might, the foremost shrine of the Chained God and his priesthood.

Population Mix: Marhad is home to about 12,000 people year-round, although the population doubles when the Kings of Karkoth gather with their entourages and supplicants. More people live in the surrounding villages and farmlands. About three-quarters of Marhadans are humans of Kar descent, with the remainder being dwarves, half-orcs, minotaurs, and drow. Eladrins and elves are viewed with great suspicion because of the historic enmity between Karkoth and Tarsembor.

Government: Marhad is ruled by Earl Ustov Berevin. The earldom of Marhad is not counted among the kingdoms of Karkoth, a situation that both annoys and pleases Earl Ustov. While a part of him wishes he had the status of a king, he also appreciates his unique position as the leader of the realm's bastion of neutrality. The earl's guards function as the city watch and defend the city. He also appoints the officials who oversee the city's daily business. Marhadan soldiers and officials have no power on Temple grounds, however. Foreigners are free to travel and conduct business in Marhad after paying for a letter of passage.

Commerce: Marhad is not a major economic power, although local quarries produce fine marble and gemstones, and surrounding pastureland provides wool, mutton, and vellum. Instead, the city's principal product is trade itself, since Karkothi from all the kingdoms meet to exchange goods here. Counting-houses, warehouses, clerks, scribes, and barristers can be found in large numbers here.

Defenses: Marhad is a fortress city, built on a spur of Mount Kolmurgar. The great hall of the Chamber of Thrones forms an inner citadel, linked to the lower city by a single spectacular bridge. Earl Marhad normally maintains about 1,000 elite foot soldiers in and around the city, and when Karkoth's kings meet here, each brings hundreds of additional warriors in his or her entourage.

Inns and Taverns: The Royal Arms is a cheap and dirty hostel located near the city gate. It is the sort of place where questions are rarely asked. The Mountain Aerie is a higher-class establishment, located near the bridge leading to the Chamber of Thrones, that caters to well-heeled travelers. A "spirit room" called the Drowsing Dragon serves as the headquarters for Marhad's small and violent thieves' guild.

Karkothi Encounters

The Seven Kings command a wide, multiracial empire, populated by humans, dwarves, goliaths, tieflings, and monstrous races such as minotaurs, gnolls, orcs, and giants. However, the kings are commonly encountered in the company of undead. Most Karkothi thanes and nobles are practiced warlocks and warriors who supplement their living bodyguards with skeletal warriors and battle wights.

Darkthanes are typical Karkothi agents or captains of middle rank. They might be found commanding Karkothi units in battle, leading patrols or guard detachments in vital places, or carrying out dangerous missions in far lands. Fell skeletons are fearless bodyguards created in necromantic rituals. Unlike other skeletons, they can speak in cold, hollow tones, act independently, and follow complex directions.

ADVENTURES IN KARKOTH

Strangers wandering through the Karkothi Throneholds are viewed with suspicion, but it's possible for a party of heroes to pose as traders, diplomats, or mercenaries, or to obtain a pass from one of the kings (or more likely their thanes). Here are a few ideas for adventures in the Karkothi Throneholds.

Ransom: A young nobleman of Vailin or the daughter of a Skalgard jarl has been taken prisoner by a Karkothi house; the heroes are tasked with escorting the ransom to Karkoth.

Beneath the Groaning Tower: Servants of King Brusev unearth a terrible artifact of Bael Turath, which the warlock king seeks to master. The heroes take on a desperate mission to steal or destroy the artifact before King Brusev can unlock its full power.

Ruins of Thamargol: On the windswept plains east of Dolthkarin lie the ruins of Thamargol, the ancient capital of Dol-Thamar. Strange monsters haunt the ruins, which are said to hold riches and magical devices still hidden in deep vaults.

Royal Quarrels: One of Karkoth's kings hires (or coerces) the heroes to attempt the assassination of a rival king.

Karkothi Darkthane Level 15 Elite Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 2,400

HP 234; **Bloodied** 117 **Initiative** +10
AC 29, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28 **Perception** +10
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Aura of Dark Resolve ✦ Aura** 3
Allies in the aura gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls. At the start of the darkthane's turn, each of the darkthane's allies in the aura gains 10 temporary hit points.

Standard Actions

⨭ **Sword of Icy Shadow** (cold, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 5 cold damage, and the target is slowed and grants combat advantage to the darkthane until the end of the darkthane's next turn.

⤙ **Clutching Shadows** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage, the target is slowed, and the darkthane gains partial concealment from the target (save ends all).

Sword and Spell ✦ At-Will
Effect: The darkthane shifts up to 2 squares, uses *sword of icy shadow*, and uses *clutching shadows*, in any order.

Minor Actions

Dark Demand ✦ Recharge when first bloodied
Effect: Close burst 5 (one ally in the burst). As a free action, the target shifts 1 square and makes a melee basic attack against an enemy designated by the darkthane.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Shield (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the darkthane hits the darkthane with an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The darkthane becomes insubstantial until the start of its next turn. After the attack is resolved, the darkthane teleports up to 5 squares.

Skills Arcana +17, History +17, Insight +15, Intimidate +18

Str 16 (+10)	**Dex** 17 (+10)	**Wis** 16 (+10)
Con 21 (+12)	**Int** 20 (+12)	**Cha** 23 (+13)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment bastard sword, leather armor, robes

Karkothi Fell Skeleton Level 13 Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 800

HP 129; **Bloodied** 64 **Initiative** +12
AC 29, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25 **Perception** +10
Speed 5
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 cold, 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Traits

Fell Blade
The fell skeleton deals full damage against insubstantial enemies.

Standard Actions

⨭ **Fell Sword** (cold, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage plus 10 cold damage, and the target is slowed and cannot shift until the end of the fell skeleton's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Fell Vengeance ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the fell skeleton attacks an ally of the skeleton and does not include the skeleton as a target.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The fell skeleton makes a basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Str 22 (+12)	**Dex** 19 (+10)	**Wis** 19 (+10)
Con 17 (+9)	**Int** 6 (+4)	**Cha** 10 (+6)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Equipment bastard sword, scale mail

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and sourcebooks, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *Dark Sun*® *Campaign Setting*, and the *D&D*® *Gamma World*™ *Roleplaying Game*. He's a New York Times bestselling author of Forgotten Realms novels such as *Condemnation*, the *Last Mythal* trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for Dungeons & Dragons at Wizards of the Coast.

Character Themes

Heroes of Tome and Temple

By Richard Baker

Illustrations by Kate Laird and Kieran Yanner

Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article details three character themes: the ordained priest, the scholar, and the seer.

Character Themes

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, you might be a human cleric who chooses the ordained priest theme, but "human ordained priest" might mean many different things. You might be a village priest who guides others in the worship of one or more deities. Perhaps you're a brother or a sister in a religious order in town, and you seek an opportunity to evangelize your worship to others outside your town. Or perhaps you roam the forest or swamp, protecting its creatures from external threats because you consider the natural balance of the area to be sacred. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," the previous article in this series.

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Ordained Priest

Ordained priests are characters who are formally appointed to work in the service of a faith, a sect, or a system of worship. Although some are devout wielders of divine power, many have no magical abilities at all; the term "ordained priest" in this context means someone who holds the social position or occupation of being an ordained official of the faith. For example, typical village priests have no powers comparable to the attack and utility prayers of adventuring clerics. They hold a different sort of power: the deference of their neighbors, the trust of the authorities, and the respect of the great majority of the citizenry who rely on their counsel and good judgment. Ordained priests might serve as teachers, soldiers, confessors, advisors, students, magistrates, or powerful rulers, but whatever their role in society, they inspire and influence ordinary people to live up to the standards of their faith.

Ordained priests enjoy a bewildering variety of preferred titles. Depending on the land in which they're found and the faith to which they belong, they might be known as curates, elders, friars, imams, lamas, prelates, shepherds, rectors, or vicars. In some realms, temples are huge, powerful states within the nation, ruling over wide estates guarded by armies of temple guards. Ordained priests in rich, influential hierarchies such as these might have duties or titles that have little to do with ministering to commoners, and instead they could wield authority as judges, lawkeepers, and bureaucrats. However, most faiths in the mortal world are smaller organizations that rarely have much influence outside their own realm or kingdom.

Creating an Ordained Priest

Although ordained priests aren't always clerics (or paladins, or adventurers of any sort), it's not unusual for clerics or other heroes to be ordained priests. Ordained priests are educated by the standards of their homelands, plus they are influential and responsible. When difficult challenges or threats arise, rulers often consult with local priests and seek their advice about how to proceed. Some ordained priests are content to offer their counsel, but others more inclined to action might set out to solve problems personally, eventually taking up a career in adventuring. Naturally, adventuring ordained priests are often clerics. Druids also serve as members of the priesthood in some cultures and are a good fit for this theme. Rogues or fighters might also serve as ordained priests, employing guile or strong sword arms in the service of their faith.

Starting Feature

Many ordinary ordained priests have no supernatural powers, but you're not an ordinary one—you're an adventurer. Even if you aren't a cleric, you have studied the lore recorded in your faith's scriptures, and you know the power the holy symbol of your faith holds. When you brandish your holy symbol, you can smite enemies while inspiring your companions.

Benefit: Choose *smiting symbol* or *shining symbol*. You gain that power.

Religions in the World

A religion or a faith in the Dungeons & Dragons® roleplaying game is essentially one organization of priests, and those people who recognize the authority of that priesthood in religious matters. When people speak of the Church of the Silver Flame, the Temple of Light, the Path of Truth, or the Holy Temple of Therund, they're referring to the physical shrines and temples, the worshipers, and the hierarchy of priests associated with that faith. Ordinarily, a religion spans a kingdom or a handful of small, neighboring city-states and holdings. The next kingdom over might have a similar religion venerating the same deities in the same way, but if the priestly hierarchies are separate, then the two kingdoms effectively have two different religions. Additionally, a single realm or city can be home to several different religions, which might appeal to different areas of the kingdom or different social classes of the kingdom's citizens. Just like secular states, neighboring religions might be allies, rivals, or bitter enemies.

Usually a religion is centered on the whole pantheon; most people worship all gods, even if they just hope to avert the attention of evil gods by propitiating them at appropriate times. In some cases, a religion favors a single god or set of gods from the pantheon above the others, but even then priests of that faith acknowledge the divinity of the rest of the pantheon. In other cases, a faith is a social structure, philosophy, or behavior system that has little to do with the pantheon—for example, a system of ancestor worship or the shamanic worship of many barbarian tribes.

Smiting Symbol Ordained Priest Attack

The power of your deity shields a nearby ally while you smite the foe.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One enemy
Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + highest ability modifier damage.
Effect: Choose one ally within 3 squares of you. That ally gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. He or she also gains temporary hit points equal to 3 + one-half your level.
Level 11: 2[W] + highest ability modifier damage.
Level 21: 3[W] + highest ability modifier damage.

Shining Symbol Ordained Priest Attack

Your holy symbol gleams with a brilliant radiance, searing your foes and dazzling them for a short time.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Target: Each enemy in the blast
Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Level 11: 2d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage.
Level 21: 3d8 + highest ability modifier radiant damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

With long study, you have come to know the holy texts of your faith like the back of your hand. You find inspiration and guidance in these ancient writings.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Religion checks and Insight checks.

Level 10 Feature

Strengthened and sustained by your personal faith, you reassure your companions with your simple presence. You inspire them to rise above their setbacks and injuries with your calm confidence in the eventual triumph of your cause.

Benefit: While adjacent to you, your allies gain a +1 bonus to saving throws.

Optional Powers

Just as your holy symbol is a weapon against evil, so too are the familiar verses and prayers passed down through the generations. Many devout people whisper these comforting words in times of danger or grief, but when you give them the full force of your sincerity and belief, they possess the power to work minor miracles. The following features and powers are available to any character who has chosen the ordained priest theme.

Level 2 Utility Power

By reciting a familiar prayer for comfort and help in the face of enemies, you bestow a small amount of healing on all allies nearby. Sorely wounded allies and those suffering from debilitating conditions receive more comfort from your prayer.

Word of Comfort Ordained Priest Utility 2

You recite a verse offering a prayer of comfort and endurance in the face of adversity.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target can make a saving throw. In addition, each target regains 5 hit points, or 10 hit points if he or she is bloodied.

Level 6 Utility Power

Continuously repeating a prayer to avert harm, you shield yourself and allies near you from the attacks of your enemies, as long as none of you breaks the effect by striking. With *word of protection*, you can guide a small party through a dangerous area or provide a crucial respite in the middle of a pitched battle.

Word of Protection Ordained Priest Utility 6

You protect yourself and nearby allies with a prayer of peace.

Daily ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target gains a +5 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. If any target makes an attack, the effect ends for all targets.
Sustain Standard: The effect persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 10 Utility Power

You learn an ancient prayer for consecrating places against the trespass of evil creatures, especially undead. Good and true people making their stand on sanctified ground are protected from the attacks of their foes, and healing effects are bolstered for them. Holy light burns undead that venture into the area.

Sanctifying Word Ordained Priest Utility 10

Your prayer sanctifies the ground on which you stand, protecting allies and daunting foes that dare to approach.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. While in the zone, each ally gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and adds 5 to his or her healing surge value. Any undead creature that ends its turn in the zone takes 5 radiant damage.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.

Scholar

For some, the past is dead and buried, but any adventurer who has ever set foot in a trap-filled, ancient tomb or battled a terrible demon freed from some centuries-old binding knows that what happened long ago might be of crucial importance to those living in the present day. Scholars study the lore of ancient times, collecting old texts and ferreting out forgotten secrets. They seek to preserve the memories of bygone days and pass along to future generations the important lessons the past offers. As with any dungeon-delving adventurers, they are keenly interested in dormant perils and lost treasures, but scholars are just as interested in the most ordinary details of ancient realms and events. To scholars, knowledge is its own reward.

Not all cultures or societies value the musty old tales of ancient days. For many people, the study of history—or simple literacy—is an extravagance. Scholars are highly specialized professionals, and their services are not in great demand. The typical frontier town or farming village has no library or formal schooling. As a result, scholars are found only in places where books and records are collected. Large cities sometimes feature vaults or libraries dedicated to scholarship, and they might have colleges or guilds of scholars who study in them. However, large collections of books are more typically the prized possessions of temples dedicated to deities of knowledge and civilization (such as Ioun or Erathis), or of powerful noble families. Most scholars are therefore sponsored or supported by a temple or patron, and they seek to repay their benefactors by adding to their collections throughout their careers.

Creating a Scholar

Adventuring scholars are most often wizards, since the study of the arcane arts appeals to the same sort of intelligent, meticulous individual that scholarship does. Arcane secrets are buried in ancient tomes and hidden in myth and legend much like the secrets of history and other fields of learning. Clerics also make good scholars—especially clerics devoted to deities of knowledge or magic. Any cleric of Ioun or Erathis is likely something of a scholar already. Warlocks also know the value of ancient lore, but in their traditions, knowledge is regarded as something to hoard and conceal; most warlocks are cryptic and obscure at best. Fighters, rogues, paladins, and rangers are not likely to follow the scholar's path, preferring action to contemplation. However, some heroes might have been raised to be scholars only to choose a different walk of life later. For example, a young scholar lured by the idea of unearthing forgotten hoards might become an exceptionally well-educated rogue who specializes in plundering ancient crypts.

Starting Feature

Young scholars typically begin their studies by learning one or more ancient languages, so that they can understand the tomes and codices they hope to master. Draconic, Dwarven, and Elven are the principal languages of learning in most mortal lands; it's a rare scholar who isn't literate in at least one of these ancient tongues.

As you have increased your knowledge, you have discovered vulnerabilities of creatures that you can identify, and you know their tactics and abilities well enough to defend yourself against them.

Benefit: You know one additional language chosen from Draconic, Dwarven, and Elven. In addition, you gain the *use vulnerability* power.

Use Vulnerability Scholar Utility

You know the strengths and weaknesses of the creature you're facing.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You succeed on a monster knowledge check against a monster that you can see or hear.
Effect: If your check result meets or exceeds the hard DC for the monster's level, you gain a +4 power bonus to all defenses against the monster's attacks until the end of your next turn. Additionally, until the end of your next turn, you gain a power bonus to damage rolls against the target equal to your Intelligence modifier, but not when you deal damage that the target resists.

If your check result does not meet or exceed the hard DC, your attacks against the target deal only half damage until the end of your next turn.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

A true scholar never stops learning. Even though you're now an adventurer, you continue to add to your understanding of the world around you at every opportunity. After all, knowledge is power.

Benefit: Choose training in one new skill and one new language. The skill you choose must be Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, Nature, or Religion; if you already have training in all of these skills, you instead gain a +2 bonus to skill checks with one of those skills. The language you choose must be Draconic, Dwarven, or Elven; if you already know all three, choose one language from those listed in the *Rules Compendium* (page 69) or *Player's Handbook* (page 25).

Level 10 Feature

Years of intensive study and exposure to hundreds of texts have provided you with a working knowledge of all but the most obscure languages. You can get by in conversation nearly anywhere you travel, and with a few days to acquaint yourself with local dialects or idioms, you're as fluent as a native-born speaker.

Benefit: You know all the languages listed in the *Rules Compendium* (page 69) and *Player's Handbook* (page 25). (At the Dungeon Master's discretion, other languages can be added to the languages you know with this feature.) You can also attempt an Arcana check (hard DC of your level) to decipher a message written in code or protected by a magical disguise.

Optional Powers

Knowing what you're facing and its vulnerabilities is a potent weapon on its own, but you are also familiar with a handful of minor spells that can be useful in the right circumstances. Your tomes and scrolls record names of power or charms of protection that can hold a demon at bay, spells to create energy inimical to particular creatures, and clever tricks or improvisations for almost any task. It has all been written down at one point or another; with your wide reading and keen memory for detail, you can find something to help you in most situations.

Level 2 Utility Power

You understand the theories and techniques behind most physical or mental tasks. This minor spell sharpens your recollection, bringing the most relevant details of your library to mind and making you an expert of sorts in almost anything you care to try.

Useful Lore Scholar Utility 2

You recall a shining example of a hero who succeeded in a challenging task, imbuing yourself with a portion of his or her skill.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Choose one skill. Until the end of the encounter, you gain a +5 power bonus to checks with that skill.

Level 6 Utility Power

The arcane tomes you have studied record the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of a wide variety of dangerous creatures, and they provide examples of spells that exploit them. This spell imbues weapons and implements with a hint of a particular magical energy—a useful trick for exploiting the vulnerabilities of the creatures you come across in your adventures.

Inimical Lore Scholar Utility 6

You enhance your allies' attacks with energy that you know can devastate the foe you're fighting.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Close** burst 1
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Choose acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, radiant, or thunder. Until the end of your next turn, any untyped damage each target would deal with attacks is of the chosen type instead.

Level 10 Utility Power

Each creature in the world or the planes has certain laws and principles describing how beings of its type exist. You know magical wardings, names, or emanations that repel creatures of different types, at least for a short time.

Defensive Lore Scholar Utility 10

You pronounce a word or name that is disruptive to creatures of a particular origin, causing their existence to falter for a few moments.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Zone
Minor Action **Close** burst 2
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Choose aberrant, fey, elemental, immortal, natural, or shadow. Until the end of your next turn, creatures of that origin take a –2 penalty to attack rolls and to all defenses while in the zone, and attacks by such creatures deal only half damage to targets inside the zone.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.

Seer

Gifted with unusual abilities to perceive things hidden by distance or uncertainty, seers are prized as advisors by powerful people throughout the world. They might call themselves astrologers, fortune-tellers, readers, augurs, diviners, or soothsayers, and each employs a favored technique for prognostication. Many seers choose to complicate their viewings with flamboyant mummery designed to impress ordinary people and perhaps conceal the important secrets of their trade. But despite the confusing mystical trappings, seers aren't frauds. Their second sight is a real and powerful gift, even if it is fickle at times.

The ability to anticipate success or failure in great endeavors, to determine the most auspicious times to embark on risky ventures, or to read the secret motives of others is a valuable edge. Naturally, wealthy patrons seek out famous and successful seers so that they can gain advantage over their rivals. Retained as permanent advisors and paid generously for their services, these kept seers are at the top of their profession. Kept seers enjoy unusual access to those they serve, and they can become entangled in the petty rivalries and battles for influence that pervade most courts and noble households. To minimize such entanglements, some rulers choose to sequester their magical advisors, keeping them out of the reach of courtiers or rivals who might harbor ambitious schemes. Other seers embrace their role as important figures in the court. Competent seers with this sort of position are placed well to do great good, but they can also do serious harm if they provide their masters with inept advice or engage in disloyal behavior. After all, a "trusted" wizard has deposed more than one king.

Seers who have not yet attracted a wealthy patron or established a reputation for success settle for a meager living catering to commoners, casting fortunes for a few coppers or silvers at a turn. Ordinary people often seek the advice of augurs and diviners when contemplating major business decisions, choosing a time to travel, arranging marriages, naming a child, or seeking explanations for some sort of misfortune. In a bustling city, well-respected seers with a wealthy clientele can make a comfortable living. Seers from small or backward towns might be little better than peddlers and beggars, hard-pressed to feed themselves from day to day—a situation that makes it hard to convince potential customers that one's powers offer useful insights. Adventuring seers fall somewhere between the extremes of royal advisor or marketplace fortune-teller; they rarely settle down in the service of a single patron, but in time their spreading fame ensures that many will come to seek their advice.

Creating a Seer

To invoke useful visions, seers require natural talent (their gift, whatever form it takes) and ability with the magical arts. Minor spells help many seers to direct their ability. Consequently, adventuring seers are usually wizards or warlocks. Some techniques for readings and visions are divine in nature rather than arcane, so clerics are also common as seers. Cleric seers are often revered as prophets or interpreters of dreams whose visions are gifts of the gods. Seers of other classes are uncommon at best, although a few brazen rogues have been known to use the seer's trappings to implement schemes and scams of all sorts.

Starting Feature

You can perform a minor divination, read omens, cast a horoscope, or use another method of prediction to determine whether fortune favors an individual on this day. You know the results of your fortune-telling; whether you tell the subject the true result is up to you. Your fortune works itself out in the next significant endeavor the subject undertakes, but a single fortune-telling predicts the future only for the upcoming day.

Benefit: You gain the *cast fortune* power.

Cast Fortune — Seer Utility

You perform a minor augury or reading that reveals to you what fortune holds for the subject this day.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One ally

Effect: Roll a d20 three times when you use this power, and note the results, in order. These results replace, in order, the next three d20 rolls the target makes for any of the following types of rolls: attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. At the DM's discretion, trivial rolls and rolls that the target makes in nondangerous or nonstressful situations can't be replaced by your recorded results. When all three results have been used or when you next take an extended rest, the effect ends. The target doesn't know if his or her fortune is good or bad unless you tell the target.

Special: Once you've used this power on a specific ally, you cannot target that ally with this power again until after you finish your next extended rest.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Your second sight is a useful tool, but it's only one part of your arsenal. You are also a keen observer and an experienced judge of character. Many problems don't require supernatural guidance; the difficulties and their solutions are apparent to anyone who pays attention. Likewise, your supernatural sources might be silent on some thorny questions, but if you project a little confidence and certainty, you can convince people to do what they already know is right.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff checks and Insight checks.

Level 10 Feature

You have developed the mystic's third eye—an invisible, intangible sensory organ in the center of your brow. With the eye of your mind, you perceive auras, impressions, and psychic energies. Your third eye allows you to see things your companions don't notice.

Benefit: Whenever you make a Perception check, you can roll twice and use either result.

Optional Powers

With careful training and self-discipline, you can harness your second sight to see places beyond normal sight, anticipate moments of danger, and perceive hidden things.

Level 2 Utility Power

Closing your eyes, you use your mind to peer around a corner, behind a closed door, or into a room a hundred feet from where you sit.

Clairvoyance — Seer Utility 2

In your mind you see a vision of a place beyond the perception of your own eyes.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Standard Action **Personal**

Effect: You gain darkvision until the end of your next turn. Choose any spot within 20 squares of you. You need not have line of sight or line of effect to the spot you choose. You can see from both your location and that spot until the end of your next turn. You can attempt Perception checks to notice small details, such as reading a letter lying on a desk near your point of observation. Sight is the only sense your clairvoyance conveys—you can't hear or smell from your point of observation.

Sustain Standard: You continue to observe from your chosen spot until the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

You are not limited to predicting the fortunes of others; you can also gain glimpses of your own future, including moments of deadly peril. Sometimes your visions don't help you to avoid the dangers that wait, but sometimes they do. You've seen this moment before, and you can duck or dodge at just the right instant to avert disaster.

Moment of Peril — Seer Utility 6

You recognize an enemy's attack as a moment of peril that you've already foreseen.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: You are hit by an attack.

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn. After the attack is resolved, you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Level 10 Utility Power

A murmured spell awakens your third eye to its full powers of perception for a time. Things that you normally perceived as the merest hints, shadows, or auras now leap into perfect clarity. At a glance you note the presence of invisible creatures, pierce magical guises, or perceive the deepest secrets of those around you.

Eye of Seeing — Seer Utility 10

An invisible, intangible third eye opens on your brow, enabling you to perceive truths that are normally hidden.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you see invisible creatures and objects. In addition, you gain a +5 power bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks.

Sustain Minor: The effect persists until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the Dark Sun® *Campaign Setting*, and the *Gamma World*® *Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of Forgotten Realms® novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the Blades of the Moonsea series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the Dungeons & Dragons® game at Wizards of the Coast.

Cleric

Illustrations by Kerem Beyit, William O'Connor, Eva Widermann, and Empty Room Studios

Why This Is the Class for You: You like playing a character who helps other characters to fight their best, using your magic to aid their attacks and heal their injuries.

Clerics are mortal followers of the gods who seek to protect what their god loves and battle against the things their god reviles. They blast foes with magical prayers, bolster and heal companions, and lead the way to victory with a mace in one hand and a holy symbol in the other. Clerics run the gamut from humble servants of the common folk to ruthless enforcers of evil gods.

Your choice of deity (or deities) to revere goes a long way toward defining you, or at least how other people in the world see you. You could be a platinum-garbed envoy of Bahamut seeking justice throughout the land, a shadowy follower of Sehanine with a roguish streak, a burly disciple of Kord who believes the virtue of strength is sufficient for all challenges, or a dwarf cleric of Moradin bringing honor to the denizens of your mountain home.

The warpriest and the templar are two types of clerics. The warpriest appears in *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*. The templar first appeared in the *Player's Handbook* as the cleric.

Templar

Divine Leader: You lead by healing and shielding allies with your prayers, and by drawing on divine power to improve your allies' attacks. Templars lean toward controller as a secondary role, since many of their powers affect multiple foes at once or hinder enemy actions.

Key Abilities: Strength or Wisdom; Charisma

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Schooled in religious traditions from childhood, templars wield divine powers entrusted to them through ordination or investiture in the service of a deity. They are expected to further their deity's interests throughout their lives, aiding all who work in the deity's name (whether they realize it or not) and opposing any who seek to thwart the deity's will. Templars try to sway the good people of the world to give honor and worship to the gods by setting an example of courage, understanding, patience, piety, and zeal. Sometimes this is best done through ministering to the needs of the common folk, sometimes by offering advice and counsel to those who hold power in the world, and sometimes by leading the way on bold adventures and inspiring quests. Whenever the faithful are in need, a cleric is called to act.

Templars are not as narrowly focused as warpriests, and they do not specialize in a domain as warpriests do. They draw from a wider variety of cleric powers, simply because such a wide variety of religious orders, priesthoods, and traditions are scattered across the face of the world. However, like warpriests, templars are often skilled, resilient warriors. Their true power lies in the divine magic they command—prayers to heal the injured, protect the weak, and chastise the wicked.

Creating a Templar

This section walks you through the steps of creating a templar. As you make choices at each step, consider how those choices relate to your character's personality, backstory, and goals.

Consult the three class tables, one for each tier of play, for a summary of what you gain as you advance in level.

Templar Traits

Hit Points: You start with hit points equal to 12 + your Constitution score. You gain 5 hit points each time you gain a level.

Bonus to Defenses: +2 to Will

Healing Surges per Day: 7 + your Constitution modifier

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail

Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged

Implement Proficiencies: Holy symbols

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Religion (Int)

Trained Skills: Religion, plus three more from the list of class skills

Priestly Order

Templars are invested with their ability to wield divine power through the traditions and authority of priestly orders. A number of priestly orders exist in the world—a single religion might include a dozen or more different ones. Priestly orders are divided into two broad groups: battle orders and devoted orders. All the members of any priestly order are templars, but battle orders and devoted orders have slightly different goals and prefer different methods in the ongoing struggle to guide and defend the faithful against the forces of darkness and evil.

Choose a type of priestly order to belong to, either a battle order or a devoted order.

Battle Order A battle order is a militant society within the priesthood, often dedicated to war-related tasks such as the defense of holy places, the protection of the faithful, or crusades against the enemies of the faith. Templars who hail from this tradition are holy soldiers, ever seeking to directly confront their enemies. They rely on physical prowess more than inner strength, concentrating on powers that help them to fight well in melee and aid comrades fighting at their side. If you are a battle templar, you prefer melee or close attack powers based on your Strength rather than your Wisdom.

Devoted Order A devoted order is dedicated to healing and fortifying the faithful followers of the religion against the perils of the world. Most devoted orders are named after famous saints or relics of the faith—for example, the Order of Saint Sollars the Twice-Martyred, or the Order of the Silver Chalice. Templars of this tradition believe that the best way to serve their deity is by lending power to any who champion righteous causes, and therefore they focus on learning prayers that support and strengthen their allies. If you are a devoted templar, you prefer ranged attack powers based on your Wisdom, not your Strength.

Alignment and Deity

Your character's alignment and choice of deity (or other faith) are fundamental aspects of his or her nature.

Pick an alignment, which represents the moral outlook that helps shape how your character acts.

In addition, all templars choose a faith to which they devote themselves. Usually this faith entails the worship of a specific patron deity—for example, Moradin,

Pelor, or Erathis. Sometimes templars are devoted to religious organizations that venerate groups of deities or even philosophies.

In almost all cases, a cleric's alignment and deity (or faith) are compatible. Good clerics serve good deities, lawful good clerics serve lawful good deities, and so on. If a deity is unaligned, your alignment doesn't matter, so a deity such as Melora has good, lawful good, evil, chaotic evil, and unaligned clerics in her service. Similarly, if you're unaligned, you can serve any god. If you opt for an alignment and a deity that are not compatible, think about how your character's personal ethos clashes with your deity's teachings. Does that conflict play a role in your background?

Your deity does not directly grant you powers. Instead, your ordination or investiture as a cleric grants you the ability to wield divine powers. Templars are usually formally ordained by existing templars who perform a special ritual to do so, but on rare occasions a deity moves to directly ordain a worthy worshiper without any sort of priestly hierarchy involved. What you do with your powers once you are ordained is up to you, although if you flagrantly and openly defy your deity's tenets, you quickly earn the enmity of the faithful.

Race

Choose your race. Dwarf, elf, and human are particularly good choices for a templar.

Dwarf Armed with a bonus to either Strength or Wisdom, you are naturally suited to take up adventuring as a cleric. You can perform well as a devoted templar, but your better choice is battle templar. Heavy armor poses no great hindrance for you, and your racial weapon proficiencies mean that you can begin play with a good martial weapon (the warhammer) instead of the simple mace. A sturdy Constitution also helps you to stand up to damage on the front lines.

Dwarves are a devout, gods-fearing race, and clerics of any sort hold high places in dwarven society. Most dwarven citadels feature great shrines dedicated to Moradin, the special patron and protector of the dwarven people. These shrines often feature working forges; if you choose Moradin as your patron deity, you are likely well versed in smelting, smithing, and other such work.

Elf Elves can choose a bonus to Wisdom, which means you're a good candidate to take up an adventuring career as a devoted templar. Given your natural speed and mobility, becoming a devoted templar is probably the better choice. Your proficiency with the longbow provides you with a useful alternative to attack powers when you find yourself dealing with an enemy you'd rather keep at a distance.

Corellon and Sehanine are commonly regarded as the patrons of elvenkind, but deities such as Avandra and Melora are also good choices for you. Elves are not much given to large temples or powerful clergies, but they are reverential and spiritual; you are valued and respected among your people.

Human Since you can choose a bonus to any ability score, you are quite capable of excelling in any class you choose. If you decide to take your bonus in Strength, you can be an excellent battle templar; if you prefer to assign your racial ability bonus to Wisdom, you can excel as a devoted templar. Your bonus feat means that you can quickly specialize in an area or broaden your talents at the outset of your career.

As with dwarves, human societies typically support large and well-organized temples, religious orders, faiths, and divine traditions. In fact, many of these traditions and faiths share their place only with difficulty—religious rivalries and competition for influence over important affairs is commonplace

A human cleric channels the power of his god

among human-dominated temples. Regardless of which deity you choose as your patron, you can expect to find allies, rivals, and enemies among the followers of other faiths.

Ability Scores

Determine your ability scores. Your best ability score should be either Strength or Wisdom; battle templars rely on Strength to confront the enemies of the faith, while devoted templars depend on Wisdom for wielding their divine magic. If you prefer to sample both paths, you'll need both a high Strength score and a high Wisdom score to be effective.

Charisma should be your second-highest ability score, since many templar powers have effects that scale with your Charisma score. Whether you are a battle templar or a devoted templar, you are expected to inspire those around you and show leadership in the fight against evil. If you plan to fight in melee a lot, you might decide that Constitution is a better second or third choice than Charisma; extra healing surges and a few extra hit points may be just what you need to survive a tough, close-up fight.

You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1 each when you reach certain levels: 4th, 8th, 14th, 18th, 24th, and 28th. In addition, all your ability scores increase by 1 at 11th and 21st levels.

Dexterity and Intelligence play little part in the effectiveness of your cleric powers, but they help you to customize your character's unique strengths. A good Intelligence score gives you a better Religion check, and might reflect a more scholarly path. On the other hand, a templar who comes from a more physically oriented chapter or belongs to a race that has natural agility—for example, an elf or a halfling—might prefer a good Dexterity score over a good Intelligence score. An elf templar often finds that the race's mastery of the bow provides a useful fallback when dealing with foes at a long distance.

Skills

At 1st level, you have training in Religion. In addition, you choose three more trained skills from the following list of class skills: Arcana, Diplomacy, Heal, History, and Insight.

You wield divine magic, so you might find it useful to be versed in magical theory and traditions with the Arcana skill. Diplomacy and Insight represent your ability to inspire, persuade, and empathize with others—useful talents when circumstances force you to step up and assume the mantle of leadership. Mastery of the Heal skill is also useful for a cleric, since it provides you with the ability to help your comrades when your magic is exhausted. Finally, many of your faith's sacred writings record events that actually took place long ago and people who really lived; the History skill provides you with the ability to call upon these ancient lessons in confusing times.

Class Features and Powers

Note which class features and powers you gain at 1st level, as specified on the Templar Heroic Tier table on page 5.

You can choose any powers you like, but if you are a battle templar, it's a good idea to choose powers that use Strength attacks; *priest's shield* and *righteous brand* are your best at-will choices, while *healing strike* and *wrathful thunder* are good encounter power choices for you. If you're a devoted templar, you'll find powers that feature Wisdom to be better for you. *Lance of faith* and *sacred flame* are at-will powers relying on Wisdom, and *cause fear* and *divine glow* are good choices for your encounter power. If you have good scores in both Strength and Wisdom, it's a sound idea to choose a mix of melee and close or ranged attacks so that you always have a power at hand for the tactical situation.

Dwarf cleric of Moradin

Feats

Choose one feat at 1st level. You gain an additional feat at every even-numbered level, plus a feat at 11th and 21st levels.

Heroes of the Fallen Lands and *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms* introduce the concept of feat categories to associate similar feats into groups, making the selection process easier. Feats in the divine devotion category are a good place for you to start, since they allow you to more strongly tie your character to your choice of deity.

In addition to the various divine devotion feats, battle templars might prefer to choose feats that help them fight better in close combat. Training in a martial weapon, learning how to wear scale mail, or a feat from the enduring stamina category would all be effective early feat choices.

Devoted templars do more of their fighting with ranged attacks and therefore aren't as exposed to melee as battle templars or warpriests are. A feat from the steadfast willpower category could be more useful to you early in your career.

Equipment

You have proficiency with the following types of armor: cloth, leather, hide, and chainmail. You have proficiency with the following weapon types: simple melee and simple ranged. You also have proficiency with holy symbols (the cleric's traditional implement), although you might channel your divine magic through a weapon when you use some powers.

When it comes to armor, heavier is better. You have 100 gp to buy your starting equipment, so chainmail is usually the best choice. If you have a Dexterity of 16 or higher, hide armor is also a good choice.

A shield helps to increase your Armor Class, but you might want to consider purchasing a two-handed weapon instead. Otherwise, a mace or a spear is a good choice for a starting character. You should also purchase a holy symbol and a ranged weapon, either a crossbow or a sling.

Defenses and Hit Points

Calculate your defenses using your ability modifiers and the bonus for your character's armor. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Will.

You start with hit points equal to 12 + your Constitution score. You gain 5 hit points each time you gain a level. You have a number of healing surges per day equal to 7 + your Constitution modifier.

Final Details

At this point, you should have all the mechanical details of your character determined. In this last step, check with your DM to see where you are from in the campaign setting, the people you already know, and what your current situation is. It also helps to spend a few minutes working out how or if you know the other player characters.

Heroic Templar

In the beginning of your adventuring career, you rely on the fundamental powers you have been invested with, while slowly mastering more advanced prayers. Your at-will attack powers allow you to set the tone of a battle by singling out enemies for your allies' attention or help you protect your friends from attack, while *healing word* reinvigorates and restores any who falter in the fight.

TEMPLAR HEROIC TIER

Total XP	Level	Feats Known	Class Features and Powers
0	1	1	Channel Divinity Healer's Lore ***Healing word*** Ritual Casting At-will powers Encounter power Daily power
1,000	2	+1	Utility power
2,250	3	—	Encounter power
3,750	4	+1	Ability score increase
5,500	5	—	Daily power
7,500	6	+1	Utility power
10,000	7	—	Encounter power
13,000	8	+1	Ability score increase
16,500	9	—	Daily power
20,500	10	+1	Utility power

Level 1: Channel Divinity

Once per encounter you can invoke divine power, filling yourself with the might of your patron deity. With the divine might you invoke, you can wield special powers such as *divine fortune* and *turn undead*. Some clerics learn other uses for this ability by choosing feats that grant additional channel divinity powers.

Benefit: You gain the *divine fortune* and *turn undead* powers. You can use only one channel divinity power per encounter.

Divine Fortune

Your deity's power blesses the next act you attempt in battle, whether that is an attack against your enemies or an effort to throw off a hindering condition.

Divine Fortune — **Cleric Utility**

In the face of peril, you hold true to your faith and receive a special boon.

Encounter ✦ Channel Divinity, Divine
Free Action **Personal**
Effect: You gain a +1 bonus to your next attack roll or saving throw before the end of your next turn.
Special: You can use only one channel divinity power per encounter.

Turn Undead

Undeath mocks the natural progression of mortality, and most gods demand that their servants lay low the undead at any cost. Channeling your deity's power through your holy symbol, you sear undead creatures with divine radiance and drive them back.

Turn Undead — **Cleric Attack**

You sear undead foes, push them back, and root them in place.

Encounter ✦ Channel Divinity, Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each undead creature in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and you push the target a number of squares up to 3 + your Charisma modifier. The target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.
Level 11: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Level 21: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Special: You can use only one channel divinity power per encounter.

Level 1: Healer's Lore

Your study of healing allows you to make the most of your healing prayers.

Benefit: When you restore hit points to a creature by using a cleric power that has the healing keyword, add your Wisdom modifier to the hit points regained, but only if the healing involves the creature spending a healing surge.

Level 1: Healing Word

Healing word allows you to invigorate and restore your allies. As you gain levels, you can restore more hit points with each use.

Healing word is a close burst, but it affects only one creature. You can use this power without provoking opportunity attacks, but remember that you must still be within range of the ally who needs healing.

Benefit: You gain the *healing word* power.

Healing Word — **Cleric Utility**

You utter a soothing word that mends wounds of the body and spirit.

Encounter (Special) ✦ Healing
Minor Action **Close** burst 5 (10 at 11th level, 15 at 21st level)
Target: You or one ally in the burst
Effect: The target can spend a healing surge and regain 1d6 additional hit points.
Level 6: 2d6 additional hit points.
Level 11: 3d6 additional hit points.
Level 16: 4d6 additional hit points.
Level 21: 5d6 additional hit points.
Level 26: 6d6 additional hit points.
Special: You can use this power twice per encounter, but only once per round. At 16th level, you can use this power three times per encounter.

Level 1: Ritual Casting

Many supernatural abilities take the form of holy ceremonies and special rites, rather than prayers meant for use in the thick of battle. Templars are typically armed with a variety of useful rituals, giving them access to powerful magical solutions to the various challenges they encounter during their travels.

As you gain levels, you automatically gain access to new rituals, but you can also buy new rituals or acquire them during your adventures. Any ritual caster can learn any ritual, but you are especially talented at rituals based on the Heal or Religion skills. Most of these are rituals that allow you to divine hidden information,

augur the success or failure of your efforts, and heal creatures afflicted by unusual curses or diseases.

Benefit: You gain the Ritual Caster feat as a bonus feat, allowing you to use magical rituals.

In addition, you possess a ritual book, and it contains two 1st-level rituals of your choice that you have mastered.

Ritual Caster

Prerequisite: Trained in Arcana or Religion

Benefit: You can master and perform rituals of your level or lower. Even though some rituals use the Heal skill or the Nature skill, the Arcana skill or the Religion skill is required to understand how to perform rituals.

Level 1: At-Will Powers

You have been invested with the authority to wield divine power. The ancient prayers and recitations of your faith are charged with holy energy for you. They are a shield against evil and a weapon against your enemies; no matter how often you call upon these familiar verses, they will not fail you.

Benefit: You gain two 1st-level cleric at-will attack powers of your choice.

Lance of Faith

Holy light is a powerful weapon against the forces of darkness. It dispels the pall of evil that shadows the wicked, revealing them to those who serve the light. This prayer creates a single blazing ray from your holy symbol to scour your foe; the light outlines the target, guiding one of your allies in his or her attacks.

Lance of Faith — **Cleric Attack 1**

A brilliant ray of light sears your foe with golden radiance. Sparkles of light linger around the target, guiding your ally's attack.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and one ally you can see gains a +2 power bonus to his or her next attack roll against the target.
Level 21: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.

Priest's Shield

Your sacred duty is to confront the wicked and guard the righteous from harm. Speak this prayer as you strike boldly, and a flicker of pale light plays over a nearby ally to deflect attacks from that friend for a short time.

Priest's Shield — **Cleric Attack 1**

You utter a minor defensive prayer to protect a comrade as you attack with your weapon.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you and one ally adjacent to you gains a +1 power bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.
Level 21: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Righteous Brand

Not only do your powers shield your allies from harm, they mark the wicked for justice. The strike of your weapon leaves behind a glowing brand on your foe. The brand provides righteous power to the attacks one of your friends or followers makes against the foe you struck.

Righteous Brand — **Cleric Attack 1**

You smite your foe with your weapon and brand it with a ghostly, glowing symbol of your deity's anger. By naming one of your allies when the symbol appears, you add divine power to that ally's attacks against the branded foe.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and one ally within 5 squares of you gains a +3 power bonus to melee attack rolls against the target until the end of your next turn.
Level 21: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Sacred Flame
The holy light burns evil, but for the virtuous, its touch is a healing balm. With this prayer you sear an enemy with radiant power, while at the same time you help an ally to shake off a lingering debility or guard your friend from future blows.

Sacred Flame — **Cleric Attack 1**

You bathe your enemy in sacred light, searing it in radiance. You call out to one of your comrades, invigorating him or her with the sight of holy power.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and one ally you can see chooses either to make a saving throw or to gain temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier + one-half your level.
Level 21: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.

Level 1: Encounter Power
More powerful than the prayers you can wield whenever you like, these battle prayers require you to focus your inner strength and faith as you speak the holy words. The effort is not easily repeated, so you must rest a short time before you can use one of these prayers again.

Benefit: You gain a 1st-level cleric encounter attack power of your choice.

Cause Fear
The supernatural power the gods have placed in your hands can overwhelm beasts and mortals alike, who quail in the presence of divine anger. Even the most savage beast or vilest villain is driven back by the wrathful power in your prayer.

Cause Fear — **Cleric Attack 1**

Your holy symbol ignites with the fury of your god. Uncontrollable terror grips your enemy, causing it to instantly recoil.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Fear, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: The target is compelled to take a free action to move as far away from you as it can, moving a number of squares equal to its speed + your Charisma modifier. It avoids hindering terrain and difficult terrain if it can. This movement is not considered forced movement, so it provokes opportunity attacks.

Divine Glow
You learn a prayer that creates a searing flash of holy light from your holy symbol. Its perfect light singes several nearby enemies, but at the same time any of your friends who are touched by the light are strengthened and guided by its holy power. For a short time their attacks strike with uncanny accuracy.

Divine Glow — **Cleric Attack 1**

With a quick prayer, you invoke a blast of white radiance from your holy symbol. Foes burn in its stern light, but your allies are heartened and guided by it.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Target: Each enemy in the blast
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: Each ally in the blast gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Healing Strike
With one hand a cleric heals, and with the other she smites. *Healing strike* is the embodiment of your role in battle; your prayer charges your mace with radiant power to lay low your foe, and with a successful strike the same holy energy heals you or a nearby ally.

Healing Strike — **Cleric Attack 1**

You call out your god's might to your enemy as you strike, challenging your foe. Your deity bestows a minor blessing of healing upon you or an ally.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and you mark the target until the end of your next turn. In addition, you or one ally within 5 squares of you can spend a healing surge.

Wrathful Thunder

The rumble of thunder has always served as a portent of divine anger. With this prayer, the swing of your mace gains the power of a thunderbolt. The foe you smite is struck half senseless and dazed for a short time.

Wrathful Thunder — Cleric Attack 1

Calling upon the divine anger of your god, you bring forth a thunderclap as you strike your foe, dazing it.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 1: Daily Power

The most potent divine powers at your command require you to concentrate all of your devotion, faith, and determination into an inner blaze of holy resolve. By joining your utmost devotion to the holy words of your faith's most ancient and sacred verses, you can wield battle prayers of great power—but any one of these mighty powers is too much to speak aloud more than once in a day.

Benefit: You gain a 1st-level cleric daily attack power of your choice.

Avenging Flame

Some of the most useful cleric prayers take the form of divine curses or punishments that compel your foes to mend their wicked ways. *Avenging flame* kindles holy blue flames around your foe with your weapon's strike. Each time your enemy seeks to reply, the flames burn hotter. Destruction is certain unless your enemy refrains from striking back.

Avenging Flame — Cleric Attack 1

You imbue your weapon with divine fire and attack your enemy. Flames spread from it to your foe, avenging each attack it dares to make.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fire, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). If the target attacks on its turn, it can't make a saving throw against the ongoing damage on that turn.
Miss: Half damage.

Beacon of Hope

Many people are heartened by the ancient words of faith; this prayer charges those same words with the power of healing as well. An invisible mantle of supernatural calm and hopefulness spreads from your shoulders, restoring the vigor of any friend who stands close by you and amplifying the effects of your own healing abilities. What bolsters your friends discourages your enemies, sapping their strength with a wave of crushing despair.

Beacon of Hope — Cleric Attack 1

You release a burst of divine energy that weakens your foes even as it heals your allies. The energy lingers within your holy symbol for a short time, improving your ability to heal your allies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Implement
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: The target is weakened until the end of its next turn.
Effect: You and each ally in the burst regain 5 hit points. Until the end of the encounter, whenever you restore hit points with a healing power, the recipient regains 5 additional hit points.

Cascade of Light

This prayer summons a single slanting shaft of argent light from overhead, enveloping your enemy in a silvery cascade. The light burns with radiant power, and as long as it clings to your enemy, all of your prayers and attacks against the foe are heightened in effect.

Cascade of Light — Cleric Attack 1

You raise your holy symbol and sear your foe with divine radiance.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 to all damage from your attacks (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Guardian of Faith

From time to time, the gods send angelic presences into the mortal world to guard their favored servants in battle. You have mastered a prayer to conjure an ephemeral guardian in times of need. Depending on the deities you venerate, the guardian might take the shape of a heavenly legionnaire, a fiery angel, or even a long-dead ancestor or loved one returned to protect you from harm . . . but whatever its form, its presence is a threat your enemies must respect.

Guardian of Faith — Cleric Attack 1

You conjure a ghostly guardian, which glows with your deity's symbol. It emits a burst of painful radiance against your enemies if they move too close to it.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Effect: You conjure a guardian in an unoccupied square within range. The guardian occupies its square, although creatures can move through it. The guardian lasts until the end of the encounter. Any enemy that ends its turn adjacent to the guardian is subject to a Wisdom vs. Fortitude attack. On a hit, the attack deals 1d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Move Action: You move the guardian up to 3 squares.

Level 2: Utility Power

Not all battle prayers are meant to chastise your enemies. Many instead arm you with miraculous powers of healing or allow you to bestow powerful blessings on those who stand beside you. The power of these prayers varies greatly from one to the next; some can be used again after only a few minutes, while others are so potent that you can employ them only once per day.

Benefit: You gain a 2nd-level cleric utility power of your choice.

Bless

With this benediction, you call upon your patron deity or deities to favor you and your allies in battle. Holy power strengthens arms, inspires zeal, and sweeps away momentary weakness and hesitation in all who hear the words of your prayer.

Bless — Cleric Utility 2

You beseech your deity to bless you and your allies.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 20
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target gains a +1 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of the encounter.

Cure Light Wounds

Clerics are by definition expert battle healers. *Healing word* is your primary way of countering the wounds, injuries, and other damage your comrades suffer in the good fight, but you might feel the need to arm yourself with even more curative power. *Cure light wounds* permits you to close cuts, knit flesh, or staunch bleeding with a mere touch.

Cure Light Wounds — Cleric Utility 2

You utter a simple prayer, and your touch momentarily suffuses you or a wounded creature with a dim silver light that heals minor injuries.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: You or one creature
Effect: The target regains hit points as if it had spent a healing surge.

Divine Aid

Many monsters and villains rely on attacks that hinder or weaken heroes in addition to damaging them. As important as it might be to keep your allies on their feet, sometimes it's more important to help them shed debilitating conditions. *Divine aid* calls down your deity's grace on a hero in need.

Divine Aid — Cleric Utility 2

You request your deity to grant you or one of your allies the strength to overcome a hindrance.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target makes a saving throw with a bonus equal to your Charisma modifier.

Sanctuary

This defensive prayer cloaks the recipient in an aura of peace. Even in the middle of a fierce battle, enemies might seem to lose interest in attacking the protected person, and those that persist discover that the prayer provides a powerful defense. Of course, anyone protected by *sanctuary* must refrain from attacking, or else the power of the prayer is broken.

Sanctuary — Cleric Utility 2

You cast a protective ward upon a creature that makes enemies' attacks less effective.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You or one creature
Effect: The target gains a +5 bonus to all defenses. The effect lasts until the target attacks or until the end of your next turn.

Shield of Faith Through this power, your faith protects you and your allies. In great battles of the past, clerics used *shield of faith* for its defensive value and also to create a rallying point for their allies.

Shield of Faith — Cleric Utility 2

A gleaming shield of divine energy appears over you, granting you and nearby allies protection against attacks.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target gains a +2 power bonus to AC until the end of the encounter.

Level 3: Encounter Power

At 3rd level you gain another encounter attack power. The prayers you can choose from at this level are a little more powerful than the prayers you learned as a beginning adventurer, but your inner strength has grown as well; you can wield these powers in battle with confidence.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric encounter attack power of your level or lower.

Blazing Beacon When you charge your weapon with this prayer, your strike leaves behind a shining symbol or a rune floating above your enemy's head. This holy rune bestows a powerful blessing upon any ranged attack your allies attempt against the foe. The ranger's arrows, the rogue's sling stones, and even some of the wizard's spells all strike with uncanny accuracy while the holy beacon blazes.

Blazing Beacon — Cleric Attack 3

You invoke your deity's name, and holy light envelops your weapon. When you strike your foe, you brand it with a beacon of blazing light that guides your allies' distant attacks against it.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and ranged attack rolls against the target gain a +4 power bonus until the end of your next turn.

Command Divine authority fills your voice as you speak a word of command to your enemy, compelling the subject to obey. Depending on the circumstances, commands such as "Flee," "Kneel," "Grovel," "Surrender," or "Approach" might be appropriate. Most foes can resist the compulsion (with some effort), so it is unlikely that you can compel an enemy to stop fighting or to injure himself–but forcing your foe to hesitate, retreat a few steps, or fall to his knees can be very useful.

Command — Cleric Attack 3

You utter a single command backed by divine will that requires obedience from your foe, directing it to move as you wish or to fall to the ground.

Encounter ✦ Charm, Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn. In addition, you can either slide the target a number of squares up to 3 + your Charisma modifier or knock the target prone.

Daunting Light You lead the way in battle because many of your prayers serve to guide the attacks of allies whose strikes follow yours. *Daunting light* is an excellent example. Not only do you smite a foe with a fierce column of holy light lancing down from above, your attack dazzles the enemy so that he doesn't see the threat posed by one of your allies.

Daunting Light — Cleric Attack 3

A burning column of light engulfs your foe. Its brilliance burns your enemy and hinders its defenses for a short time.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: One ally you can see gains combat advantage against the target until the end of your next turn.

Split the Sky

The power of a divine thunderbolt accumulates in your weapon as you intone the words of this prayer. When your strike lands, you send your enemy flying back and blast it off its feet.

Split the Sky — **Cleric Attack 3**

As you strike, you invoke ancient words of holy wrath that rumble with the power of storm clouds, causing your foe to stumble backward and fall.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier thunder damage, and you push the target up to 2 squares and knock it prone.

Level 4: Ability Score Increase

Your constant training hones your body and mind.

Benefit: You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

Level 5: Daily Power

Your faith and understanding continue to grow, and with them so does your ability to wield the power you have been granted. Before, you could use a daily power only once without requiring a long rest to replenish your abilities, but now you can call on prayers of this sort twice in a day. These prayers are so powerful that their effects linger or inhibit a foe even if your attack misses.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric daily attack power of your level or lower.

Consecrated Ground

Most shrines, temples, and burial grounds are sanctified by various minor rituals, but with this prayer you can consecrate the ground on which you stand with a few powerful words. Any villain or monster that dares to remain on the ground you have made holy suffers damage, but your friends find that this same power salves the sorely wounded.

Consecrated Ground — **Cleric Attack 5**

You create a crackling web of radiant light upon the ground around you that you can move at your whim. Enemies within the light suffer the wrath of your deity, while you and your allies bask in it.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Any enemy that starts its turn in the zone takes 1d6 + your Charisma modifier radiant damage. If you or any ally of yours is bloodied and starts his or her turn in the zone, he or she regains hit points equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.

Rune of Peace

Like *righteous brand* or *blazing beacon*, this prayer creates a holy sigil that hovers near the foe you smite with your weapon. In this case, the rune's power subdues and pacifies the foe, preventing it from raising its hand against the righteous—you and your allies.

Rune of Peace — **Cleric Attack 5**

You smash your weapon into your foe, leaving behind a glowing rune that prevents your enemy from making attacks.

Daily ✦ Charm, Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Will
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target cannot attack (save ends).
Miss: The target cannot attack you until the end of your next turn.

Spiritual Weapon

You have learned to conjure a glowing blade or bludgeon made of light that floats in the air, an image of your deity's chosen weapon. At your command, the weapon slashes and stabs at your enemies, serving as a tangible sign of your deity's disfavor.

Spiritual Weapon — Cleric Attack 5

You conjure a glowing weapon adorned with the symbol of your deity. The weapon attacks one of your foes and guides your allies' attacks against that same enemy.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + Wisdom modifier damage.
Effect: You conjure a weapon in a square occupied by the target. The weapon lasts until the end of your next turn. Your allies have combat advantage against any enemy in the weapon's square.
Move Action: You move the weapon up to 10 squares into the space of an enemy within range.
Sustain Minor: You can repeat the attack against an enemy in the weapon's square, and the weapon persists until the end of your next turn.

Weapon of the Gods

With this prayer you charge a single weapon with radiant power. For the rest of the battle, it releases a burst of holy power against whomever the wielder smites. You might wield the energized weapon yourself, or you could find it more useful to speak this prayer over a weapon belonging to one of your allies.

Weapon of the Gods — Cleric Attack 5

The weapon you touch glows with divine radiance, enhancing its attacks.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Melee** touch
Target: One held weapon
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the target deals 1d6 extra radiant damage when used to make a weapon attack. In addition, whenever an enemy is hit by a weapon attack using the target, that enemy takes a –2 penalty to AC until the end of the next turn of the target's wielder.

Level 6: Utility Power

Along with the increasing variety and power of your offensive prayers, you steadily add to your selection of prayers that serve solely to heal and support. You learn another utility power.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric utility power of your level or lower.

Bastion of Health

If you are the only hero in your adventuring band who has access to healing powers, or if you find that your comrades favor an especially reckless approach to battle, you might find it necessary to maximize your capacity for healing. This prayer calls upon your wounded companion's natural powers of recovery, chasing away fatigue and accelerating the normal healing process as if your friend had just rested for hours.

Bastion of Health — Cleric Utility 6

You invoke a prayer that instantly fortifies one of your allies.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target can spend a healing surge and regains additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Cure Serious Wounds

Sometimes an ally is so gravely wounded that an ordinary healing prayer simply won't get him or her back into the fight. This powerful prayer is almost twice as effective as other healing abilities. In contrast to *bastion of health*, *cure serious wounds* can be used only once per day—but it can turn the tide of a battle by restoring a bloodied ally to full health, or saving an ally from almost certain defeat.

Cure Serious Wounds — Cleric Utility 6

You utter a simple prayer and gain the power to instantly heal wounds. Your touch suffuses you or a wounded creature with a bright silver light that restores health and vigor.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: You or one creature
Effect: The target regains hit points as if it had spent two healing surges.

Divine Vigor

Like the other healing utility powers available to you, *divine vigor* helps you to keep your allies on their feet and in the fight. However, this prayer offers the ability to affect every hero in your party at once by refreshing each one's ability to benefit from a short breather in the middle of battle by taking a second wind. Dwarf clerics are especially fond of *divine vigor*, since it helps them take advantage of their race's natural hardiness and resilience.

Divine Vigor — Cleric Utility 6

You call upon your deity to invigorate you and your battle-weary allies.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target regains the use of his or her second wind.

Holy Lantern

Light is a powerful weapon against darkness—both spiritual and physical. With this prayer you conjure an intangible lamp or beacon that glows softly with holy light. It lasts for hours, hovering near you. Many an adventuring party lost in the tunnels of the Underdark has been saved from a grim and terrible fate by a cleric's ability to illuminate its path.

Holy Lantern — Cleric Utility 6

You conjure a beam of divine light that shines like a lantern, piercing shadows and deception.

At-Will ✦ Conjuration, Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 3
Effect: You conjure a holy lantern in a square within range. The lantern sheds bright light in its square and within a 5-square radius. You and your allies gain a +2 power bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks while in the light. The lantern lasts for 10 hours or until you use this power again.
Minor Action: You move the lantern up to your speed.

Level 7: Encounter Power

The gods smile upon your courage and devotion, rewarding you with even greater ability to call upon the divine power with which you have been invested. You gain another encounter attack power, giving you greater endurance in battle and increasing your options for dealing with your foes.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric encounter attack power of your level or lower.

Awe Strike

The touch of divine power can be an overwhelming experience for the wicked. With this prayer you mantle yourself in an unseen aura of might and dread; when your blow lands, your enemy is rooted to the spot in terror for a short time.

Awe Strike — Cleric Attack 7

You call on your deity's immortal power, infusing your attack with supernatural energy that leaves your enemy momentarily frozen with terror.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Fear, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Will
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Break the Spirit

This prayer infuses the subject with the harsh light of divine judgment. Doubts, fears, and weaknesses swim to the front of the wrongdoer's mind in the merciless glare, disheartening him and sapping his will to fight with his full strength and skill.

Break the Spirit — Cleric Attack 7

You bathe your enemy in the agonizing radiance of your deity, stealing the strength from its impending attacks.

Encounter ✦ Charm, Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn. The penalty equals your Charisma modifier.

Searing Light

The most brilliant manifestations of holy light literally strike your enemies blind. An enemy struck by *searing light* is momentarily unable to see, which means that he or she is very unlikely to mount an effective counterattack and is an easy target for your allies.

Searing Light — Cleric Attack 7

You raise your holy symbol and lance your foe with a blistering ray of light that blinds it for a short time.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of your next turn.

Strengthen the Faithful

Much like *healing strike*, *strengthen the faithful* allows you to both smite and heal at the same stroke. You deal a mighty blow to an enemy, and each ally close to you is washed over by a wave of healing power.

Strengthen the Faithful — **Cleric Attack 7**

You utter a solemn prayer as you attack your foe, invoking the power of your deity to physically bolster yourself and nearby allies.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. In addition, you and each ally adjacent to the target can spend a healing surge and regain additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 8: Ability Score Increase

You reap the reward of constant challenge by increasing your physical and mental well-being.

Benefit: You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

Level 9: Daily Power

You are becoming a hero of great renown, and your divine patrons are taking note of the example you are setting in the mortal world. By your efforts, the power and majesty of the gods is made apparent to friends and foes alike. You learn another daily power to better serve your divine masters.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric daily attack power of your level or lower.

Astral Defenders

This prayer conjures two ephemeral warriors to guard you in battle. They might appear as silver-armored knights or winged angels, but regardless of their form, they pose a keen threat to your foes. Enemies that move past them or ignore their presence provoke opportunity attacks from the defenders' radiant swords.

A city guard unwisely challenges a cleric of Melora

Astral Defenders — **Cleric Attack 9**

You conjure a pair of ghostly soldiers bearing glowing weapons. They lash out against any of your enemies that would fail to heed them.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You conjure two soldiers, each one in a different unoccupied square within range. The soldiers occupy their squares, although creatures can move through them. The soldiers last until the end of the encounter. Each soldier has an opportunity attack that it can use without you taking an opportunity action. When an enemy triggers the attack, the soldier makes a Wisdom vs. Reflex attack against that enemy. On a hit, the attack deals 1d10 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Move Action: You move one soldier or both a total of 3 squares.

Blade Barrier

A spectacular and deadly prayer, *blade barrier* conjures a wall of whirling razorlike blades made from glowing golden astral energy. You can use it to lash your enemies by summoning it where they stand, but it is perhaps most effective as an obstacle—few foes are willing to dare the flying blades by crossing the barrier.

Blade Barrier — Cleric Attack 9

A barrier of whirling blades appears, slashing at those who come too close or try to pass through.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Area** wall 5 within 10 squares
Effect: You conjure a wall of spinning astral blades that lasts until the end of your next turn. The wall can be up to 2 squares high. The wall's squares are difficult terrain. Any creature that enters the wall or starts its turn there takes 3d6 + Wisdom modifier damage, plus ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Sustain Minor: The wall persists until the end of your next turn.

Divine Power

This prayer floods your body with divine energy, giving you the ability to make a great, sweeping strike with your weapon against any enemy close to you. The energy lingers, fortifying you; for the duration of the battle you heal at an extraordinary rate, and you (and any ally nearby when you used the prayer) are warded from enemy blows.

Divine Power — Cleric Attack 9

You swing your weapon in a wide arc, driving back foes and creating a halo of divine energy that fortifies you and your allies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each enemy you can see in the burst
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and you can push the target 1 square.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you have regeneration 5 while you are bloodied, and you and each ally in the burst gain a +2 power bonus to AC.

Flame Strike

As a direct manifestation of divine wrath, few prayers can match the terrible splendor and power of *flame strike*. A pillar of fire rushing down from above, the sudden flash of its heat and the thundering roar of its combustion seem to fill the world for an instant. Because the flame is indiscriminate in who and what it burns, try to avoid catching your allies in the burst.

Flame Strike — Cleric Attack 9

You call forth a column of holy flame to engulf your foes.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier fire damage, and ongoing 5 + Wisdom modifier fire damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Level 10: Utility Power

At the height of the heroic tier, you gain access to your most powerful non-attack power.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric utility power of your level or lower.

Astral Refuge

When battle presses so closely that a wounded ally faces certain death before your healing powers can restore her strength, *astral refuge* offers safety. Your prayer shifts your ally away from the mortal world into an extra-planar refuge, giving her time to recover before resuming the fight.

Astral Refuge — Cleric Utility 10

With a touch, you send one of your allies to a sequestered location in the Astral Sea, where he or she can recuperate for a brief time before rejoining the battle.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One ally
Effect: The target is removed from play. The target is gone for his or her next two turns and reappears at the start of the third. Until the target reappears, he or she can spend a healing surge on each of his or her turns, but cannot take any actions. When the effect ends, the target reappears in the space he or she last occupied or in the nearest unoccupied space.

Knights of Unyielding Valor

Much like *guardian of faith* and *astral defenders*, this prayer summons an angelic presence to aid you—four phantasmal warriors bearing great shields. The knights do not attack, but they block your enemies and use their shields to cover your allies.

Knights of Unyielding Valor Cleric Utility 10

You conjure four ghostly knights, which carry shields emblazoned with the symbol of your deity.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You conjure four ghostly knights, each occupying a different square within range. The knights last until the end of the encounter. They grant partial cover to you and your allies. Enemies can't enter the knights' spaces, but you and your allies can move through them. The knights can't attack or be attacked or damaged.
Move Action: You move each knight up to 2 squares.

Mass Cure Light Wounds

This potent healing prayer allows you to aid multiple allies at the same time, essentially bestowing a *cure light wounds* power on each wounded comrade within range.

Mass Cure Light Wounds Cleric Utility 10

With a wave of your hand, healing motes of silver light engulf you and all nearby allies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target regains hit points equal to his or her healing surge value, plus additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Shielding Word

Consisting of but a single word, this prayer instantly bolsters the defenses of an ally who is about to be hit. You can use it when it's not your turn, interrupting enemy attacks as they occur.

Shielding Word Cleric Utility 10

You call out a quick prayer to instantly defend a nearby ally from harm.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** 5
Trigger: An ally within 5 squares of you is hit by an attack
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: The target gains a +4 power bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.

Paragon Templar

Having mastered the fundamental powers of your profession, you now concentrate on refining your skill. In the paragon tier, your capabilities improve to match the demons, titans, and similar enemies you might face.

At 11th level, you choose a paragon path (see pages 29–33 for a selection of cleric paragon paths).

TEMPLAR PARAGON TIER

Total XP	Level	Feats Known	Class Features and Powers
26,000	11	+1	Ability score increase Paragon path features
32,000	12	+1	Paragon path feature
39,000	13	–	Encounter power
47,000	14	+1	Ability score increase
57,000	15	–	Daily power
69,000	16	+1	Utility power Paragon path feature
83,000	17	–	Encounter power
99,000	18	+1	Ability score increase
119,000	19	–	Daily power
143,000	20	+1	Paragon path feature

Level 11: Ability Score Increase

Your improved physical and mental prowess highlights your entrance into the paragon tier.

Benefit: Each of your ability scores increases by 1.

Level 11: Paragon Path Features

The paragon path you choose provides you with one or more features that you gain right away.

Benefit: You gain features associated with your paragon path.

Level 12: Paragon Path Feature

As you begin your climb through the paragon tier, you gain another ability from your paragon path.

Benefit: You gain a feature (typically a utility power) associated with your paragon path.

Level 13: Encounter Power

You are now a cleric of the paragon tier, and it is time to leave behind one of the encounter attack powers you first relied on when you began your adventuring career, learning a new and more powerful prayer in its place.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric encounter attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the encounter attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level encounter attack power).

Arc of the Righteous

Lightning is a powerful expression of divine displeasure. This prayer charges your weapon with the crackling energy of a lightning bolt, which is released when you smite your foe. The bolt then leaps to another foe nearby, shocking it as well.

Arc of the Righteous — **Cleric Attack 13**

You channel your god's divine wrath into your weapon as lightning, striking your foe and sending an arc of lightning at another nearby enemy.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Lightning, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier lightning damage. Make the secondary attack.

Secondary Attack
Close burst 3
Secondary Target: One creature in the burst
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier lightning damage.

Inspiring Strike

Great power is contained in holy verses. When you speak the words of a sacred verse and strike your enemy, that power fires you or your ally with divine inspiration. Most healing powers require the recipient to spend one or more healing surges, but *inspiring strike* heals without limitation.

Inspiring Strike — **Cleric Attack 13**

You pray to your god as you attack, asking for a healing boon for yourself or an ally. Your prayer is rewarded when you strike your enemy.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you or an ally within 5 squares of you regains hit points equal to 15 + your Charisma modifier.

Mantle of Glory

Raising high your holy symbol, you bring forth a blast of glorious white light, bathing friend and foe alike in a wide area. The radiance sears foes caught in the blast, but it heals your allies at the same time.

Mantle of Glory — **Cleric Attack 13**

Whispering a prayer to your deity, you invoke a blast of radiant light from your holy symbol. Your foes burn in its glorious light, while your allies are fortified by it.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Close** blast 5
Target: Each enemy in the blast
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: Each ally in the blast can spend a healing surge.

Plague of Doom

This dire prayer inflicts a divine curse upon your foe, crippling it with stabbing pains. In addition to dealing damage, it weakens the target's defenses for a time, perhaps rendering a tough enemy more vulnerable to your allies' attacks.

Plague of Doom — **Cleric Attack 13**

You whisper an ancient battle prayer and send jolts of wracking pain through your enemy to weaken its defenses.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target takes a penalty to all defenses until the end of your next turn. The penalty equals your Charisma modifier.

Level 14: Ability Score Increase

Each new challenge only makes you stronger in body and mind.

Benefit: You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

Level 15: Daily Power

Your divine powers are becoming formidable indeed, and what seemed like a prayer of great power when you began your adventuring career now pales in comparison to the powers you can wield.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric daily attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the daily attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level daily attack power).

Holy Spark

This prayer strongly resembles *arc of the righteous*, but the divine lightning you invoke does not dissipate in a single stroke. It clings to your enemy, continuing to shock and sear the target. In addition, any of the target's allies that stray too close are lashed by holy lightning too.

Holy Spark — **Cleric Attack 15**

You infuse your weapon with holy energy and strike your enemy, engulfing the foe in glowing arcs of crackling lightning that lance out at any of its allies that approach it.

Daily ✦ Divine, Lightning, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Will
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier lightning damage, and ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends). Until the ongoing damage ends, any ally of the target that starts its turn within 3 squares of the target takes 10 lightning damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Purifying Fire

Fire has long been the means by which the gods erase works of sin and folly. This prayer calls down a scourge of divine flames that ignite any enemy in the area and burn the unfortunates to ash. Yet the same divine combustion is a balm to the righteous, healing any of your allies who stand near the burning foes.

Purifying Fire — **Cleric Attack 15**

You engulf your foes in divine fire that continues to burn. The cleansing flames provide relief to you and your allies, healing those who move near your burning enemies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fire, Healing, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). You or any ally regains hit points equal to 5 + your Charisma modifier when starting his or her turn adjacent to one or more targets taking the ongoing damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Seal of Warding

This prayer creates a ring of holy sigils in the air around you, warding the area against enemy movement or attacks. The sigils are charged with radiant energy, searing any foe close by you when you use the power.

Seal of Warding — **Cleric Attack 15**

You create a circle of faintly glowing symbols around you that hinders enemy movement and protects you and your allies from ranged attacks.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 4d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone is difficult terrain for your enemies. You and your allies have partial cover against ranged attacks while in the zone.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 16: Paragon Path Feature

You are now in the upper half of the paragon tier. To mark this status, you gain a new feature of your paragon path.

Benefit: You gain a feature associated with your paragon path.

Level 16: Utility Power

These prayers might not offer many ways to strike directly at your foes, but they can easily sway a battle in your favor or help you to save an ally in grave danger.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric utility power of your level or lower.

Astral Shield

This prayer creates a shield of silvery astral energy. Any who stand near are protected against enemy attack. It is not an impervious defense, but it can be very useful when your enemies press you closely.

Astral Shield — **Cleric Utility 16**

You conjure a shimmering silver shield, which you can then move around the battlefield to provide protection where it is needed most.

Encounter ✦ Conjuration, Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Effect: You conjure an astral shield in 1 square within range. The shield lasts until the end of the encounter. You or any ally gains a +2 bonus to AC while in the shield's square or adjacent to it. The shield can't be attacked or damaged.
Move Action: You move the shield up to 3 squares within range.

Cloak of Peace

Like the lower-level power *sanctuary*, *cloak of peace* surrounds the recipient with a powerful aura of peace. As long as the person protected refrains from attacking, the prayer provides a nearly insuperable defense against many forms of attack. It's extremely useful for guarding a wounded ally surrounded by a sea of foes, or for escorting someone unskilled in fighting through a desperate battle.

Cloak of Peace — **Cleric Utility 16**

You utter a prayer, placing a mantle of faint silvery light upon yourself or an ally. The mantle repels attacks as long as its wearer doesn't attack.

Daily ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target gains a +5 power bonus to AC and a +10 power bonus to all other defenses until the end of the encounter. These bonuses end if the target makes an attack.

Divine Armor

A powerful blessing in battle, *divine armor* guards all nearby allies with an aura that deflects blows and makes them resistant to all types of injury. Legends tell of seven dwarf temple guards who held the doorway of a shrine for hours against an orc-horde, guarded by the power of this prayer.

Divine Armor — **Cleric Utility 16**

As you mutter a fervent prayer, the power of your god shrouds you and nearby allies in protective motes of silver light.

Daily ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Each target gains both a +2 power bonus to AC and resist 5 to all damage until the end of the encounter.

Hallowed Ground

Holy power protects shrines, temples, and burial places throughout the world; the evil dare not set foot within the proscribed bounds. This prayer allows you to instantly consecrate an area around you, guarding it with the same sort of powerful blessing. You and your allies gain a bonus to your attacks and defenses as long as you are within the area.

Hallowed Ground — **Cleric Utility 16**

You speak a prayer, and the ground around you becomes sanctified, granting you and your allies divine protection.

Daily ✦ Divine, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. You and your allies gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and all defenses while in the zone.

Level 17: Encounter Power

Divine magic arms you and protects you as you progress through the paragon tier. Prayers are your sword and shield against the forces of darkness.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric encounter attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the encounter attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level encounter attack power).

Blinding Light

Your enemies cannot abide the touch of the pure light that you serve. Your weapon glows brightly as you summon the light's power into it; when you strike, the brilliant flash strikes your foe blind for a short time.

Blinding Light — **Cleric Attack 17**

You utter a brief prayer, and a brilliant nimbus of golden light surrounds your weapon, blinding your enemy on impact.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of your next turn.

Enthrall

Divine authority gathers about you as you begin to recite a powerful verse from the old texts of your faith. Enemies are rooted to the spot by the power in your voice, and they suffer mortal anguish as they are forced to confront the depths of their own wickedness and failures.

Enthrall — **Cleric Attack 17**

You recite a verse from an ancient holy text. The power of those words wounds your enemies and hampers their attacks against you.

Encounter ✦ Charm, Divine, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage. Until the end of your next turn, the target is immobilized and cannot attack you.

Sentinel Strike

Not only does this prayer charge your weapon for a crushing blow against your enemy, it provides one ally of your choice with absolute protection against your enemy's attacks for a short time. This is an excellent way to safeguard an ally who might be in danger, but be warned—if the foe you strike can't harm your comrade, he might turn on you.

Sentinel Strike — **Cleric Attack 17**

You imbue your weapon with divine power and then strike. Your foe is overcome by the power of your god, foiling its attacks against a chosen ally.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage. Choose one ally within 5 squares of you. Until the end of your next turn, the damage of the target's attacks against that ally is reduced to 0.

Thunderous Word

Sacred texts record a handful of names and words so holy that merely speaking one aloud smites your enemies with a powerful blow. *Thunderous word* is one such; when you speak it, your enemies are driven back a great distance and take significant damage. Allies in the area are not harmed, and in fact gain the opportunity to improve their positions. Use this prayer to rearrange the battlefield to your advantage.

Thunderous Word — **Cleric Attack 17**

You shout a word of power that thrusts your enemies back while allowing your allies to reposition themselves.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Thunder
Standard Action **Close** blast 5
Target: Each enemy in the blast
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + Wisdom modifier thunder damage, and you push the target a number of squares up to 3 + your Charisma modifier.
Effect: Each ally in the blast can shift 1 square as a free action.

Level 18: Ability Score Increase

You are a true paragon of physical and mental achievement.

Benefit: You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

Level 19: Daily Power

The most powerful prayers of the paragon tier, these mighty invocations are almost miraculous in their effects. Wield them with care; only a few mortals are entrusted with such divine might.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric daily attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the daily attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level daily attack power).

Fire Storm

Like *flame strike* and *purifying fire*, this prayer places holy fire in your hands—the most fearsome agency of divine destruction. The true and righteous need not fear, for the flames will not touch them—but any foe that defies you is consumed. If you need to, you can sustain the searing storm in place, creating a wide area where no enemy can long remain.

Fire Storm — Cleric Attack 19

A roiling cloud of fire scours your foes, lingering until you allow it to burn itself out.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fire, Implement, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 3 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + Wisdom modifier fire damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 1d10 + your Wisdom modifier fire damage.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.

Holy Wrath

The light sustains and invigorates you even as it blisters those that are the enemies of your god. Any foe near you when you use this prayer is seared, and for the rest of the battle the holy light bathing you swiftly closes your wounds and strengthens your attacks.

Holy Wrath — Cleric Attack 19

You bring down the wrath of your god upon your foes in a burst of furious light that shines from your weapon. It scours your enemies even as it fortifies you.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you gain regeneration 10 while you are bloodied and a +2 power bonus to attack rolls.

Indomitable Spirit

Filled by the intangible presence of your divine patron, you deal your foe a stern blow with your weapon. Even if you miss, your enemy still takes damage. In addition, the spirit in you heals you and all allies nearby.

Indomitable Spirit — Cleric Attack 19

The divine power of your mighty attack fortifies your allies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: You and each ally within 5 squares of you regain hit points as if you had each spent a healing surge.

Knight of Glory

The heavens are full of mortal souls chosen to serve the gods after death. With prayers such as *guardian of faith* or *astral defenders*, you channel weak echoes of these saintly spirits, but this prayer conjures a much stronger, more tangible, and more persistent champion of the heavens. It fights skillfully on your behalf, attacking any foe you command it to engage.

Knight of Glory — Cleric Attack 19

You conjure a ghostly warrior clad in the ceremonial armor of your faith. With sword in hand, it attacks your enemies.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You conjure a ghostly knight that occupies 1 square within range, and the knight makes the following melee attack. The knight lasts until the end of your next turn. You can move it up to 5 squares as a move action.
Target: One creature adjacent to the ghostly knight
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + Wisdom modifier damage.
Sustain Minor: The knight persists, and it repeats the attack.

Level 20: Paragon Path Feature

You gain the capstone ability of your paragon path at 20th level.

Benefit: You gain a feature (typically a daily attack power) associated with your paragon path.

Epic Templar

The power you now wield grows in strength to match the same abilities wielded by your deity. Where you once faced the minions of a god or primordial, you now battle such potent foes directly.

When your cleric reaches 21st level, he or she takes on an epic destiny. This epic destiny represents the grand finale of your adventuring career, and like your paragon path, it grants a set of related features and powers.

TEMPLAR EPIC TIER

Total XP	Level	Feats Known	Class Features and Powers
175,000	21	+1	Ability score increase Epic destiny feature
210,000	22	+1	Utility power
255,000	23	—	Encounter power
310,000	24	+1	Ability score increase Epic destiny feature
375,000	25	—	Daily power
450,000	26	+1	Epic destiny feature
550,000	27	—	Encounter power
675,000	28	+1	Ability score increase
825,000	29	—	Daily power
1,000,000	30	+1	Epic destiny feature

Level 21: Ability Score Increase

You have become an epic hero, and your physical strength and mental acuity have expanded beyond normal mortal limits.

Benefit: Each of your ability scores increases by 1.

Level 21: Epic Destiny Feature

Your epic destiny provides you with a feature that you gain when you select that destiny.

Benefit: You gain a feature associated with your epic destiny.

Level 22: Utility Power

At 22nd level, you gain your last cleric utility power. You will continue to learn new attack powers throughout the epic tier, but from this point on your epic destiny determines your utility powers and class features.

Benefit: You gain a new cleric utility power of your level or lower.

Angel of the Eleven Winds

With this prayer, you can grant one ally at a time the ability to fly, and provide that ally with an excellent defensive bonus against opportunity attacks. Not only is flight highly useful in battle, it offers you the ability to overcome otherwise impossible obstacles such as huge chasms, rivers of lava, or sheer walls.

Angel of the Eleven Winds — Cleric Utility 22

You conjure a luminous winged angel with indistinct features that grants protection and the power of flight to an ally.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 10

Effect: You conjure the likeness of an angel that occupies 1 square within range. The angel grants one ally you can see a fly speed of 8 and a +4 power bonus to AC against opportunity attacks. These benefits last until the angel disappears or until you grant them to a different ally, which you can do as a minor action. When the fly speed ends on an ally, that ally descends safely to the ground if he or she has no means of staying aloft. The angel can't move or be attacked or damaged, and it lasts until the end of the encounter.

Clarion Call of the Astral Sea

This prayer resembles *astral refuge*, allowing you to send one comrade (or yourself) to your deity's celestial realm for a short time. The subject returns in the next round, fully healed.

Clarion Call of the Astral Sea — Cleric Utility 22

You beseech your deity for aid. In answer, a heavenly trumpet sounds, and you or an ally is whisked to your god's dominion, restored to full health, and returned to the battlefield.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You or one ally

Effect: The target is removed from play and regains all of his or her hit points. The target can perceive the surroundings of his or her previous location, but can't take actions. At the start of the target's next turn, he or she reappears in an unoccupied space chosen by you within 5 squares of his or her previous location.

Cloud Chariot

This potent conjuration shapes clouds into the form of a flying chariot pulled by a winged horse. It lasts for a day or more, providing you with the ability to fly overland in reasonable comfort and safety. The chariot is usable in battle, but it is limited in that all characters wishing to fight from the air must remain together in the chariot or on the horse.

Cloud Chariot — **Cleric Utility 22**

You conjure a white cloud that coalesces into a chariot pulled by a winged horse that waits to carry your and your companions across the skies.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 2

Effect: You conjure a chariot of cloudstuff that occupies a 2-by-2 space within range, and a winged horse of cloudstuff that occupies a 2-by-2 space adjacent to the chariot. The horse and chariot have a fly speed of 8. You can move the chariot up to its speed as a move action. The chariot can carry up to four Small or Medium creatures, and the horse can hold one Small or Medium rider. The chariot grants partial cover to its occupants. The chariot and horse can't attack or be separated, and they can't be attacked or damaged. They last until you take an extended rest or until you dismiss them as a free action.

Purify

The most dangerous enemies have attacks that poison, charm, stun, cripple, or otherwise hinder you and your companions. Your healing powers are now the match of almost any affliction your foes can employ. You can purge any persistent conditions from all your companions at once with this powerful prayer of healing.

Purify — **Cleric Utility 22**

You wave a hand, releasing golden motes of light that strike nearby allies, ridding them of lingering afflictions.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and each ally in the burst
Effect: Every effect that a save can end is removed from each target.

Spirit of Health

In the most hard-fought battles, your allies might require swifter healing than you can manage alone. *Spirit of health* effectively adds another healer to your party for the duration of the battle by conjuring an angelic presence that bestows healing once per round on your allies.

Spirit of Health — **Cleric Utility 22**

You conjure an insubstantial spirit that hovers in the air nearby and heals your wounded comrades.

Daily ✦ Conjuration, Divine, Healing
Standard Action **Ranged** 10

Effect: You conjure a spirit that appears in 1 square within range. You or any ally adjacent to the spirit or in its square can spend a healing surge as a minor action. The spirit can heal one target per round and regains its healing ability at the start of each of your turns. Creatures can move through the spirit's space. The spirit can't move or be attacked or damaged, and it lasts until the end of the encounter.

Level 23: Encounter Power

The prayers you rely upon in battle after battle continue to grow more powerful in the epic tier. They might not be as awe-inspiring as prayers of daily power, but your ability to call upon them several times a day means that these are potent weapons against the forces of darkness.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric encounter attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the encounter attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level encounter attack power).

Astral Blades of Death

Unlike many other attack powers, *astral blades of death* doesn't shield your allies from injury or aid their attacks. It simply conjures a dozen or more floating blades of astral energy that lash furiously at the target of your ire, dealing excellent damage.

Astral Blades of Death — **Cleric Attack 23**

You invoke a holy phrase. Merciless blades of silvery light suddenly appear around your enemy and begin hacking at it.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 6d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.

Divine Censure

When you speak the words of this prayer, you beg your deity to judge the worth of your foe, pass judgment on his or her wrongs and misdeeds, and make your weapon the vessel for divine punishment. Not only do you strike a sore blow against your foe, your deity's anger inhibits your enemy's attacks for a time.

Divine Censure — **Cleric Attack 23**

With a hushed prayer, you imbue your weapon with the divine might of your god and attack, sending your foe reeling.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Haunting Strike

As a high-ranking servant of your deity, you have the authority to condemn any creature you deem an enemy of the faith. The divine anger you invoke charges your weapon for a single powerful attack; your deity signals his or her approval of your actions by empowering your next strike against the object of your wrath.

Haunting Strike — **Cleric Attack 23**

As you deliver a terrible blow upon your enemy, you invoke a divine curse to make your foe vulnerable to your next attack.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength + 2 vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage. The next attack roll you make against the target gains a +2 power bonus.

Healing Torch

The most powerful cleric prayers heal your allies at the same time that they chastise your foes. Similar to *mantle of glory*, this prayer washes a wide area with a brilliant, holy light. The light burns foes in the area with radiant damage, but heals friends and protects them with a holy blessing.

Healing Torch — **Cleric Attack 23**

Your holy symbol ignites with divine light that sears your foes and bathes you and your friends in a protective, healing glow.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: You and each ally in the burst gain a power bonus to AC equal to your Charisma modifier until the end of your next turn. In addition, you and each ally in the burst can spend a healing surge and regain additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 24: Ability Score Increase

The threats of the epic challenges you face are countered by the perfection of your body and mind.

Benefit: You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

Level 24: Epic Destiny Feature

Your epic destiny continues to transform you, granting you abilities and talents that are beyond the merely mortal.

Benefit: You gain a feature associated with your epic destiny.

Level 25: Daily Power

At this level, daily attack powers are miraculous events. Few enemies indeed can withstand the divine wrath you are now capable of unleashing.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric daily attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the daily attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level daily attack power).

Nimbus of Doom

You beseech your god for the strength to destroy his or her enemies, and your deity responds by granting your wish. The holy purpose filling your weapon deals a blow of staggering power, and a deadly glow of inescapable doom settles over your enemy. Your comrades find that the *nimbus of doom* fatally weakens your enemy's defenses.

Nimbus of Doom Cleric Attack 25

Your attack illuminates your foe with a radiant glow, guiding future attacks against it.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 6[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The target takes a –2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Sacred Word

The ancient language of the gods includes a handful of words that normally cannot be spoken by mere mortals, such as the true names of divine beings, or secret words that encompass the totality of powerful concepts such as truth or good. You know one such word, and you have learned how to speak it aloud. The effort to do so is almost overwhelming, but so are the effects of the word: All enemies close to you are stricken senseless by its power.

Sacred Word Cleric Attack 25

You utter a single word of divine power that damages and stuns the enemies around you.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d10 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Half damage.

Seal of Binding

Tracing a design in the air with your holy symbol, you draw sigils of holy power that appear around your enemy, forming an inescapable prison. The seal holds your enemy powerless and unable to act, at the cost of walling out the attacks of all others. It is best used to hold a powerful enemy out of battle while your companions deal with your foe's minions or followers.

Seal of Binding Cleric Attack 25

Faintly glowing symbols encircle your foe, trapping it.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is stunned and can't be affected by any attack other than this one until the end of your next turn.
Sustain Standard: You take 15 damage, and the target remains stunned and protected against all other attacks until the end of your next turn. You can't sustain this power if you are bloodied.

Seal of Protection

Like *seal of binding*, this prayer creates a ring of sigils glowing with holy power. However, *seal of protection* surrounds you and any companions nearby with the sigils. The seal damages enemies within its bounds, stops enemies that try to enter, and helps to protect you and your allies from enemy attack.

Seal of Protection Cleric Attack 25

You trace a circle of faintly glowing symbols with your weapon. The circle halts your enemies and protects you and your allies from attack.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Strength vs. Reflex
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. You and your allies gain a +2 bonus to AC while in the zone. Any enemy that enters the zone ends its current movement.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.

Level 26: Epic Destiny Feature

At 26th level, your epic destiny provides you with another ability.

Benefit: You gain a feature (typically a utility power) associated with your epic destiny.

Level 27: Encounter Power

At this level you gain your final encounter powers, the most powerful prayers that you can use more than once in a day.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric encounter attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the encounter attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level encounter attack power).

Punishing Strike

A grim, purposeful prayer for swift and certain divine justice, *punishing strike* has long been the signature battle strike of the most powerful champions and priests of Bahamut and Bane, warlike deities who are the principal dispensers of divine punishment among the gods. It is a straightforward weapon attack offering excellent damage, but it is uncannily accurate—you won't often miss with *punishing strike*.

Punishing Strike — Cleric Attack 27

With a simple prayer, you gain a sudden clarity of purpose and empower your weapon with the indomitable might of your deity.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength + 4 vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage.

Sacrificial Healing

Your prayer dedicates the foe you face as a sacrifice to your deity. The enemy's defeat will honor your patron and demonstrate your deity's power for all to see; your god rewards you for smiting your foe in his or her name by bestowing healing on you and your companions.

Sacrificial Healing — Cleric Attack 27

As you spill the blood of your enemy, you whisper a prayer to your deity, who rewards you and your allies with a blessing of health.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage. In addition, you and each ally within 10 squares of you can spend a healing surge and regain additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Scourge of the Unworthy

The great majority of cleric prayers rely on elements associated with holiness or divine action, but *scourge of the unworthy* calls upon unholy power, dealing necrotic damage to the enemy you curse in your deity's name. The gods reserve this terrible punishment for the vilest and most wicked of your foes.

Scourge of the Unworthy — Cleric Attack 27

You utter a divine phrase that lashes your enemy, robbing it of its aggressiveness for a short time.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + Wisdom modifier necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Sunburst

This prayer invokes an explosion of brilliant, holy light as pure and powerful as the dawning of the sun itself. Its touch burns the wicked with radiant damage; like any prayer that employs radiant energy, it is often especially effective against undead. In addition, the touch of *sunburst* grants healing to you and your companions, but this healing does not require you to expend a healing surge.

Sunburst — Cleric Attack 27

You invoke an ancient prayer for succor and retribution, and a brilliant burst of light explodes in front of you, healing your allies and searing your enemies.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: You and each ally in the burst regain hit points equal to 10 + your Charisma modifier and can make a saving throw.

Level 28: Ability Score Increase

Training, practice, and experience have molded your abilities. Even as you near your final destiny, you continue to hone your talents for the tests you will soon face.

Benefit: You increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

Level 29: Daily Power

As your adventures in the mortal world draw to a close, you gain access to the most powerful prayers known to mortals or gods alike.

Benefit: You can gain a new cleric daily attack power of your level or lower. If you do so, this new power must replace one of the daily attack powers you already have from your class (usually your lowest-level daily attack power).

Astral Storm

Long ago the gods imposed order upon the elements of the unformed world, shaping the work of the primordials to suit their creation. This awesome prayer likewise harnesses the powers of primal energy, creating a storm of ice, fire, lightning, and thunder in a wide area to scourge your enemies. You can maintain the storm in place for multiple rounds, pummeling creatures with blasts of lightning as long as they remain in the area.

Astral Storm — **Cleric Attack 29**

You unleash a terrible storm upon your enemies that rains ice, fire, lightning, and thunder down upon them.

Daily ✦ Cold, Divine, Fire, Implement, Lightning, Thunder, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 3 within 20 squares
Primary Target: Each creature in the burst
Primary Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + Wisdom modifier cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of your next turn, and you can make the secondary attack.
Secondary Attack (Divine, Implement, Lightning)
Secondary Target: Each creature in the zone
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier lightning damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Godstrike

This prayer beseeches your deity to guide your arm directly as you prepare to strike. Your deity hears and responds, extending his or her unseen hand to touch your hand or shoulder and pour divine might into your body for one awesome blow.

Godstrike — **Cleric Attack 29**

You call on the direct power of your deity, causing your weapon to burst with brilliant light as you strike your foe.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 7[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Level 30: Epic Destiny Feature

Your epic destiny is fully realized, and you reach the heights of fame and accomplishment for which you have been striving so long. You are mortal no longer!

Benefit: You gain a feature associated with your epic destiny.

Cleric Paragon Paths

Cleric paragon paths typically allow you to devote yourself to a specific order within a religion, an aspect of a deity's power, or a particular expression of divine magic.

Angelic Avenger

Prerequisite: Cleric

You become a special servant of your god, operating with angelic powers to promote the word of your faith. When you use your angelic avenger powers, you briefly take on the aspect of an angel: Your face blurs into beatific blankness, astral wings sprout from your back, and your lower body blurs away.

Level 11: Angelic Action

The divine fervor you have cultivated grows all the stronger when you push yourself beyond your usual limits. Bolstered by your faith, you fight with greater strength and determination.

Benefit: When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you also gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls until the start of your next turn.

Level 11: Astral Vibrance

As you become a living embodiment of divine power, the air around you seethes with energy. Although this energy is too weak to disrupt a healthy foe, those that have been battered and bruised by your attacks slowly succumb to its power.

Benefit: Choose a damage type: lightning, radiant, or thunder. When any bloodied enemy starts its turn within 5 squares of you, it takes damage of the chosen type equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 11: Astral Wave

This power allows you to channel divine energy through your weapon. It emerges as a vicious shock wave that blasts through your foes in a pulse of energy.

Benefit: You gain the *astral wave* power.

Astral Wave — **Angelic Avenger Attack 11**

As your angelic visage emerges, a wave of astral energy emanates from your weapon and washes over your enemies with deadly effect.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon; Varies
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Strength vs. Will
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage of the type you chose for your Astral Vibrance feature.

Level 11: Weapon Training

Your ability to emulate an angel also extends to your training. You gain skill in a weapon commonly associated with those creatures.

Benefit: You gain proficiency with one heavy blade of your choice.

Level 12: Angelic Presence

When pressed, you shed your mortal mask to reveal the divine power that lies within your soul.

Benefit: You gain the *angelic presence* power.

Angelic Presence — **Angelic Avenger Utility 12**

Your features blur into an angel's holy veil, and you are filled with a divine presence.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fear
Minor Action **Personal**
Requirement: You must not be bloodied.
Effect: Enemies take a –2 penalty to attack rolls against you until the end of the encounter or until you are bloodied.

Level 16: Blood and Radiance

The power that burns within you becomes visible for a brief moment when you are badly injured, distracting your foe with a mix of fear and awe.

Benefit: When any enemy bloodies you with an attack, it grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

Level 20: Angel Ascendant

Having mastered the innermost mysteries of this paragon path, you are ready to learn its mightiest power. The purification of your soul extends to your physical form, as you become an angel in service of the gods.

Benefit: You gain the *angel ascendant* power.

Angel Ascendant — Angelic Avenger Attack 20

You channel divine energy into a single attack that transforms you into an angelic being. Wings of radiant light spread from your back as your features transform into those of an angel.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 5[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: You gain a fly speed of 6 (hover) that lasts until the end of the encounter.

Divine Oracle

Prerequisite: Cleric

You become the voice of your god, full of prophecy and omens. When you use your oracular powers, your eyes glow with the silvery depths of the Astral Sea.

Level 11: Foresight

The future unfolds all around. You, however, can glimpse it before it occurs, sensing hidden enemies before they strike. Your presence can thwart any ambush.

Benefit: You and each ally within 5 squares of you cannot be surprised. In addition, whenever you make an initiative check, roll twice and use either result.

Level 11: Prophecy of Doom

Creatures author their own futures by the choices they make and the circumstances surrounding those choices. You pick out one possible future and alter fate to serve your interests.

Benefit: You gain the *prophecy of doom* power.

Prophecy of Doom — Divine Oracle Attack 11

You predict dire results for your enemy.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Effect: You or an ally who hits the target with an attack can choose to make the attack a critical hit. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn or until you or an ally uses it to make an attack a critical hit.

Level 11: Prophetic Action

When the need is great and you must go beyond your normal limits, you experience a sudden vision, a path to safety or success. You need only take it to realize what comes next.

Benefit: When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you also gain an extra move action that you can use on a different turn of yours during this encounter.

Level 12: Good Omens

You cast your senses outward to identify the omens and portents all around you. In recognizing them, you shift fortune to your favor, showing your allies the path to a more fortuitous future.

Benefit: You gain the *good omens* power.

Good Omens — Divine Oracle Utility 12

You peer into the future and predict good fortune for you and your allies.

Daily ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You and each ally
Effect: Each target gains a +5 power bonus to all d20 rolls until the end of your next turn, but cannot score a critical hit while this power is in effect.

Level 16: Terrifying Insight

Your mind travels time's threads, identifying all the possible futures so that you can make more effective decisions. When you use prayers that affect a target's mind, you can see your target's destiny and shape it to suit your needs. If you make the wrong choice, however, you feel fate's rebuke in your own thoughts.

Benefit: When you make an attack roll against Will, you can roll twice and use the higher result. If you do so and the attack misses, you are dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 20: Hammer of Fate

The prophetic words you speak shape reality to suit your vision. Even if the target of your barrage does not succumb in the way you hoped, the enemy finds itself having to fend off another assault right away.

Benefit: You gain the *hammer of fate* power.

Hammer of Fate — **Divine Oracle Attack 20**

You assail your foe with words of power. If your foe avoids the barrage, you can untangle the lines of fate and perform a different action.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 5d10 + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Neither this power nor the standard action is expended. You can take a different standard action during this turn, but you can't use this power again until your next encounter.

Radiant Servant

Prerequisite: Cleric

You become the light of your god in the world, shining divine illumination into every dark corner and deep shadow. When you use your radiant powers, your countenance glows with the brightness of the sun.

Level 11: Illuminating Attacks

You are a beacon on the battlefield, a shining presence embodying your god's holy power. When you call upon astral radiance to bolster your attacks, you strike with even greater efficacy.

Benefit: You can score a critical hit with cleric attacks and radiant servant attacks on a roll of 19–20, but only if they have the radiant keyword.

Level 11: Radiant Action

You can call upon your inner light to transcend normal limits, to attempt more and achieve more than you otherwise would be able to. When you do so, light flares outward from you to scorch a nearby foe.

Benefit: When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can also choose an enemy within 5 squares of you. That enemy takes ongoing 10 radiant damage (save ends).

Level 11: Solar Wrath

The light within you begs for release, and when you loose it you become as the sun, a righteous brilliance meant to scour darkness from the world. Demons and undead are particularly susceptible to this radiance, their senses blasted by the sudden flare of holy light.

Benefit: You gain the *solar wrath* power.

Solar Wrath — **Radiant Servant Attack 11**

Radiant light explodes from you like a flare, evaporating shadows and dealing illuminating damage to everything around you.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage. If the target is either an undead creature or a demon, it is also stunned until the end of your next turn.

Level 12: Healing Sun

You call forth a scintillating mote hanging in the Astral Sea to surround you in its healing light. You and your allies feel pain subside when you are in its illuminating presence, while filth and corruption cannot bear its brightness.

Benefit: You gain the *healing sun* power.

Healing Sun — Radiant Servant Utility 12

A healing sun shines forth from you, repairing the wounds of your allies while keeping creatures of darkness at bay.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Effect: The burst creates a zone of bright light that lasts until the end of your next turn. You or any ally who ends his or her turn in the zone regains hit points equal to 5 + your Charisma modifier. A demon or an undead creature that ends its turn in the zone takes 5 + your Charisma modifier radiant damage.
Sustain Standard: The zone persists until the end of your next turn.
Special: The zone ends at the end of your turn if you are bloodied.

Level 16: Lasting Lght

Your god's foes cannot abide your prayers. The doom you call down upon their heads lingers, subjecting them to your righteous wrath.

Benefit: Any saving throws made by demons or undead creatures to remove effects you have placed on them take a –2 penalty.

Level 20: Radiant Brilliance

The light you harbor defines you, shapes you, and gives you your identity. You can call upon its power with ease and focus it into whatever form you wish. This prayer lets you direct your inner light into a terrible beam. The creature it strikes erupts in a brilliant burst to scourge distant foes.

Benefit: You gain the *radiant brilliance* power.

Radiant Brilliance — Radiant Servant Attack 20

You fire a brilliant ray of searing light into a foe, igniting that foe and briefly turning it into a small sun.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: At the start of your next turn, the target is the center of a burst 3 attack that affects only your enemies (not including the target): Wisdom vs. Will; 3d10 radiant damage on a hit, and half damage on a miss.

Tactical Warpriest

Prerequisite: Cleric

Your god demands battle to accomplish the tenets of your faith, and you are the chosen priest at the forefront of the war. When you call upon your divine powers, your weapons glow with holy light.

Level 11: Battle Cry

To obey your god's commands, you fling yourself into battle, fighting on the front lines. When beset by your foes, you can loose a battle cry as you hammer into your enemies, rallying those who fight alongside you.

Benefit: You gain the *battle cry* power.

Battle Cry — Tactical Warpriest Attack 11

You attack every enemy next to you, shouting a revitalizing battle cry that inspires your allies.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in the burst
Attack: Strength or Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2[W] + Strength or Wisdom modifier damage.
Effect: You (if you are bloodied) and each bloodied ally within 10 squares of you can spend a healing surge.

Level 11: Extra Damage Action

When you dig deep and find the will to press on beyond your normal limits, you feel righteous fury lending new strength to your attacks.

Benefit: When you spend an action point to take an extra action, your standard action attacks this turn deal extra damage equal to one-half your level.

Level 11: Warpriest's Strategy

No stranger to combat, you can find ways to succeed where another might fail. Your insights can give an ally another chance to salvage what would be a disastrous effort.

Benefit: Once per encounter, if you or an adjacent ally rolls a 1 when making a melee attack or a close attack, you can call for a reroll.

Level 11: Warpriest's Training

Although your faith shields you from enemy attacks, you never underestimate the value of heavy armor. You learn how to maximize armor's protective qualities to better protect you in battle.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing heavy armor.

Level 12: Battle Favor

Your patron rewards your continuing success with a boon to help you shrug off your injuries or reclaim expended divine energy.

Benefit: You gain the *battle favor* power.

Battle Favor — **Tactical Warpriest Utility 12**

When you score a critical hit against an enemy, your deity favors you with healing or by renewing one of your prayers.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You roll a natural 20 when making a melee attack.
Effect: You regain hit points as if you had spent two healing surges, or you regain the use of one cleric daily attack power that you have already used today. Once you use this power, you cannot recover it except by taking an extended rest.

Level 16: Warpriest's Challenge

You are ferocious in battle, a terrible force powered by righteous fury and singular dedication. An enemy that you confront can see doom in your eyes and knows that to take its focus from you would be to invite certain disaster.

Benefit: Once per encounter when you hit an enemy with a melee attack, you can choose to mark that enemy for the rest of the encounter. The first time that enemy shifts or attacks a creature other than you while the enemy is adjacent to you, you can make an opportunity attack against the enemy.

Level 20: Battle Pyres

Your trusted weapon has helped you win victory after victory. Having perfected your methods, you learn to feed divine power through it to sear your enemies with overwhelming radiance.

Benefit: You gain the *battle pyres* power.

Battle Pyres — **Tactical Warpriest Attack 20**

You channel a powerful prayer through your weapon, turning your enemies into pyres ablaze with radiant energy.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Primary Target: Each enemy in the burst
Primary Attack: Strength or Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 10 + Strength or Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and ongoing 5 radiant damage (save ends). Make the secondary attack.
Secondary Attack
Secondary Target: One creature within 5 squares of you that is taking this power's ongoing damage
Attack: Strength or Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 5[W] + Strength or Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Effect: Until the ongoing damage ends on every primary target, you can take a standard action on your subsequent turns to repeat the secondary attack.

Addendum:

Updates in Brief

Cleric Class Updates

Player's Handbook

Name	Page	Change
Turn Undead	62	Changes the damage die from d10 to d8. Removes the damage increases at all levels except 11 and 21. Removes burst increases.
Consecrated Ground	65	Removes the user's ability to move the zone.
Spiritual Weapon	65	Clarifies that allies gain combat advantage against the target while the weapon is in the target's space.
Flame Strike	67	Changes the target from "enemy" to "creature" to better reflect the power's intent.
Astral Refuge	67	Removes the teleportation keyword, since the effect is removing the target from play. Clarifies when the target returns to play.
Holy Spark	68	Updates the damage roll applied to the target's allies to a static value, aligning it more with the ongoing damage.
Purifying Fire	68	Reduces the power's damage from 3d10 to 2d10.
Seal of Warding	68	Changes the damage dice from 4d10 to 4d6. Updates the zone language in the Effect entry to clearly define the effects on allies and enemies.
Enthrall	69	Reduces the power's burst area from 3 to 1. Tightens the wording on the additional effects in the Hit entry.
Thunderous Word	69	The allies' shift granted by the Effect entry now requires a free action.
Fire Storm	69	Reduces the power's burst area from 5 to 3. Changes the target from "enemy" to "creature" to better reflect the power's intent. Reduces the power's damage from 5d10 to 3d10. Clarifies that the damage timing in the Effect entry occurs at the end of a creature's turn, not at the start.
Holy Wrath	69	Changes the damage from 2d10 to 2[W], replacing the implement keyword with the weapon keyword and making the power a weapon attack.
Clarion Call of the Astral Sea	70	Removes the teleportation keyword, since the effect is removing the target from play.
Healing Torch	71	Reduces the power's burst area from 5 to 2. Reduces the power's damage from 3d8 to 2d8.
Nimbus of Doom	71	Adds a Miss entry to the power.
Sacred Word	71	Reduces the power's burst area from 5 to 1.
Seal of Protection	71	Changes the damage from 3d10 to 3[W], replacing the implement keyword with the weapon keyword and making the power a weapon attack.
Astral Storm	72	Reduces the power's burst area from 5 to 3. Changes the target from "enemy" to "creature" in each Target entry to better reflect the power's intent. Reduces the power's damage from 6d10 to 4d10. Removes the resistance explanation from the Hit entry, since the rules cover it. Updates the formatting of the Effect and Sustain entries for the secondary attack that occurs when the power is sustained.
Astral Wave	73	Reduces the power's burst area from 8 to 1. Updates damage type from 2d8 to 2[W], replacing Implement keyword with the Weapon keyword and making the power a weapon attack. Changes the Attack type from Wisdom to Strength.
Angel Ascendant	73	Adds a Target entry to the power.

Name	Page	Change
Illuminating Attacks (Path Feature)	73	Now applies only to cleric attacks and radiant servant attacks.
Radiant Action (Path Feature)	73	Changes amount of ongoing damage to a static value of 10.
Healing Sun	74	Clarifies that the damage timing in the Effect occurs at the end of a creature's turn, not at the start. Updates the damage roll in the Effect to a static value.
Radiant Brilliance	74	Reduces the burst area in Effect entry from 5 to 3, and clarifies that the burst doesn't affect the target.
Tactical Warpriest	74	Updates the name from "Warpriest" to avoid confusion between the paragon path name and the subclass name.
Warpriest's Challenge (Path Feature)	74	Changes usage of the ability to once per encounter. Clarifies that it no longer requires an at-will attack, only a melee attack.
Battle Cry	74	Updates the Attack type from "Wisdom" to "Strength or Wisdom" vs. Fortitude.
Battle Favor	74	In the Effect entry, clarifies that you regain a "cleric daily attack power" instead of a "daily power" and tightens wording.
Battle Pyres	74	Updates damage type from 2d8 to 10 in the Hit entry, and from 5d10 to 5[W] in the Secondary Hit entry, replacing the Implement keyword with the Weapon keyword and making the power a weapon attack. Updates the Attack type in each Hit entry from "Wisdom" to "Strength or Wisdom," increasing versatility. Updates all damage to radiant. Clarifies that the Secondary Target must be a creature taking ongoing damage from this power. Changes the Sustain entry to an Effect.

Class Acting

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE
Illustration by William O'Conner

Sweet relief! Today was the last session of the D&D Encounters™ season and, more important, my last day having to play a cleric. Sure, Stormin' Norman and his weird codependent mommy issues, fear of blood, and healing surge selfishness will be missed—by me at least—but man, I am so out of the healing business.

If there's anything the last twelve weeks have taught me, it's that I was right—I'm not the person to call in case of emergency. For one thing, I seldom have my ringer turned on, so I'll probably miss your call anyway. Dependable, I am; but dependency, I can't stand. Look, I have a hard enough time trying to keep myself alive out there—I can't worry about the rest of the party!

This sad fact has been reinforced in my "easy to induce panic stricken" mind. I'm just no good in crisis situations. Case in point: I saved up enough miles to land myself in first class on a cross-country trip. Naturally I got to board early—after the babies but before the premier gold members. I was sitting there in my big leather seat debating between a rum and Diet Coke and a bottle of red wine when I saw the flight attendant run out of the cockpit shouting, "Everyone off! Get off now!"

Admittedly that *was* frightening. For *anyone*. And the flight attendant certainly didn't conduct herself in a manner I deem appropriate. Surely they covered things like "how to calmly and efficiently evacuate an airplane" in flight attendant school, right? Think about how *you* might have handled this situation while I tell you how my instincts directed me. I screamed, threw myself out of my seat, body-checked a senior citizen who was calmly and efficiently moving down the aisle, climbed over her compression-stocking feet, tripped over and probably destroyed a very expensive baby stroller, ran down the jetway, and burst through the doors into the terminal, just as I remembered my abandoned carry-on bag which not only housed my beloved teddy bear, Pooh, but the wretched chartreuse, tea-length bridesmaid gown I was supposed to be donning about 23 hours from then. Sad. I would miss my teddy bear.

The emergency was that a fuel truck had tipped over at the gate next to ours and the out-of-control hose was dousing my plane in gasoline. No biggie,

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right? I spent the next six hours and twenty-three minutes watching a bruise the size of the croissant I ate for lunch spread across my right thigh and fielding dirty looks from the senior citizen I toppled.

So yeah, not great in emergencies, on the playmat, or off. Just last week, four out of five of my party members were bloodied and near death, and Norman thought *storm surge* would be a better use of his minor action than . . . oh, I don't know, offering up a *healing word*.

"Hello?" Chuck bellowed. "I know lightning damage is cool to look at and all, but maybe you have something you'd like to say to me? I took thirteen points of damage for you!"

"I said thank you!" Jeez. Some people are all about recognition.

"Not *thank you*!" Chuck shouted. "How about a *feel better* or a *buck up, Camper. You'll be right as rain real soon!*"

Bah, I thought. "Who says things like that?"

"Umm," Marty said, "our healer."

"Oh shoot, I forgot! I'm sorry, Chuckles. I'll get you next time."

"That'd be great," he said. "If there is a next time."

There was, thankfully, but there was also a next time when I forgot to heal the party. (I also forgot to use my *elven accuracy* on more than one occasion, but I can't blame that on being a cleric.)

While I whittled away the weeks with Norman, I looked across the playmat at Laura, the party's wizard, and envied her spellbook, her burning hands, her safe distance from combat. No one was bugging her for a Band-Aid or a septic stick. Silently I counted the sessions until I could be in robes again. Laura wouldn't mind. She didn't even want to be a wizard. She was just "trying out a new class," which is exactly how I got saddled with the role of healer.

"It's so boring back here," she would complain every session. "I want a mace in my hand, not a *mage hand*."

I'm pretty sure she was making fun of me, clearly forgetting about the time I used *mage hand* to slap an orc across the face.

"You cannot be a wizard again," Laura said after our last session. "You're always a wizard."

"Hello?" I answered. "Did you accidentally hit yourself on the head with a *magic missile*? *You* were the wizard!"

"But you always go back to playing one. There are a million other choices out there. Live a little."

The nerve! I tried breaking out of my comfort zone to no avail. I don't like other classes the way I like magic-users.

"Isn't it more important to have fun playing the game than to force yourself to try a different class just because *they're out there*?"

"I'm saying it's important to break out of your comfort zone once in a while. It's how you develop different facets of your personality."

Sure, I thought, in real life maybe. Someone finds their fear of heights is negatively impacting their desire to have a career as a trapeze artist. By all means, break out of your comfort zone and into an intensive sixteen-week virtual reality treatment program. But I failed to see how doing so in my fantasy life would help my personality facets blossom in real life. Being a wizard *was* my personality.

"That's crazy," Laura said when I told her my theory. "You are not a wizard in real life. Besides, what does having a 'wizard's personality' even mean?"

"Well, for starters, *some people* might say I'm controlling. And I like to be prepared. I make my lunch every day before I go to bed and I can tell you exactly what I'm going to wear for the rest of the week. As long as the seven-day forecast doesn't change, of course."

Laura just shook her head. "Are wizards really, really weird? Because then I might buy into this."

Weird or not, there's some truth to this. We (and I mean all players) *are* drawn to certain classes based on certain personality traits. I was sure of it! Laura was a perfect example.

"You like playing a defender in our D&D games," I reminded her. "And you like it in real life too."

She raised her eyebrows, which I took as a sign to continue.

"You're part of your neighborhood watch system, you played a sweeper in soccer, you almost took out a fellow parent at your kid's baseball game because he was texting instead of watching his son hit a triple. Face it. You're a fighter."

"You know D&D is a fantasy game, right?" she asked.

Whatever. Fighters just hate being wrong.

I returned my attention to launching the Character Builder and relaunching my wizard career, but I got a little distracted by Facebook along the way. And what should I stumble across? An article about personality traits! How serendipitous. It was like I conjured this little piece of market research just to prove my point to Laura.

According to the study, everyone falls within one of the five traits: Open, Extrovert, Conscientious, Agreeable, and Neurotic. (Ha, ha, smarty pants, I'm not *neurotic*. At least not according to *this* quiz.)

I wrote up an email and sent it to my group.

"*Hey friends! Before you roll up your new characters take this personality quiz or I will take it for you and post your results to Facebook.*"

Who can resist a quiz? Not my group. I heard back from them right away.

Player: Liz
Personality Trait: Agreeable
Characteristics: Friendly, willing to compromise, trustworthy, interested in other people's problems, soft-hearted

Is Chuck Norris not trustworthy? Would you not want someone trained in two-weapon fighting to be interested in your problems? Of course you would. This trait most accurately describes our ranger friends, and it almost perfectly describes Liz, our go-to ranger. Coincidence? I don't think so. While I've never heard her express an interest in archery and she's clearly not a recluse, considering I see her almost every day, she does liken herself to these earthy loner types.

"That whole *taking other people's damage* thing Chuck does? Yeah. So not my style."

I hear that!

Apparently Liz gets attached to her characters and despises when they get hurt. What draws her to the ranger class is the ability to cause massive amount of hurt by thunking enemies with a quiver-ful of arrows while staying out of harm's way.

And what doesn't appeal to her?

"I wouldn't be caught DEAD living outside the city limits of Seattle," she said with certainty. "And as far as I know, I don't think Amazon Fresh delivers to 'the yurt nestled between a patch of poison ivy and a fir tree.' "

She also likes the jack-of-all-trades aspect of a ranger. "They're good with a bow, good with a sword, good with magic. Kind of like a Navy SEAL."

Having worked with Liz for over a decade, I can attest to the fact that she's kind of a Navy SEAL, too. She's the one who knows everything from how long an ad should run to where to rent our next beach house.

Shelly: 1
Laura: 0

Player: Marty
Personality Trait: Open
Characteristics: Art enthusiast, rich vocabulary, creative, highly emotional

If I hadn't bought that pizza bagel for breakfast, I would have some cash to bet we all know what class this describes. More important, I know exactly who falls into it. "Mr. Showbiz," a.k.a. Marty the *Bardy*, wears this trait with the same swagger and confidence as when he donned Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat.

Generally the person who is last to join the party is forced to play a cleric. That's how Marty always got stuck being the Wyld Stallyns' traveling medic. But he, unlike yours truly, was good at it. Tabitha barely got a blister without him whispering a *healing word*. But playing the cleric wasn't his first choice.

"You guys needed one, and I needed a game. I did what I could."

Sure, he downplays his competence as a cleric, but I know him quite well and see a lot of similarities between the real Marty and the *heal* Marty. Not only is he extremely well versed and cultured, if you could be sitting next to someone on an airplane when a fuel truck tips over, you'd want it to be Marty. He's calm, cool, and collected. And I wouldn't be surprised if he knew how to apply a tourniquet.

But cleric wasn't his first choice.

"I've always been drawn to the bard," he mused. "I love being able to burst into song at a moment's notice." He illustrated this point by bursting into song.

Musical proclivity is not a stretch for Marty, as he is a theater guy who's always looking for opportunities to sing about something. And when he is not singing, he's directing, which explains his penchant for Dungeon Mastering.

Shelly: 2
Laura: 0

Player(s): Chuck & Laura
Personality Trait: Extrovert
Characteristics: Action-oriented, excitement-driven, assertive, likes to be the center of attention

Jeez, it's almost like R&D wrote this quiz that so accurately describes our friends on the front lines. It also fits my two coworkers to a T. In addition to dismissing all of my theories, Laura is also the kind of person

who, when overhearing me order flowers for my mom, gets teary-eyed from the sentiment.

"You send her flowers on *your* birthday?" she sniffed. "That's *so* sweet!"

She doesn't get dirty jokes, seldom curses, and counts the times she *runs for the border* at lunchtime as exercising. She is also our most fearless fighter, constantly getting all up in the grill of the grisliest ghouls. This behavior I credit to the fact that she's also the mother of twins.

"It's must be mother's instinct," I told her. "See? You feel the need to protect the weak."

"Not just that," she said. "I like being in the fray of things. If a door is closed, I say we open it. I'm not content being stuck in the background. It's so boring."

Again, I try not to take offense to that.

Chuck also likes playing the defender, and we *love* Chuck in this role.

"My characters are never too bright, which is probably the reason they keep getting punched in the face and taking other people's damage."

I find this to be an interesting finding in my study, as we like to call Chuck "The Sage." He's quietly working most of the time, but when something Laura or I say inspires him, he'll turn slowly in his desk chair, remove his headphones (which are clearly a decoy so people won't talk to him) and spouts out something rife with wisdom and counsel.

Chuck's characters aren't generous with counsel, but they are with that whole damage-taking thing. I'm willing to bet Chuck would risk his own health to save someone he knows in real life too.

"Like if a truck were coming at me," I explained to him. "I know you would knock me out of the way to safety."

"And do what?" he asked. "Just stand there and get run over by a big rig? Could I knock us both to safety? I am a father, after all."

Ahh, right. He too has the "must protect" instinct, which proves my theory is correct. Fighters and defenders are mothers and fathers.

Shelly: 4

Laura: 0

Player: Shelly

Personality Trait: Conscientious

Characteristics: Always prepared, likes order, detail-oriented, schedule-driven, efficient and exacting at work, and all-around awesome*

*(I might have made that part up)

"It's 3:30 already?" Chuck asked, walking by my desk.

"If you say so," I said.

"Well, actually *you* say so, because you're eating your afternoon snack." He was referring to my bowl of yogurt and sliced bananas.

Yes, I do tend to eat on a schedule. But that's just because I get hungry at the same time of day every day. Very wizardly, no? Additionally, I love the idea of traveling around with an animal companion. (Unless it's my cat who recently managed to escape her $200 cat carrier, lunge at my face and cause me to run over a mailbox on our way to the vet. Not cool, Zelda!)

What's not wizardly and might surprise you is that I don't mind taking damage. (Probably because Chuck is there to shield me and Marty is there to heal me.) Taking damage makes me feel useful, like I accomplished something or at least contributed. It's kind of like when I leave a workout with my trainer and I'm not sweating because I spent too much time recapping *Glee* or rolling around on the yoga mats complaining about kidney spasms. What a waste. Aren't I paying this guy to hurt me? Even if I won't be able to apply deodorant the next day without writhing in pain, I'll still think I didn't work hard enough. I need visual affirmations.

"I don't think this sounds like a wizard," Laura said, looking at my notes. "I think it sounds more like a leader class."

"Well I think it sounds like me, and clearly I'm a wizard."

Chuck spun slowly around in his desk chair, removed his headphones, and said, "I think what Laura is saying is that if your research proves correct, you might be playing the wrong class. Or that wizards have no personality."

I looked at Laura for confirmation, but she just shrugged and returned to her desk.

"But paladins are self-righteous," I complained. "And do-gooding, goodie two-shoes. They're so . . . pious. No one wants to hang out with a paladin. That's like hanging out with the R.A. in college."

"Remember that time you got in a fight at Safeway because some woman snuck seventeen items into the fifteen items or less line?"

"You can't put oranges, apples, and Brussels sprouts in the same plastic bag and call it one item! The cashier still has to ring up each item separately."

Laura shrugged again.

"I was defending the people!"

"Umm hmm," Laura said turning around. "We still hang out with you."

A paladin? I thought. Ew.

Later that day our Dungeon Master emailed us a reminder that we should all have our characters created and ready for action next week. We responded to the email introducing the new group. Liz was a ranger, Laura and Chuck defenders, I was of course a wizard, and because he was the last one to roll up his character, Marty was going to be our cleric. Well, well, well.

"But he moonlights in a minstrel band," Marty told us. "Watch for him on *Forgotten Realms Got Talent*."

"I still think you're a paladin," Laura wrote me back.

And I think we are a well-rounded group. More important, well-suited. Having a type isn't a bad thing, so why fight it? Sure, D&D is a fantasy game, but there's a definitely some reality that seeps through. You're playing *you*, but a badder-ass version of you.

"Perhaps Wilamena Foxraiser, my shade mage, will enroll in paladin night classes," I wrote back to Laura. "And use her necromancy background to raise pets and familiars from the dead. How's that for righteous?"

"I think you might be on to something," she said. "But if you post my quiz results to Facebook, I will tell HR."

"Deal," I agreed. And then I put on my robes, packed up my staff, and went home to plan for the next day.

Shelly: 4 1/2

Laura: 1/2

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble is a Paladin Night School dropout.

Character Themes
Heroes of Virtue

By Richard Baker

Illustrations by John Stanko and Jim Nelson

Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article details four character themes: the chevalier, the guardian, the hospitaler, and the noble.

Character Themes

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, if you're a human rogue who chooses the guardian theme, you might be a member of an order of guardians who don't stand toe to toe with their enemies but use subterfuge and distraction to protect their charges. Perhaps your order stresses action over reaction, believing that the best way to properly guard someone is to get off the first shot against that person's enemy. Or perhaps you are a guardian without a cause, ready and willing to become part of a new group of heroes. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," the first article in this series.

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Chevalier

Dedicated to the ideals of chivalry, chevaliers are gallant warriors who serve as champions and exemplars to the people around them. A chevalier's personal honor is his or her most treasured possession; it is far better to die with honor than to live without it. Chivalric codes vary from race to race and culture to culture, but most agree on a number of noble virtues that all chevaliers should aspire to: courage, fairness, mercy, justice, loyalty, honesty, charity, piety, moderation, and gallantry.

Although chevaliers strive to cultivate all the chivalric virtues, the most important elements of their code revolve around behavior on the field of battle. Honor demands that chevaliers seek out the most worthy foes on the field to defeat in a fair fight. Chevaliers aren't under any requirement to stand and die against superior foes—but they must stand as long as they hold out any hope for victory, and they need to execute a fighting retreat rather than flee in panic if the battle is hopeless. Likewise, chevaliers strive to fight fairly. Flanking foes or attacking dazed enemies is fair enough, especially if the enemy has the advantage of numbers, but performing a coup de grace or attacking a stunned foe is not honorable. Some chevaliers might wait for enemies that have fallen prone to stand again before resuming combat, or to permit a respite if a foe requests one. Of course, enemies who refuse to fight in a chivalrous manner fall outside the protections of honor and should be dealt with in the most expedient manner available.

Chevaliers frequently come from well-born families. Many chivalrous traditions arise from the requirements of elite military social classes, such as heavily armored cavalry and highly trained sword fighters. Acquiring the specialized equipment and years of training needed to serve as their realms' most highly prized warriors—whether that warrior ideal is a human knight, a dwarf giant-slayer, or an eladrin bladesinger—is never cheap or easy. In some lands, aspiring heroes aren't permitted to become chevaliers unless they can prove their noble birth and thus their right to claim the privileges of knighthood, but in most places low-born warriors of skill and personal integrity can win their spurs through the sponsorship of royal patrons or their performance on the battlefield. No one denies that chevaliers are prone to more than a little haughtiness toward those they perceive as their social inferiors, but even the prickliest among them are conscious of their obligation to protect the weak and the poor from those who would oppress them.

The Chivalrous Code

The chevalier seeks always to conduct himself or herself in a chivalrous manner. The concept of chivalry embraces courage on the battlefield, justice and fealty in the service of others, and courtly manners and fair speech. In short, it is a philosophy or way of life as well as a code of conduct. Details of what constitute chivalrous behavior vary from culture to culture, but most chevaliers would agree that the following precepts are a good start.

Serve your liege lord with valor and faith.
Protect the weak and defenseless.
Give comfort and charity to those in need.
Treat others with respect.
Live by your code of honor.
Despise wealth for its own sake.
Seek foes worthy of you.
Obey those placed in authority.
Eschew injustice, cruelty, and deceit.
Speak the truth always.
Persevere to the end in any enterprise.
Never refuse a challenge from an equal.
Never turn your back upon a foe.

Creating a Chevalier

A number of chevaliers are fighters (and most of those are knights), but other heroes also feel drawn to this gallant path. Many paladins and warpriests become chevaliers, dedicating themselves to upholding the chivalric virtues as they confront evil. Among elves and eladrin, ranger chevaliers aren't uncommon; elven chivalry does not disdain ranged weapons or the use of magic. Likewise, tiefling hexblades sometimes become "dark chevaliers," unleashing their warlock powers only against enemies who have demonstrated that nothing less will do.

Starting Feature

In many lands, heavy cavalry—whether mounted on horses, giant boars, wolves, griffons, or dragons—is the noblest and most powerful of the military arms. Chevaliers are therefore highly trained equestrians (or the appropriate equivalent for more fantastic creatures), and they can perform astonishing feats of horsemanship.

All chevaliers also have some skill in close combat and are expected to open a battle by bringing their enemies to grips as quickly as possible. *Valiant charge* embodies the courage you hold as the noblest of the martial virtues. You charge into the midst of your foes and lay about you with your

weapon, intentionally throwing yourself into the point of greatest danger—and greatest honor.

Benefit: While mounted, you and your mount gain a +5 power bonus to Athletics checks and Acrobatics checks to jump, swim, or hop down. You can use your skill check or your mount's skill check, whichever is better.

In addition, you gain the *valiant charge* power.

Valiant Charge Chevalier Attack

You charge your enemy and strike out, momentarily holding it where it stands.

Encounter ✦ Martial
No Action **Special**
Trigger: You hit a creature with a charge attack.
Effect: The creature is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Word of your deeds has spread throughout the land, and your emblem is widely known. Common people know you as a defender of the weak, nobles regard you as a desirable ally, and minor villains discover that they have pressing business elsewhere when you appear on the scene. In some kingdoms, you can call upon various privileges of knighthood or nobility, such as the right to expect hospitality from local lords or the authority to stand in judgment over lawbreakers.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Diplomacy checks and Intimidate checks.

Level 10 Feature

Years of practicing self-discipline and temperance have made you exceptionally healthy, both physically and morally. You withstand assaults on your mind or body better than others who don't ask as much from themselves.

Benefit: You gain a +1 power bonus to saving throws.

Optional Powers

War is the flowering of chivalry, or so the saying goes. For all the trappings of gallantry, romance, and courtly manners, chevaliers are skilled warriors first and foremost. They train for battle from childhood, often serving first as pages and then as squires to older, established chevaliers. This rigorous program of martial training hardens the body and prepares the spirit for the tests chevaliers face on the battlefield, and many chevaliers continue these practices throughout their careers.

Level 2 Utility Power

Unless you're riding a fantastic beast such as a dragon or a griffon, your mount can be an easier target for your enemies than you are. Opponents might try to dismount you by striking at your steed first. However, you have learned a technique for maneuvering your mount away from the worst of these ignoble attacks.

Battle Riding Chevalier Utility 2

You quickly guide your mount away from danger.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** 1
Trigger: A mount you are riding is damaged by an attack.
Effect: Your mount takes half damage from the triggering attack. After the attack is resolved, your mount can shift 1 square.

Level 6 Utility Power

When battle goes against you, you fall back on the discipline and inspiration of the chivalric code. When other warriors would quit, you drive yourself onward that extra mile. Your personal honor demands no less.

Indefatigable Chevalier Utility 6

You call upon your iron self-discipline to shake off the effects of enemy blows.

Daily ✦ Martial, Healing
Minor Action Personal

Effect: You regain hit points equal to your healing surge value, and you can make a saving throw.

Level 10 Utility Power

In battle, sometimes one side or the other holds a strategic piece of ground and refuses to yield it. When you decide to make a stand, you are difficult to dislodge—as are any companions standing with you.

Loyal Stand Chevalier Utility 10

You protect nearby allies with a flurry of blocks and parries for a short time, refusing to give ground.

Encounter ✦ Aura, Martial
Minor Action Personal

Effect: You activate an aura 1 that lasts until the end of your next turn. You and your allies gain a +2 power bonus to AC while in the aura, and you can reduce the distance of push, pull, or slide effects against you or your allies in the aura by 1 square.

Guardian

Members of elite societies or military orders dedicated to the preservation of a worthy ideal, guardians are vigilant warriors ready to defend their sworn charges with their lives. Although strength and fighting spirit are useful to guardians, most pride themselves on using their heads, not their hands. Guardians believe that the service they offer doesn't permit personal glory-seeking or needless risk-taking. If the causes or the people they protect can be defended only by head-on battle, then guardians do not hesitate to draw their weapons. On the other hand, if the best way to carry out a mission is to employ stealth or subterfuge, or flee the scene, so be it.

A guardian's orders vary widely from realm to realm. Some exist to protect another group or organization, such as the high priests of a particular god, the members of a wizards' guild, or a family line harboring a great destiny or a magical legacy. Some are sworn to protect a rare or treasured site or item, such as the forge-flame burning eternally in the heart of a dwarven citadel, or a mighty artifact of good that a demon lord seeks so that it can destroy the item. A few guardian orders are mercenary squads of the highest quality, priding themselves on offering the best, most loyal protection that gold can buy. However, most guardians are sworn to the service of a kingdom or realm. They serve as bodyguards to the royal family and high-ranking members of court, protect the treasures and the secrets of the realm, and undertake missions of vital interest to the crown.

Creating a Guardian

Characters who specialize in melee combat make the best guardians. Fighters and paladins are naturally strong candidates for this theme, since they combine good close-combat capabilities with excellent durability—a vital characteristic, since guardians must be ready to take an arrow for their charges if that's what the situation demands. Militant clerics

FALLEN GUARDIANS

Fellowships of champions such as the Silvershields of Mithralfast or the Moonwarders who protect the initiates of the Isle of the Druids are known throughout the wide lands of the world. An adventuring guardian could be one small part of a strong order, with allies and refuges to call upon in many lands, or he or she might belong to an order on the verge of dying out. A number of guardian orders have fallen over the years, leaving behind handfuls of widely scattered rovers who no longer have anything to serve. These individuals sometimes take on young trainees and do their best to pass along the traditions of their broken companies. Others abandon their old haunts and set out to do what good they can in the world, each hoping to find a worthy cause. And every now and then, a young warrior stumbles across an old relic or hears the story of an ancient order that inspires him or her to take up arms in the name of an order that has otherwise vanished from the world. Guardians without an order to call their own might not have the resources of guardians from a still-functioning order, but they are free to follow their consciences wherever they go.

likewise become guardians on occasion, protecting their wards with wise counsel as well as strength of arms. Rogues and rangers can also do well as guardians, since they can be less obvious than more heavily armed characters, and they have talents for circumventing avoidable dangers rather than battling through them.

Starting Feature

Guardians require good melee combat skills, and they are expected to do their best to protect nearby allies caught up in the melee. *Guardian's counter* embodies your alertness and unflinching courage. With a single quick stride, you move to an endangered ally's side, shielding him or her from attack with your own body.

Benefit: You gain the *guardian's counter* power.

Guardian's Counter Guardian Attack

Seeing a friend in danger, you step up to take the attack meant for your ally—and then you strike back.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 2
Trigger: An ally within 2 squares of you is attacked and you are not included in the attack.
Effect: You and the ally shift up to 2 squares as a free action, swapping positions. You become the target of the triggering attack, in place of the ally. After the attack is resolved, you can make a basic attack against the attacker.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

The ability to sense trouble that others don't notice isn't something that just happens; it's the result of years of honing your powers of observation and your ability to read others' intentions. A flicker of the eyes, a tensing of the shoulders, a leaf quivering without a breeze, a sudden silence in the forest—for you, these might as well be shouted warnings of danger.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Insight checks and Perception checks.

Level 10 Feature

Many guardians' tasks revolve around keeping a particular person safe. You might be partnered with a wizard or a cleric, sworn to accompany your charge on his or her travels and guard him or her with your very life. You might serve for a time as a bodyguard to a high noble, be tasked with escorting an important diplomat through dangerous territory, or be caught up in the effort to spirit off to safety a child of prophecy. Regardless of the nature of your obligation, you have developed an uncanny instinct for danger. When your charge is lost or in peril, you can feel it in your bones.

Benefit: Choose one creature to be your bonded charge. You can sense when your bonded charge is in danger, as long as he or she is within one mile. You can sense the general direction and distance to your bonded charge if you don't know where he or she is. If an enemy attacks your bonded charge, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against that enemy until the start of that enemy's next turn.

You can have only one bonded charge at a time. Your bonded charge must be someone your guardian order is sworn to protect. Generally speaking, you can't designate someone as a bonded charge whose melee combat skills equal or exceed your own; you're supposed to protect people who don't fight as well as you do.

Optional Powers

As a guardian, you are familiar with techniques for fighting defensively, protecting nearby companions from attack, and remaining alert and ready for trouble. Depending on the nature of the order you serve and the missions you tackle, you might decide to learn how to get the most from these talents.

Level 2 Utility Power

The most basic test of a guardian's skills is keeping someone else alive in the middle of a hard-fought melee. As long as you stay close, you can deflect blows meant for the one you are protecting and make sure that no enemies take advantage of flanking or a sudden opening.

Guardian's Defense Guardian Utility 2

Fighting side by side with an ally, you guard his or her back.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Minor Action **Close** burst 1
Target: You and one ally in the burst
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each target gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses. Additionally, enemies cannot gain combat advantage against either target until the end of your next turn.

Level 6 Utility Power

Whether you're more observant than most other adventurers or you adapt to situations with incredible speed, it's almost impossible for your enemies to get the drop on you. When goblin arrows start hissing through the air and your companions are frozen in sudden confusion, you're already leaping into the fray.

Ready for Anything Guardian Utility 6

Your enemies think they caught you off guard; they're wrong.

Daily ✦ Martial
No Action **Personal**
Trigger: You are surprised at the start of an encounter.
Effect: You are not surprised.

Level 10 Utility Power

Protecting the back or the flank of the comrade fighting next to you is second nature by now. Without a moment's hesitation, you throw yourself into the path of an attack to take the blow meant for your ally. You might be better able to withstand the injury, or you might not—but no better example of service to others and courage in the face of adversity exists.

Watch Out! Guardian Utility 10

You take a hit intended for one of your friends.

Encounter ✦ Healing, Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** 1
Trigger: An ally adjacent to you is hit by an attack that does not include you as a target.
Effect: The triggering attack misses your ally and hits you instead. After the attack is resolved, you can spend a healing surge.

Hospitaler

Hospitalers are members of a religious order of compassionate warriors sworn to provide care and comfort to the poor, the sick, and the injured. Their chapter houses are in many large cities, offering comfort and healing to those in need of it. However, hospitalers are most famous for their work out in frontier lands, where they aid travelers (especially religious pilgrims) who are in distress far from any other help. Fortified hospices stand near difficult mountain passes, at remote river crossings, and in lonely clearings in dark, monster-haunted forests. Many are the travelers whose lives have been saved by hospitalers watching over dangerous roads in the wilds.

In addition to serving as healers and sponsoring almshouses and hospices throughout the land, hospitalers are valiant soldiers. Hospitaler orders keep roads safe from bandits and monsters, especially routes used by pilgrims journeying to holy sites. They defend important shrines and protect high-ranking members of the priesthood. Finally, hospitaler orders are the backbone of many crusading armies seeking to confront great evils in far lands.

Like chevaliers, hospitalers are seen as knights of a sort and are entitled to a number of privileges in most realms. They are responsible for maintaining estates and strongholds, overseeing justice in their demesnes, and marshaling companies of soldiers to protect the lands around their estates. However, they are loyal to religious leaders, not secular rulers. Hospitaler commanders hold high ecclesiastic rank as well as knightly titles and estates. In practice, most hospitalers split their time between the estates for which they are personally responsible and the chapter houses or hospices of their order. Titles and estates are awarded

on the basis of seniority and family influence, so low-ranking hospitalers rarely have estates of their own. Instead they serve as seneschals or lieutenants to landed hospitalers, swear fealty to the king or high nobles of the nearest realm, or take up arms in a crusade.

Creating a Hospitaler

Clerics of any kind and paladins are the backbone of hospitaler orders. Armed with potent healing abilities, they are well equipped to carry out the sacred mission of their societies. Fighters and rangers sometimes become hospitalers despite their lack of divine magic; hospitalers fight as well as heal, and hospitaler chapters offer excellent opportunities for brave, true warriors to win respect and renown.

Starting Feature

All hospitalers are skilled with at least one healing prayer and can quickly offset the injuries inflicted by enemies. In addition, hospitalers are warriors as well as healers; enemies that strike their companions risk their righteous anger. *Shield of devotion* allows you to immediately grant minor healing to an ally struck by a foe, and then strengthens your weapon arm against that enemy for a short time.

Benefit: You gain the *shield of devotion* power.

Shield of Devotion — Hospitaler Utility

With a quick prayer you bestow minor healing on a stricken ally, then prepare yourself to smite the enemy who struck your friend.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Healing
Immediate Reaction **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An ally within 5 squares of you takes damage from an enemy attack.
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: The target regains hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to your next attack roll against the enemy that damaged the target.
Level 11: The target regains hit points equal to 5 + your Wisdom modifier.
Level 21: The target regains hit points equal to 10 + your Wisdom modifier.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Other knightly warriors often amass great personal wealth with their lands, but hospitalers hold only noble titles and offices as stewards. Without any great personal fortune to draw upon, they cannot easily afford to maintain themselves in the style demanded by their high station or provide themselves with suitable entourages in their travels. In recognition of this fact, most kingdoms grant hospitalers the right to request hospitality from landed knights and nobles of the realm. (Naturally, hospitalers can also expect food and shelter from chapter houses, hospices, and temples affiliated with their order.) When you travel, you can ask to be put up in any temples, castles, or manors you pass by; your hosts are obliged to provide for your needs for a minimum of three nights. Enemies are free to ignore your demands, of course.

Benefit: You can request food and lodging for yourself and your traveling companions from any temple affiliated with your hospitaler order, or from any noble household. Your request for hospitality will be honored in all but the most unusual circumstances.

Level 10 Feature

When battle turns against you and your companions, your star shines most brightly. If multiple

comrades fall or become seriously wounded, you can use your *shield of devotion* prayer a second time in the same battle.

Benefit: You can use *shield of devotion* twice per encounter.

Optional Powers

Most hospitalers are skilled battlefield healers as well as devout warriors. Armed with potent divine prayers, they serve to bolster and refresh allies fighting alongside them.

Level 2 Utility Power

Claws, fangs, blades, and arrows are bad enough, but many enemies also employ deadly poison, foul magic, or vicious combat maneuvers that can cripple unfortunate warriors. Sometimes it's more important to help an ally shake off a stunning blow or purge poison from his or her body than it is to knit a wound with a healing prayer. *Hospitaler's prayer* helps to remove an effect hampering the target, and it also serves as a potent prayer of protection for a short time.

Hospitaler's Prayer — Hospitaler Utility 2

Your prayer alleviates one malady afflicting your comrade and shields him or her from harm for a short time.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Target: One ally in the burst
Effect: The target can make a saving throw. Until the end of your next turn, the target gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses, or a +4 power bonus if the saving throw you grant with this power fails.

Level 6 Utility Power

Many eager warriors boldly throw themselves into the midst of their enemies, seeking glory even if it means leaving their allies far behind them. Sometimes, this reckless strategy can result in the boldest of your comrades getting into serious trouble when you can't easily come to his or her aid. The *radiant stride* prayer surrounds you in a bright, glowing mist, helping you to slip around the enemies standing between you and your stricken friend, without being cut down yourself. The lingering mists help to conceal you from your enemies for a short time, giving you the chance to heal or retrieve your friend.

Radiant Stride — Hospitaler Utility 6

Cloaking yourself in a bright nimbus of light, you go to the side of a wounded comrade.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Move Action **Personal**
Effect: You shift up to your speed. You must end the shift adjacent to a bloodied or unconscious ally. Until the end of your next turn, you gain partial concealment, and your allies also have partial concealment while adjacent to you.

Level 10 Utility Power

As a devoted hospitaler, you seek to keep your allies on their feet, battling on valiantly against whatever evils confront you. This powerful prayer restores a badly wounded ally to something approaching full health, and cures him or her of one detrimental condition.

Fight on, Friend — Hospitaler Utility 10

You heal a badly wounded companion, restoring health and banishing one affliction or hindering condition of your choice.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Minor Action **Melee** touch
Target: One bloodied or unconscious ally
Effect: The target regains hit points equal to twice his or her healing surge value. In addition, the target automatically saves against one effect that a save can end.

Noble

Heroes arise from all levels of society. Some begin their stories as peasants, some as rough-and-ready homesteaders from frontier lands, and others as well-off townsfolk, but some heroes are born into privilege. Noble-born heroes enjoy opportunities and comforts that many commoners can only imagine, but if they are blessed with wealth and influence by the luck of being born to high station, then they are also obligated to do more with the gifts they have been given.

The definition of nobility varies from land to land and race to race. In most realms, the aristocracy falls into three groups: low nobility, high nobility, and royalty. Low nobles include landed knights, squires, baronets, lairds, hidalgos, seigneurs, and other holders of minor titles and estates. Typically a low noble's lands rarely extend for more than a day's ride or include more than one good-sized town. Most low nobles owe allegiance to a nearby high noble, who might bear a title such as baron, count, duke, marquis, earl, landgrave, or prince. High nobles can be major powers, since they are wealthy enough to raise their own armies and are near-absolute rulers over the lands of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of low nobles. High nobles in turn owe their allegiance to the sovereign of their realm. Royal titles come in a bewildering variety, ranging from king or queen to archduke, high prince, tsar, khan, shah, or something even more exotic. Of course, the ranks of the nobility also include everyone in the titled landholder's family. A member of a noble family who isn't the actual titleholder is generally called lord or lady.

An adventurer from a noble family is rarely the family's active titleholder or ruler. Governing and defending a fief is an important duty, and the affairs

of the kingdom leave little time for dungeon delving and adventure seeking. Most noble heroes are therefore untitled lords or ladies who are closely related to a titleholder. A hero might be the heir apparent to the title of head of the family, standing only one heartbeat away from a noble seat, or he or she might be further removed from the order of succession, free to indulge a taste for adventure with little concern for ever becoming a baron, a duke, or a king.

Regardless of whether they hold titles or might inherit them, nobles still enjoy a number of perquisites of their high stations. Common officials and lawkeepers can arrest or hinder nobles only in exceptional circumstances. Important people in nearby lands are careful to treat nobles with respect, even deference, for fear of offending a powerful family. Nobles are also wealthy by the standards of most people. As long as they're anywhere near home, nobles can afford fine meals, excellent lodgings, and sufficient allowances and stipends to maintain themselves in comfort.

Creating a Noble

Noble heroes can be found in every character class. Naturally, knights are frequently born of noble families. Wizards can come from noble backgrounds, since noble families possess the means and the opportunity to arrange for promising youngsters who display an interest in magic to be tutored in the magical arts. Nobles blocked from inheriting titles by older siblings are encouraged to enter the clergy, and they might become clerics or paladins. Even a rogue could have an aristocratic origin; a street-savvy thief might be a troublemaker who became bored with a life of being pampered or a runaway seeking to avoid the duties of holding high rank.

Starting Feature

Nobles are born to lead. Commoners naturally look to you to make decisions and take charge of any important endeavors, and that includes leading your followers, retainers, and soldiers in battle. (Your friends and allies aren't obligated to follow your commands, of course; they're not your servants.) If you grew up training to be a warrior, you know how to lead with the sword; if your family instead tutored you in other areas of endeavor, your noble bearing and confidence still command respect.

Benefit: You gain the *noble presence* power.

Noble Presence — Noble Utility

You encourage your allies to improve their positions and stand firm against the foe.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Move Action **Close** burst 3
Target: One or two allies in the burst
Effect: Each target can shift up to 2 squares as a free action, and each target gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Now that you have demonstrated that you are a hero of some account and a worthy continuation of your family's noble lineage, you are given a magic item that has been in your family's keeping for generations. (If you are far from home when you reach this milestone, a courier shows up in the nearest large town to deliver it to you.) The heirloom is yours to use for as long as you need it, but you're expected to return home with it when you're done with it—it's not to be sold or given away.

Benefit: You gain one common suit of magic armor, weapon, or neck slot item of 6th level or lower.

Level 10 Feature

Whether you've tried to avoid it or not, you can't help becoming involved in the high affairs of your realm and the shifting affairs of the court. The great nobles of the realm rarely confront each other openly, instead surreptitiously jockeying for influence. Recognizing your friends and your enemies when everyone wears a mask of gentility and courtly manners is an art, but your experiences have prepared you well.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Diplomacy checks and Insight checks.

Optional Powers

Adventuring nobles excel at inspiring those around them, naturally rising to the top in dangerous situations. Some nobles are political creatures who send others out to face danger, but you aren't one of those. Your title confirms what your comrades and followers already know about you—you're a courageous warrior who leads from the front. You won't ask your associates to do anything that you wouldn't do yourself, and they strive to match your bravery and coolness in battle.

Level 2 Utility Power

Depending on the laws of the land, nobles can have commoners fined, taxed, arrested, or beaten at a mere word. Under such circumstances, few commoners can afford to ignore a noble determined to throw his or her weight around. Even other nobles think twice before giving offense to one of their own, knowing that a careless insult might be the beginning of a fierce rivalry or a lethal vendetta. You can get what you want by identifying yourself and suggesting that it would be wise to cooperate with you.

Noble Influence — Noble Utility 2

If a logical argument or a heartfelt appeal won't move your adversary, perhaps your exalted title will.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Free Action **Personal**
Effect: You gain a +5 power bonus to your next Intimidate check made before the end of the encounter. Until the end of the encounter, you can also use Intimidate in place of your next Bluff check or Diplomacy check.

Level 6 Utility Power

By standing up to the effects of your enemies' attacks, you demonstrate to those around you that they can do so as well. When you recover from the effects of debilitating magic, poison, fear, or another unusual form of attack, your success and your words of encouragement help an ally to follow your example.

Inspiring Recovery — Noble Utility 6

When you shake off the lingering effects of an enemy's attack, you provide an ally with the inspiration to do the same.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Free Action **Close** burst 5
Trigger: You succeed on a saving throw.
Target: One ally in the burst
Effect: The target can make a saving throw with a +2 power bonus.

Level 10 Utility Power

You're accustomed to quick obedience from your inferiors, and you seize control of any dangerous situation. When an ally panics or hesitates, it takes you only a single shout or a firm hand on the shoulder to get your friend moving again.

Urge to Action — Noble Utility 10

With one quick word, you spur a hesitating ally into action.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Free Action **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An ally makes an initiative check, and the result is lower than your initiative check result.
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: The target's initiative check result improves to your initiative check result.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *Dark Sun*® *Campaign Guide*, and the *D&D*® *Gamma World*™ *Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of Forgotten Realms® novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the Blades of the Moonsea series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the Dungeons & Dragons® game at Wizards of the Coast.

Character Themes
Heroes for Hire

By Richard Baker

Illustrations by Peter Tikos and Mathias Kollros

Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article details four character themes: the explorer, the guttersnipe, the mercenary, and the outlaw.

Character Themes

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, if you're a human wizard who chooses the guttersnipe theme, you might have started your life on the streets, picking up a few arcane tricks here and there from several different wizards. Perhaps a wizard took you under his or her wing, more or less, but without the formality of taking you in as an apprentice. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," the first article in this series.

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Explorer

Seekers of new lands and lost places, explorers are masters of the trackless wilderness. Formal exploration is not very common in the world; a few wealthy kingdoms and mercantile cities charter expeditions to distant lands or reward travelers who return home with descriptions of far-off places. Most explorers, however, are individuals whose interests or duties lead them to venture into places where other people rarely go. They can be hunters, scouts, pathfinders, merchants, or emissaries to distant realms. Pursuing their private interests or carrying out important missions entrusted to them leads these travelers into the wild places of the world.

Many explorers begin their adventures as professional treasure-seekers. Searching out legends about lost hoards, hidden artifacts, or unplundered tombs, they put their talents to use in locating the rich score that no one else has found. Other explorers are engaged in searches, quests, or missions that lead them to places no one has visited before. For example, an order of knights or wizards might charge its members with traveling the world to battle a specific threat. A few explorers are true wanderers—travelers who feel compelled to see for themselves what lies beyond the next ridge or to seek out legendary challenges. Fortune or fame is of little concern to these wanderers; they live to satisfy their personal curiosity or to measure themselves against the dangers they overcome.

Regardless of individual motivation, explorers must master a daunting set of skills if they hope to be successful. They must be tough and enduring, capable of traveling great distances over difficult terrain, and must have the ability to survive the worst extremes of weather. They must be expert beast hunters and foragers with a talent for living off the land no matter where they are, since they're not likely to find friendly inns or trading posts once they leave civilization behind. A knack for direction is indispensable; roads are nonexistent in the wilds, and missing an important landmark or choosing the wrong turn off a poorly marked trail might be a fatal mistake. Finally, explorers had better be ready to defend themselves from the attacks of vicious raiders and hungry monsters.

Creating an Explorer

The explorer theme works well with any character class. Rogues are drawn to this theme as treasure-seekers; legends of vast hoards in lost cities or fantastic treasures hidden in deep caverns are the meat and drink of many bold rogues. Wizards take to the explorer's path for less materialistic reasons, drawn by the lure of knowledge and discovery. Rangers are perhaps the most iconic explorers. At home in the deepest wilderness, skilled in the hunt, capable and enduring, rangers are pathfinders and trackers of extraordinary skill. They can venture through wilderness that no other explorers could survive.

Starting Feature

Scrambling over broken ground, balancing on fallen logs, determining which direction to take to get to your goal, and setting your feet in the firmest patch of a bog or a streambed are second nature to you. You have an uncanny knack for knowing which direction you face. You can tell which branch of a trail is likely to lead in the direction you want to go, and you can gain your bearings by studying the landscape around you.

As you venture through various environments, and as the tenderfoots around you flail for balance or slog

through the muck, you're already on the other side of the obstacle. Broken ground and heavy undergrowth can impede others who aren't familiar with the wilderness, but by using *surefooted stride*, you know how to cross the worst terrain without difficulty and turn it to your advantage in a fight. Almost any sort of ground can offer some cover if you know what you're doing, or if you can distract an enemy that needs to pay attention to where it is standing.

Benefit: You can tell which way is north, and you gain a +5 bonus to any skill check to avoid becoming lost, find your way to a specific location, or spot a distant landmark.

In addition, you gain the *surefooted stride* power.

Surefooted Stride Explorer Utility

Your expert woodcraft allows you to move easily through difficult terrain and use it to your advantage in battle.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Move Action Personal

Effect: You move up to your speed, ignoring difficult terrain. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex if you are in difficult terrain, and you gain combat advantage against enemies that are in difficult terrain.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

You can push yourself to make better speed over distance than most people can. By choosing easier paths and showing those around you the best way to handle harsh conditions, you can help a small company make exceptional time through the worst sort of wilderness and ensure that your companions survive the experience in the best possible condition.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Endurance checks. In addition, for the purpose of determining how far you and up to ten companions can travel in an hour or a day, treat the group's speed as the slowest member's speed + 1. While the group travels with you, its members also gain a +2 power bonus to Endurance checks.

Level 10 Feature

You've been toughened up by long journeys and hard treks. You have built up a resistance to the hazards of your profession and are more likely to shake off poisons and stand your ground.

Benefit: You gain a +1 power bonus to Fortitude and a +2 bonus to saving throws against ongoing poison damage.

Optional Powers

Whether you venerate the primal spirits of the wilderness or not, you have learned much by observing the ways of the wild creatures around you.

Level 2 Utility Power

Many obstacles such as slippery branches, high ledges, deep gorges, and torrential streams are best crossed with a feat of pure athleticism or balance. Like the wild stag fleeing the hunter, you hurl yourself over whatever lies in your path or swiftly run across a treacherous surface without breaking stride.

Stag's Bound Explorer Utility 2

Fleet-footed as the wild deer, you fly over a treacherous surface or make a daring leap.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Move Action Personal

Effect: You move up to your speed +2. During this movement, and until the end of your next turn, you gain a +5 power bonus to Athletics checks to jump and Acrobatics checks to balance or reduce falling damage. Any jump you make is considered to have a running start, and you can move at full speed while balancing.

Level 6 Utility Power

The eagle is legendary for its ability to see prey at great distances. With a moment's concentration, you sharpen your own eyesight for a short time, giving you the ability to strike distant targets with your ranged attacks or spot a foe before it spots you.

Eagle's Eye Explorer Utility 6

You fix your eye on a distant target, seeing it with exceptional clarity.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain combat advantage with your ranged attack powers and area attack powers, and your weapon attacks take no penalty for long range. You also gain a +4 power bonus to Perception checks to detect hidden objects or creatures.

Level 10 Utility Power

Your travels often lead you into places guarded by deadfalls, pits, or hidden traps. But like the wildcat, you have an uncanny nose for danger and lightning-quick reflexes. When the trap closes around you, you leap out of the way in the blink of an eye.

Lynx's Reflexes Explorer Utility 10

Sensing a sudden threat, you throw yourself out of danger's way.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Immediate Interrupt Personal
Trigger: A trap attacks you.

Effect: You shift up to 2 squares and gain a +4 power bonus to AC and Reflex against the trap's attack.

Guttersnipe

Heroes can rise from unfortunate circumstances, and few circumstances are less fortunate than to begin life as a penniless street urchin in a hard, unforgiving city. Orphaned, abandoned, or mistreated as children, guttersnipes can grow into hard-bitten, cynical adults. Marked by the lower-class manners and speech patterns of the poorest quarters, guttersnipe heroes struggle to be seen as something more than the dregs of society. Guttersnipes live their lives under constant suspicion from the more fortunate people in the world. Most are seen as greedy, lying cutpurses, footpads, or ruffians who would slit a throat for a handful of silver pieces. Common people openly distrust them, constables and watch officers routinely harass or question them, and aristocrats are surrounded by watchful guards or counselors who make it a point to keep the riffraff, especially dangerous riffraff, away.

Under this cloak of distrust, some guttersnipes choose to live down to others' expectations, nursing bitter grudges against their "betters." Others desperately try to escape their poor origin by concealing their street manners and lack of education behind carefully rehearsed facades of gentility; they dread the day when someone sees through the disguise. Some happy-go-lucky souls choose not to be troubled by suspicions and slights, refusing to be defined by others' ill-informed judgments. Finally, benefactors who see potential in them pluck a lucky few guttersnipes out of the streets and give them a chance to make something of themselves. A powerful wizard might detect a spark of greatness in a street urchin and teach the boy or girl a few tricks; a compassionate priest might offer a poor child a chance to become an acolyte in a temple. As recounted in more than one legendary tale, guttersnipes are sometimes picked up from the streets by royalty or high nobles and adopted after doing some great service or showing tremendous pluck.

Whether a guttersnipe meets life with wry wit or scheming self-interest, every one is a survivor who excels in recognizing and seizing opportunity. Guttersnipes who through good fortune or hard work leave the streets behind to become wizards, clerics, or wards of nobles might not look or sound much like the beggar children they once were, but inside they still have the quick wits and daring that got them noticed in the first place.

Creating a Guttersnipe

Naturally, a great number of rogues are guttersnipes; growing up in the streets provides a perfect opportunity for learning the rogue's talents. Fighters, especially slayers, also fit this theme well. Guttersnipes of exceptional talent sometimes turn to magic and master the warlock's art, determined to earn respect through power. Beyond that, characters of any class could be plucked from the streets or succeed in their efforts to improve their circumstances. A guttersnipe is most likely a human, dwarf, halfling, drow, or tiefling, since the lowborn folk of these races are most likely to congregate in the sort of poor, desperate slums from which guttersnipes come.

Starting Feature

In the worst quarters of cities, packs of nearly feral guttersnipes pose a threat to careless passersby. Darting out of alleyways or scurrying through thick crowds, they descend like swooping hawks, cutting purses or grabbing parcels before disappearing into the shadows. For those victims who seem a little too ready to draw a blade to defend their property, a

quick slash to the hamstring or the calf cripples any pursuit. You are a master of this art, using the technique to make a single swift attack before retreating to a safe distance.

Benefit: You gain the *running slash* power.

Running Slash Guttersnipe Attack

You dart past a foe, attacking as you pass by.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** 1
Effect: You move up to your speed and make the following attack at any point during your move. This movement does not provoke an opportunity attack from the target.
Target: One creature
Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Reflex
Hit: 1[W] + highest ability modifier damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
Level 11: 2[W] + highest ability modifier damage.
Level 21: 3[W] + highest ability modifier damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Buying and selling valuables of uncertain origin is second nature to you. No matter where you go, you can establish contact with the most motivated sellers and buyers. Whether you're selling a statuette you found in a dungeon or buying new rituals to add to your spellbook, you can get a better price than anybody else.

Benefit: When you buy an item, you pay 90 percent of the listed price. When you sell an item, you receive 10 percent more than the price normally quoted for selling that item.

Level 10 Feature

You know from personal experience how much street urchins, beggars, pickpockets, and other petty criminals understand about the goings-on in a city. Better yet, your reputation as a hero of humble origins means that poor folk seek you out and keep you well informed at all times; you have a ready-made spy network waiting for you wherever you go.

Benefit: You gain a +5 power bonus to Streetwise checks. You can make a Streetwise check once per day as a free action as long as you are in a town or a city.

Optional Powers

Growing up on the streets, you quickly learned how to get away from trouble and stay out of the authorities' reach. You're nearly impossible to corner, and when enemies box you in, you have a knack for making them look like buffoons. Now that you're grown, you can't rely on a child's stature to get you out of danger, but you can still lure an enemy into making a mistake with a few barbed words and your own quick reflexes.

Level 2 Utility Power

As any city watch member could tell you, guttersnipes are renowned for their ability to taunt and infuriate their betters. You have mastered the stinging insult, the rude gesture, and the mocking laugh. When an enemy misses you, you make sure everyone knows about it. Even unintelligent foes can be baited into wild swings if you look like you're leaving yourself open to an attack.

Infuriating Taunt Guttersnipe Utility 2

You enrage an enemy by mocking its failure.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Reaction **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares of you misses you with an attack.
Target: The triggering enemy in the burst
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls (including rolls against you) until it hits you with an attack.

Level 6 Utility Power

If you've learned one thing, it's how to make fools out of bigger, tougher enemies, especially when they outnumber you. It's difficult for them to keep track of you, and you dart away from the swings of swords or take cover from a foe by ducking behind its allies.

Fools' Dance Guttersnipe Utility 6

When pressed by your enemies, you turn their numbers against them. The closer you are to your enemies, the farther you are from harm.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each time you are attacked, you gain a power bonus to all defenses against that attack. The bonus equals the number of enemies adjacent to you when the attack is made. In addition, until the end of your next turn, each time you are missed by an attack, you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Level 10 Utility Power

Just when it seems you're trapped, you somehow wriggle out of trouble. You go limp, slip an arm out of a sleeve, tear your cloak or tunic, or buck and kick with such suddenness that you shake free of any restraint. In the blink of an eye, you're on your feet again 10 or 15 feet away, ready to run for it—or resume the fight.

Unlikely Escape Guttersnipe Utility 10

With a quick twist of your torso, you slip free from a situation that impedes you.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Move Action **Personal**
Requirement: You must be restrained, slowed, immobilized, or flanked by enemies.
Effect: You end one effect on you that is immobilizing, restraining, or slowing you, and you shift up to 3 squares.

Mercenary

Sellswords, spellslingers, soldiers of fortune, freebooters—regardless of their appellation, mercenaries are heroes who work for pay. Capable warriors and spellcasters are always in demand, and the more desperately they're needed, the better paid they are. More than a few young heroes begin their careers by striking out in search of opportunities to turn their fighting skills into high-paying jobs. Although most people expect that mercenaries do only what they're paid to do, it's not unusual for a heroic mercenary to show a soft spot after coming across people in need who can't afford his or her services. It might not be good business, but one of the advantages of being unencumbered by loyalties and obligations is the ability to follow the dictates of one's conscience whenever they strike.

Each adventuring mercenary falls into one of two broad categories: retainer or freelancer. A retainer signs on with a patron, providing service in exchange for a regular stipend or salary. Nobles, merchants, and royal officials often find it useful to keep a small number of talented troubleshooters at their beck and call for escorting them during travels, guarding their homes or interests, or dealing sternly with rivals. Retainers are naturally expected to follow their employers' orders, but they spend less time looking for work.

A freelancer hires on for one specific job at a time or works on speculation—for example, hunting down outlaws who have prices on their heads or searching out prospective employers who have problems in need of fixing.

Mercenaries might be more flexible in their standards than high-minded characters who serve others without thought of reward, but that doesn't mean they'll do anything for money. Heroic mercenaries won't hesitate to walk away from jobs that require them to murder, rob, or oppress commoners. Likewise, the best mercenaries pride themselves on their loyalty and professionalism even under difficult conditions. Any thug can take a paymaster's gold to swagger around and look capable when danger's far away, but honest mercenaries don't slink off into the shadows when called upon to earn their pay. Building a reputation for having standards and being reliable is the best way to impress future employers. Some mercenaries, however, are little more than brigands who are perfectly happy to earn a living through plundering and banditry if they can't find more respectable work that pays them well enough. Heroic mercenaries therefore face a good deal of suspicion and prejudice from people who expect sellswords to behave like thugs.

Creating a Mercenary

Characters of any class might call themselves mercenaries, or at least make a habit of choosing their quests based on the likely rewards. Rogues and fighters naturally fit the mercenary's approach to adventure, and they often flourish as sellswords. Clerics and paladins can be driven by higher ideals than pure self-interest, but a devout or pious individual might nonetheless fall in with a company of freebooters. Serving as voices of conscience and spiritual shepherds to their more worldly companions, they encourage their allies to take on causes that are both worthy and well paying. On the other hand, wizards can be every bit as avaricious as martial characters who sell their loyalties for gold. Ambitious nobles and powerful merchants find it useful to

retain house wizards who can advise them on arcane matters, spy on rivals, and defend against the wizards employed by their rivals.

Starting Feature

Mercenaries learn to incorporate all sorts of pragmatic tactics into their fighting. Although some might think of these moves as dirty, it's a simple matter of expedience; the best fight is one in which you put your foe at a disadvantage early on and don't give it a chance to recover. However you have come by the experience, you've learned a few different ways to take down an enemy. Maybe you cut your adversary's feet out from under it, maybe you stick your foot behind it and knock it over with a hard shove, or maybe you aim a *magic missile* at a kneecap or dizzy your foe with a *phantasmal assault*. With your enemy on the ground, you have an opportunity to move on to another foe, or beat a retreat—or finish it off while you have the advantage.

Benefit: You gain the *takedown strike* power.

Takedown Strike Mercenary Attack

You sweep or shoot through an enemy's legs and knock it to the ground—hard.

Encounter ✦ Martial
No Action **Melee** 1
Trigger: You hit an enemy adjacent to you with an attack.
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: The target takes extra damage from the triggering attack equal to the ability modifier used in the triggering attack, and you knock the target prone.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Mercenaries spend a lot of time in rough quarters; you don't scare easily. You know the sorts of people you need to approach to find out what's going on in town or learn whether any work is available for a person of your special talents. Naturally, you learned long ago how to project just the right amount of experience, suspiciousness, and willingness to use violence to get your way.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Intimidate checks and Streetwise checks.

Level 10 Feature

Mercenaries are notorious for looking out for their own necks first. You might be more willing than most to run big risks, but that doesn't mean you don't care about surviving the job. The more dangerous the situation gets, the more your finely tuned instinct for survival kicks in.

Benefit: While you are bloodied, you gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses.

Optional Powers

Fighting for pay means that you look on most battles and skirmishes as business transactions, carefully weighing the potential rewards against the likely costs. Fair fights do not exist in your world; you don't see any reason at all to meet your enemies on an even footing if you can find a way to tilt things in your favor.

Level 2 Utility Power

You've seen every trick in the book, and you've thought up a couple of new ones for yourself. By feigning injury, giving up an advantageous position, or pretending to be distracted, you lure an enemy into attacking when you appear to have dropped your guard—but it's a clever trap.

Sellsword's Ploy Mercenary Utility 2

Your enemy attacks when it appears to have an advantage, but you're ready for it.

Daily ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy attacks you while it has combat advantage against you.
Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + one-half your level. Until the end of your next turn, you do not grant combat advantage to the triggering enemy, and it grants combat advantage to you.

Level 6 Utility Power

The first step in fighting smart is to control the range of the engagement. Some enemies are best dealt with at a distance, and any mercenary worth his or her salt stays out of their way. Other enemies—for example, dangerous archers or spellcasters—should be kept right under the menace of your blade. You know a

technique or two for keeping enemies from getting away from you when you don't want them to.

I'm Right Here Mercenary Utility 6

When an enemy tries to slip away from you, you stick to it.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to you moves away from you.
Effect: You shift up to 2 squares to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Level 10 Utility Power

To a mercenary, the most important objective is to live long enough to collect a reward. That doesn't mean you should stay out of the fighting—the best way to avoid getting killed is to make sure your side wins as quickly and decisively as possible. After all, they say that the best defense is a good offense.

Brutal Survivor Mercenary Utility 10

The best way to survive a fight is to take out your enemies as fast as you can.

Daily ✦ Martial
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, each time you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points or score a critical hit, you gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + one-half your level.

Outlaw

The world is a hard place. Many people are forced to do unfortunate things to survive; some are wrongly accused, and others find that the laws and structures that are meant to shield the weak from their depredations protect oppressors. Outlaw heroes are wanted by the authorities in their native realms. They risk arrest every time they show themselves, and they must develop a talent for disguise, take to a life in the wilderness, or master the art of the quick escape if they want to avoid the executioner's axe.

Outlaws might come to be outlaws for a variety of reasons. An insecure tyrant might decree the destruction of a noble family that poses a threat to his reign, leaving the survivors destitute and hunted by royal authorities. A tragic misunderstanding or accident might condemn an individual, who is discovered standing over a murdered archmage's body with a bloody dagger in her hand. No one believes her when she tries to explain that she found him already dead. In a realm where the powerful are free to oppress the weak, standing up to a cruel official or lord who injures or mistreats someone can easily turn a hero into an outlaw. However, it's far more common for an outlaw to justly stand condemned for her actions. She might be a habitual scofflaw who defies authority, or she might have made one tragic mistake in a moment of desperation or anger. Many paths can lead a person to earn a price on his or her head, and not all are undeserved.

Outlaw heroes often win the gratitude and loyalty of the poor people in the lands nearby, especially if they're standing up for commoners against oppressive rulers. In lands where the lawful authorities are weak or corrupt, outlaw heroes might be the only resource for defeating dangerous monsters and putting a stop to villainous plots. In addition, some officials and nobles deliberately cultivate contacts with capable outlaws. Sometimes it's useful to hire agents to do illegal things for good reasons . . . or for selfish ones. Ambitious nobles or courtiers often find employment for criminals and have ways to protect them from arrest or set them free again if they prove useful. Friends at court can make life much more comfortable for outlaw heroes.

Creating an Outlaw

Obviously, rogues are drawn to the outlaw's path; few rogues are ever in the law's good graces, even if they spend most of their time pilfering hoards in monster-haunted dungeons. Fighters and rangers are also well suited to the rigors of an outlaw's life, since they're tough and self-reliant. Clerics and wizards are less likely to be outlaws, but such a combination is not unheard of; a cleric who sees that the authorities are corrupt might be compelled by conscience to aid outlaws who resist injustice. Warlocks are often practitioners of arts frowned upon (or banned outright) by the powers that be, and they become accustomed to following their own paths regardless of the local laws.

Starting Feature

As an outlaw, you've learned that you can't afford the luxury of a fair fight. The best fights are those you win with your first attack, and if you don't, it's helpful to discourage pursuit. *Surprise strike* lets you cripple an enemy right at the start of an encounter, making it your choice whether to fight it out or make your getaway. If you don't have a chance to use it before the fight begins, it's a handy tactic for gaining a good head start by dazing your adversary for a brief moment.

Benefit: You gain the *surprise strike* power.

Surprise Strike Outlaw Attack

You follow up on the advantage granted by a surprised or distracted enemy to strike a crippling blow.

Encounter ✦ Martial
No Action **Special**
Trigger: When using a basic attack or an at-will weapon attack power, you hit an enemy that is granting combat advantage to you.
Effect: The enemy is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Staying out of sight can mean a life in the outdoors, hiding out in tangled thickets and lonely heaths. You learned long ago how to cover your tracks, keep up your best speed over rough ground, and use terrain to elude pursuit. Few foes can keep up with you—or get away from you—when you're on your home ground.

Benefit: Choose a terrain type: desert, forest, hills and mountains, marsh and swamp, or snow and tundra. In your chosen terrain, you can't be tracked and you ignore difficult terrain.

Level 10 Feature

You have achieved an impressive level of notoriety in the districts you haunt. Commoners are quick to provide you with information, either in gratitude for your exploits or (if you're a less heroic sort of outlaw) to avert your wrath. Poachers, bandits, and other criminals regard you with respect, envying your success. To your enemies, your name is a byword for swift and certain doom. When you appear on the scene, weak-willed foes are quick to take to their heels rather than face the person behind the terrifying tales.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Intimidate checks and Streetwise checks.

Outlaw Utility Powers

The first rule for a successful career as an outlaw is "Don't get caught." Outlaws need to be quick on their feet and quicker with their wits. Your talents help you to launch stealthy ambushes and fade back into the forests or alleyways before your enemies realize that you're around. Even if they flush you from your hiding place, you've got the speed to outrun almost anything on two legs.

Level 2 Utility Power

The best way to avoid capture is to be faster than the enemies trying to catch you. Clumsy watch members or city guards struggling to run you to ground don't have a chance when you decide to lengthen your stride and leave them puffing and panting in your dust. Of course, your fleetness of foot means that many people can't run away from you when the situation is reversed; you can run most enemies down in the space of less than 100 feet.

Burst of Speed Outlaw Utility 2

You put on an impressive burst of speed.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to speed until the end of this turn. Until the start of your next turn, you do not grant combat advantage or take a penalty to attack rolls for running.

Level 6 Utility Power

If you can't outrun your pursuers, you can try to disappear into the terrain around you. You are a master of concealment, and with a few quick steps you can break contact with your enemies and vanish like a ghost.

Out of Sight Outlaw Utility 6

You slip into the underbrush or the shadows, vanishing with uncanny skill.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Move Action **Personal**
Effect: You shift 1 square, and then you move up to your speed. If you end your movement in a square with partial cover or partial concealment, you can make a Stealth check as a free action to hide from nonadjacent enemies.

Level 10 Utility Power

Every encounter offers the opportunity for a bold and fast-thinking outlaw to seize the advantage over his or her foes. You can spot a hiding place just before your enemies see you, launch an attack at the very instant a distraction diverts their attention, or start acting with decisive swiftness while your enemies are still taking in the scene.

Improvise Ambush Outlaw Utility 10

With a sudden distraction, a bluff, or a quick motion, you turn a fair fight into a surprise attack.

Daily ✦ Martial
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You roll initiative at the start of an encounter and are not surprised.
Effect: You and each of your allies gain a +5 power bonus to initiative checks for this encounter.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *Dark Sun*® *Campaign Guide*, and the *D&D*® *Gamma World*™ *Roleplaying Game*. He's a *New York Times* bestselling author of Forgotten Realms® novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the Blades of the Moonsea series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the Dungeons & Dragons® game at Wizards of the Coast.

Combat Velocity

By Matt Sernett

Illustration by Eric Belisle

Combat can be one of the most fun parts of the Dungeons & Dragons® game, but it can also take a long time. You might have a blast with an hour-long battle or exult in four hours of epic mayhem, but sometimes a fight can drag out longer than you would like.

For instance, I run a lunchtime session each week, and with a little less than an hour to play each Thursday, most fights bridge two sessions. This situation can present a challenge when we miss a week's play and our memories are foggy about who was doing what, where, and why. Over the past few months, we've been experimenting with ways to pick up the pace so we can cover more ground and play through the adventure quicker. I've found one strategy that works for my game; what works for you will depend upon your group and how much time you have to play. You might find that your game benefits from more than one of the ideas below.

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Roleplay

The simplest and perhaps best way to speed combat is through roleplaying. Not every monster needs to fight to its last breath. Monsters can run away, surrender, make peace, or try to cut a deal. Villains can even turn into allies.

Time Saved: It's up to you. Monsters might fight until bloodied, or until they are outnumbered. They might assess the odds and make a deal when an event doesn't go their way.

Pros: This strategy introduces more roleplaying, and if your group prefers that to combat, it's a win-win situation.

Cons: If you haven't been playing this way, your players might not know how to handle it. Can they trust the orcs to keep their word about leaving the forest? What do they do with the necromancer now that he's surrendered?

The other problem you'll encounter is that you can't betray the players too often in a game where they are used to accepting the surrender of their foes. When enemies escape capture, break their word, or turn on the characters too often, the players won't trust you anymore. Sure, their characters shouldn't doubt the word of the leader of the bandits because the goblins lied to them two weeks earlier, but the players will doubt your sincerity. When that happens, it often results in the characters executing captured enemies, and that can be uncomfortably grisly for the players.

Double Character Damage

This is the strategy that works best for my lunchtime game. All character damage is doubled, including critical hits and ongoing damage, and no other changes are made to the rules.

Time Saved: It doesn't cut combat length in half, but it comes closer than other options.

Pros: The players feel their characters are powerful.

This option has the crucial advantage of being simple. It's easy and fun for players, and because the players do all the work, the DM doesn't need to change anything.

Cons: The monsters have fewer rounds to act and might therefore not be able to show off all their tricks if they have a lot of powers. Also, the players might not feel their characters are threatened because the monsters have less time to deal damage, and the strategies to make the characters feel more threatened (using more brutes, adding more monsters, using higher level monsters, and so on) inevitably lengthen the time spent in combat.

In addition, some players might now have an incentive to pick powers that deal more damage rather than an interesting special effect. If a monster is only going to last two or three rounds, why take the power that immobilizes it when you can take the one that will take the monster out of the picture twice as fast?

Double Everyone's Damage

This might appear similar to the same strategy as halving hit points, and you would think it would have the same effect, but this approach is a bit easier. Doubling a result is simpler than halving a bunch of numbers on a character sheet and as well as die rolls.

Time Saved: Fights feel about 25 percent faster than normal.

Pros: The math is easy for everyone, and you don't need to do any of it ahead of time. Combat is tense for players in a way than doesn't occur with the halving hit point strategy: High damage numbers pose a real existential threat to the characters.

Cons: Even though you might expect the net effect to be the same as for halving hit points, the deadlier nature of combat was more palpable with this method. When the monsters concentrated attacks, a character could go down early and stay down for most of the fight. One of the surprising drawbacks was how dangerous ongoing damage became. Ongoing damage can easily kill an unconscious low-level character with a couple rounds of failed saving throws.

In addition, the players and DM were doing more math. Even though it might not be difficult to double a number, it does lengthen each player's turn, and that adds up.

Average Damage

I've sat in on many playtests and timed player's turns, and in doing this I discovered a surprising time sink: rolling damage. It might be fun to roll 6d6 + 16 damage, but the act of selecting the dice, rolling them, tracking the dice on the table, adding up the

numbers, consulting a sheet for the bonus, and creating a total can add significant time to your turn. You might be thinking that you don't roll that many dice and that you're a math whiz, so it won't take you long. Even so, it does add a number of seconds to your turn. If you want to see how long, time yourself and your friends the next time you play (surreptitiously, if people are likely to become self-conscious or competitive about it).

With this technique, the players (and the DM, as much as possible) calculate the average damage for their attacks before the game begins. A hit deals this amount, and a critical hit deals maximum damage plus the average amount for any extra dice of damage stemming from magical or other bonuses.

Time Saved: How much time you save will depend on how slow people were with dice and math beforehand; a saving of 25 percent is easily achievable.

Pros: The time you don't spend rolling damage can really add up.

Cons: The big disadvantage here is you lose the excitement of rolling dice. That can be a huge part of the joy of combat for the players, and it might be something your group can't stand to lose.

Fewer Monsters

You can save time at the table by giving yourself less to do. The easiest way is by using fewer monsters in a fight.

Time Saved: You might shorten battles by 10–20 percent. It depends on how complicated a fight you typically run.

Pros: You have fewer monsters and effects to track each turn.

Cons: To use fewer monsters, you have to accept one of two choices. You can use more elites and solos, which reduces your options for encounter design. Second, you can decrease the amount of XP that the encounters provide and thereby reduce their difficulty. Neither of these is a great option for regular play, but can be good for an occasional battle.

Simple Character Choices

One of the ways the players can speed up a combat is to pare down their options. If the players don't have to keep an eye on a dozen items with active powers or examine their feats for action options, their turns will go by more quickly. In this case, players should avoid items with daily powers and triggered actions, and instead should choose simpler benefits such as feats that are "always on." It also helps to pick powers that have simple rules.

Time Saved: The time you save will depend a lot on how willing or able the players are to embrace this idea. You could save a minute or two on each player's turn, which can add up.

Pros: Having simpler and more obvious options doesn't mean those options are weaker. Characters might not be able to bring about unusual corner-case results, but they will likely achieve consistently good returns on both attacks and defense.

Cons: This strategy obviously limits the players' choices, and that might be a deal-breaker, especially for the type of player that loves to tinker with character building.

Keep it Exciting

If you can't shorten the combat, you can at least keep it interesting. Sure, combat might last three hours, but if the players are on the edges of their seats to the last minute, everyone is happy. One of the simplest ways to keep the excitement level up is to introduce more foes over the course of a battle. You can also do this by putting some enemies out of the easy reach of the characters. Spread out a few minions with ranged attacks around the characters so the creatures can't be wiped out with a single area attack, or put artillery monsters up on a balcony above the battle.

Time Saved: It doesn't matter if everyone's having fun.

Pros: You and you players won't mind how long the combat takes.

Cons: When you design an encounter to be long but interesting, it can be hard to tell when it turns deadly. If you're good at adjusting on the fly, this might not be a problem. On the other hand, even the most well-designed encounter can turn deadly if the characters roll poorly and the DM has a string of critical hits.

About the Author

Matthew Sernett is a writer and game designer for Wizards of the Coast who has worked on both Dungeons & Dragons® and *Magic: The Gathering*® products. His recent credits include *Monster Vault*™, *Neverwinter*™ *Campaign Setting*, and *Magic the Gathering: Scars of Mirrodin*™. When he's not making monsters or building worlds, he's watching bad fantasy movies you don't realize exist and shouldn't bother to learn about.

Dragon # 399 | Editorial Archive | 5/2/2011

On Theme

Dragon Editorial

by Steve Winter

One thing to look forward to in *Dragon* and *Dungeon* is a greater emphasis on themes. I don't mean themes like those that were introduced in the *Dark Sun Campaign Setting* but themes in the sense of a common thread running through several articles in a month. In April already, we already saw what you might call a mini-theme—three articles dealing with gambling.

Coincidentally (or, perhaps, confusingly), the theme for May is themes. In this case, we do mean themes like those introduced in the *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*. They land with a splash in four separate articles, totaling fifteen new themes. These aren't aimed at any particular campaign setting, which is another way of saying that they're aimed at all campaign settings. The list includes the ordained priest, scholar, and seer; the alchemist, animal master, order adept, and apprentice; the chevalier, guardian, hospitaler, and noble; and the explorer, guttersnipe, mercenary, and outlaw. All were put together by Richard Baker, Wizards' design manager for R&D and lead designer on the *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*, so he's well versed on what themes are intended to do and how they should do it.

If you haven't had a chance to play with themes or experience what they contribute to your character, here's the 50-word rundown. A theme adds a third element to your character, layered on top of race and class. Those two facets define your character in broad strokes, and a theme fine-tunes them. As the *Dark Sun Campaign Setting* puts it, a theme "offers a different story for the same basic character concept."

The magazine themes (we're back on big-picture themes again) that you'll see over the coming months are necessarily broad. We don't want to devote a month to the school of pyromancy, because too few people would benefit from a focus that narrow. We can, however, have "magic" month, with articles covering such topics as arcane duels, illusions, a magic theme or two, a discussion of the differences between campaigns with high, medium, and low levels of magic, and an adventure that pits heroes against the machinations of an evil wizard. That's an example, by the way, not the June table of contents.

We have a few ideas for magazine themes, but we still want to know what you'd find interesting. Have you always wanted to run a campaign with a heavy emphasis on ships, seas, and island nations, and you weren't sure how to start? That could be a month's theme. Are you yearning to play a prince in exile but your friends and DM are concerned that politics will disrupt the campaign? Nobility, feudal politics, and dynastic struggle could be a monthly theme. We know you'll be full of great ideas, so send them to dndinsider@wizards.com and share them in the comments below.

Dragon # 399 | Ampersand Archive | 5/13/2011 New!

New Frontiers: D&D and Board Games

Ampersand

By Bill Slavicsek

At long last, spring is in the air. Birds are singing, and it's that time of year when a young gamer's fancy turns to thoughts of lazy days, blockbuster movies, and all-out war—specifically, all-out war in the world of **Dungeons & Dragons**. The forces of good and evil clash in the *Conquest of Nerath* board game, available in June. Which side will you take?

New D&D Experiences

Last year, we introduced the first in a new line of D&D board games with the release of *Castle Ravenloft*. We followed that up a few months ago with *Wrath of Ashardalon*, creating a small family of products that use the Adventure System game mechanics. We have big plans in the works for D&D board games, with the goal of releasing all kinds of different play experiences using the iconic elements of **Dungeons & Dragons** and its worlds.

Castle Ravenloft, *Wrath of Ashardalon*, and *Legend of Drizzt* (due in October) create a cooperative, roleplaying-like experience that lets players complete an adventure in about an hour. Next month, *Conquest of Nerath* provides an action-packed strategy game experience, set in the D&D core world, for 2 to 4 players. With this product, chock full of versatile components, the types of gameplay available to D&D fans expand to include competitive war games. And this one is fast-paced, furious, and a whole lot of fun.

When R&D set out to create a follow-up to the Adventure System games, we wanted to go in a completely different direction, to show the range and versatility of the D&D brand. Rich Baker built a great design for a strategy game a few years ago, and it seemed like just the thing we were looking for. It was competitive instead of cooperative. Different? Check! It was strategic in scope instead of tactical. Different? Check! It was a war game instead of an adventure game. Different? Check! And as an added bonus, it was lots of fun to play.

We dusted off the original design, rebuilt it to take place in the D&D core world, and fine-tuned it to get the game's length to the place we wanted it to be. Rich, with some development help from Peter Lee, reworked the game to create a fantastic D&D war game experience that played in about three hours. Take a look at the beautifully rendered game board …

… and the highly detailed playing pieces!

In addition to the traditional trappings of a strategic war game, *Conquest of Nerath* includes a new element that makes it a uniquely D&D experience. As you can see from the above illustration, the board contains dungeon

spaces scattered across the world. These add an exciting option that changes every time you play. As you build armies and send them out to crush your opponents, the dungeons make possible another kind of strategy. You can recruit heroes and send them into the dungeons to find treasure and magic items to help you win the game—provided you can defeat the monsters waiting there.

Check out Rich Baker's ongoing series of web articles about the board game here, and look for *Conquest of Nerath* next month at a game store near you.

Beyond Nerath

As intimated above, in addition to our ongoing efforts to provide the best RPG products we can, D&D R&D is hard at work looking for new, fun experiences to engage fans everywhere. *Conquest of Nerath* and the Adventure System games are just the beginning. We're experimenting with games for younger fans, Euro-style board games, and other fun ideas that take the D&D brand to places it's never been before. We'll talk more about these new D&D experiences in the months ahead, as plans become firmer. In the meantime, try one of the Adventure System games (if you haven't already) and get ready to go to war with *Conquest of Nerath*!

Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale

If all-out war across the world weren't bad enough, next month also sees the debut of the new *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale*. We've shown off a couple of the new monsters available in this sleeved product, but I thought revealing one more cool monster entry would be a good way to wrap up this month's column. Feel free to use one or both of these monsters in your next D&D game.

Boggle

"Boggle comes and boggle goes,
Steals your rings and stamps your toes.
Turn around the compass rose,
Where it went to, no one knows."
—Fallcrest children's rhyme

Boggles skirt the borders of civilization, creeping between shadows and squeezing through shortcuts in space to steal from and to trick mortals. They have a malicious sense of humor and enjoy tricks that torment others.

Children sometimes tell of "bogeymen" that follow them, lurking in the corners of their vision only to vanish when confronted. Parents dismiss such stories as phantoms of an overactive imagination—until the boggle snatches the child away.

Misshapen Interlopers: Boggles are native to the Feywild. They are common ancestors of goblins and of the Shadowfell's dimension-hopping banderhobbs (*Monster Manual 3*), but are as similar to those creatures as humans are to apes. Although diminutive, boggles are able to extend their reach a considerable distance, and over the years, their ability to bend space and grasp across dimensions has stretched them somehow, making them adept at trickery. A boggle lopes with a hunched gait, dragging its knuckles along the ground as it moves.

Boggles migrate to the world wherever they discover a fey crossing, seeking the limitless entertainment provided by the world's easily beguiled mortals. They are able to fold space over short distances and spy on mortals through the dimensional windows they create. They might pass through the resulting portal or reach across with their long arms, in search of items to filch or victims to terrify.

Malicious Tricksters: Boggles go out of their way to torment or vex people. A boggle might spoil milk, strip the sheets from beds, tie shoes together, or set stockings aflame. It might disassemble armor and hide the pieces, or switch new weapons with old, rusty ones.

It might pound at the inside of a closet door, hurl an object against a wall, or grab at sleepers from beneath their beds. It might even swaddle a wild animal cub like a baby and swap it for a sleeping infant—then lurk nearby to delight in the parents' horror. Sometimes a boggle volunteers to act as a humble guide for travelers or explorers, then leads them into an ambush or a dragon's lair.

Stealthy Sneaks: Boggles are cowards that prefer to stay out of contact with others. They can speak in halting Common or Goblin, but most communicate with shrieks, hisses, clicks, and taps understood only by their own kind. Boggles are not particularly intelligent, but they are cunning and exceptionally devious. Using their dimension-folding powers, they feed by snatching birds, rabbits, and other small prey by surprise. They can even ambush larger creatures, suffocating them with strong, grasping claws. Because of its innate ability to be sneaky, a boggle is sometimes coerced into serving as a guard, a spy, a thief, or a harrier by a stronger or cleverer creature.

Boggles panic when caught, and they sweat profusely in the presence of other creatures. Boggle sweat is a viscous, slick, fire-resistant substance, and a boggle will often leave traces of it wherever it goes, like the slime trail of a slug. For those who know what to look for when strange happenings are afoot, traces of boggle sweat will reveal that a boggle is present.

Boggle Sight Stealer **Level 3 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid XP 150

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18 **Initiative** +10
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13 **Perception** +8
Speed 6, climb 6 Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

Claw ♦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

Neck Bite ♦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature grabbed by the boggle); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + 8 damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Peek-a-Boo Trick (teleportation) ♦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The boggle must have no creature grabbed.
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: The boggle teleports the target to an unoccupied square within 2 squares of the boggle, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13). The target is blinded until the grab ends. The boggle must remain within 2 squares of the target for the grab to persist.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ♦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Face Rip (teleportation) ♦ **Encounter**
Trigger: A creature grabbed by the boggle escapes the grab.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (triggering creature). The target takes 1d8 + 5 damage, and the boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +11, Thievery +11
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 20 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 5 (–2) **Cha** 6 (–1)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Boggle Blink Trickster **Level 4 Artillery**
Small fey humanoid XP 175

HP 43; **Bloodied** 21 **Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14 **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6 Darkvision

Resist 5 fire	
Traits	
Dimensional Window	
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.	
Standard Actions	
Dimension Claw ♦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC *Hit:* 2d6 + 5 damage.	
Double Diversion Trick ♦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC *Hit:* 2d6 + 5 damage.	
Move Actions	
Dimension Hop (teleportation) ♦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Teleport Trick (teleportation) ♦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The boggle takes damage from a melee attack. *Effect (Immediate Reaction):* The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12	
Str 15 (+4)	**Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3)	**Int** 5 (–1) **Cha** 6 (+0)
Alignment evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin

Next Month

We'll look at something else going on in D&D R&D, reveal a secret or two, and discuss the next big product release from the team. In the meantime, check out our new series of weekly columns, including Mike Mearls' *Legends & Lore* and *The Dungeon Master Experience* by Chris Perkins.

Keep playing!
—Bill

In Case You Don't Know Him

Bill Slavicsek's gaming life was forever changed when he discovered **Dungeons & Dragons** in 1976. He became a gaming professional in 1986 when he was hired by West End Games as an editor. He quickly added developer, designer, and creative manager to his resume, and his work helped shape the *Paranoia*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars*, and *Torg* roleplaying games. He even found some time during that period to do freelance work for D&D 1st Edition. In 1993, Bill joined the staff of TSR, Inc. as a designer/editor. He worked on a bunch of 2nd Edition material, including products for Core D&D, *Dark Sun*, *Ravenloft*, and *Planescape*. In 1997, he was part of the TSR crowd that moved to Seattle to join Wizards of the Coast, and in that year he was promoted to R&D Director for D&D. In that position, Bill oversaw the creation of both the 3rd Edition and 4th Edition of the D&D Roleplaying Game. He was one of the driving forces behind the *D&D Insider* project, and he continues to oversee and lead the creative strategy and effort for **Dungeons & Dragons**.

Bill's enormous list of credits includes *Alternity*, *d20 Star Wars*, *The Mark of Nerath* **Dungeons & Dragon** novel, *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the *D&D For Dummies* books, and his monthly *Ampersand (&)* column for *Dragon* online.

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